LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE ONE

INTRODUCTION, SUBJECT, AND CONTENTS OF THE GOSPEL

(1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:14

With this message we begin the Life-study of the Gospel of Luke. Apparently, this Gospel is quite simple. It may seem that the Gospel of Luke is not as profound as the Gospel of Matthew or as mysterious as the Gospel of John. The reason for this is that Luke gives us a record of our Savior, the Lord Jesus, as a Man. A man, of course, is not profound when compared to God.

Although the Gospel of Luke is not the most profound or mysterious of the four Gospels, it is the most sweet and pleasant of the Gospels. Yes, God is profound. But when He became a man, He became sweet and pleasant.

In Matthew we see the King; in Mark, the Slave; and in John, God Himself. In Luke we see the Man. Luke's narration concerning the Lord Jesus as the Man-Savior is very sweet and pleasant. Both the narrative and the narration itself are sweet and pleasant.

INTRODUCTION

Luke 1:1 and 2 say, "Seeing that many have undertaken to draw up a narrative concerning the matters which have been fully accomplished among us, even as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning became eyewitnesses and attendants of the Word." The word "many" in verse 1 indicates that there were more than four who wrote an account of the Savior's earthly life. The "matters" in this verse are the events of John the Baptist's birth, ministry, and martyrdom, and of Jesus'

birth, life, ministry, teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension for the accomplishment of God's redemption to save sinners by grace.

Verse 2 indicates that the writer of this Gospel was not among those disciples who were with the Savior in His earthly life. By "those who from the beginning became eyewitnesses and attendants of the Word," Luke denotes the first group of New Testament believers, who were with the Savior in His ministry on earth. They are called attendants of the Word. The Greek word rendered "attendants" means official servants, apparitors who attend or serve an officer or who have authority to carry out his orders. This word is used in Luke 4:20, Matthew 5:25, Mark 14:54, Acts 26:16, and 1 Corinthians 4:1. The Word in 1:2 is the Word of the gospel ministered and preached to people (Acts 6:4; 8:4).

A Consecutive Account

Luke 1:3 and 4 say, "It seemed good to me also, having followed all things accurately from the first, to write to you a consecutive account, most excellent Theophilus, that you might know fully the certainty of the things concerning which you were instructed." Here Luke indicates that he is writing a consecutive account. This consecutive account concerns the life, ministry, and martyrdom of John the Baptist and the life, ministry, teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the Man-Savior. This Gospel may be regarded as a biography of these two persons. Of course, the Gospel of Luke is mainly a biography of the Savior.

Written by Luke

The early church recognized Luke as the author of both this Gospel and Acts. Luke's authorship is evident from the style of composition of the two books. Luke was a Gentile (Col. 4:14, cf. 11), probably an Asiatic Greek, and a physician (Col. 4:14). Starting in Troas, he joined Paul in his ministry and accompanied him in his last three ministry journeys (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:15).

He was a faithful companion of Paul until Paul was martyred (Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11). Hence, his Gospel should represent Paul's views, as Mark's represents Peter's.

To Theophilus

We know from Luke 1:34 that this Gospel was written to Theophilus. This is a Greek name meaning loved by God, or friend of God. Theophilus was probably a Gentile believer who occupied some official position under the Roman Empire. Hence, this Gospel was written by a Gentile physician to a Gentile officer.

SUBJECT--THE MAN-SAVIOR AND HIS SALVATION IN THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY

Because Luke's Gospel is one of the synoptic Gospels concerning the Savior's humanity, its purpose is to present the Savior as a genuine, normal, and perfect Man, revealing God among men in His saving grace to fallen mankind. It narrates a complete genealogy of the Man Jesus, from His parents back to Adam, the first generation of mankind. This shows that He is a genuine descendant of man--a son of man. Its record of this Man's life impresses us with the completeness and perfection of His humanity. Hence, its emphasis is the Man-Savior. It presents, based upon the moral principles which apply to all men, gospel messages as in 4:16-21; 7:41-43; 12:14-21; and 13:2-5; gospel parables as in 10:30-37; 14:16-24; 15:3-32; and 18:9-14; and gospel cases as in 7:36-50; 13:10-17; 16:19-31; 19:1-10; and 23:39-43; these are not recorded in the other Gospels. Luke does not stress the dispensational aspect or the Jewish background as Matthew does. The Gospel of Luke is the Gospel written to mankind in general, announcing the good news to all people (2:10). Its characteristic is absolutely not Jewish, but Gentile (4:25-28). It is a Gospel to all sinners, both Jews and Gentiles. As such, its record is according to the sequence of morality, not according to the sequence of historical events.

The subject of the Gospel of Luke is marvelous: the Man-Savior and His salvation in the highest standard of

morality. Here we have the Man-Savior, His salvation, and the highest standard of morality. I believe that most readers of this Gospel would realize that this book speaks of a Man who is our Savior. Hence, we may call Him the Man-Savior. Also, it is rather easy to realize that this book shows us the Man-Savior's salvation. However, not many readers of this Gospel realize that the Man-Savior and His salvation are both in the highest standard of morality.

When some hear that Luke presents the Man-Savior and His salvation in the highest standard of morality, they may say, "We can't find the word 'morality' in this book. We do not even see the thought of morality." Apparently, this may be the case. But if we search into the depths of this book, we shall see that it does convey the highest standard of morality. According to the Gospel of Luke, our Savior lives, behaves, and works in the highest standard of morality. Moreover, His salvation is carried out in the highest standard of morality. Therefore, we need to keep in mind that the subject of the Gospel of Luke is the Man-Savior and His salvation in the highest standard of morality.

The Man-Savior

Conceived of the Holy Spirit with the Divine Essence

We need to see that the Lord Jesus is the Man-Savior. As the Man-Savior, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence. Unlike other biographies, Luke records the conception of the one whose life he records. Other biographies may speak of a person's birth, but not his conception. In this matter, Luke is unique. He tells us how the Man-Savior was conceived. He was not conceived of a man; rather, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence.

The Holy Spirit is God Himself reaching man. This means that when God reaches man, He is the Holy Spirit. With the conceiving of the Man-Savior, the Holy Spirit came into humanity.

We have pointed out that the Man-Savior was

conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence. Here we are using the word "essence" in a strong sense to denote something even more intrinsic than nature. The essence is the intrinsic constituent of a certain substance. The Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit not only with the divine nature but with the divine essence. It is extremely important that we see this matter.

Born of a Human Virgin with the Human Essence

The Man-Savior was born of a human virgin with the human essence. In 1:27 and 31 we see that a virgin named Mary conceived in her womb and bore a Son whose name was Jesus.

Because the Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence and was born of a human virgin with the human essence, He has two essences, the divine and the human. With Him there is the mingling of the divine essence with the human essence.

In contrast to the Man-Savior, we have only one essence, the human essence, for we were conceived of man and born of woman. Our Savior is different, for He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a human virgin. With the Holy Spirit there is the divine essence, and with the human virgin there is the human essence.

The Mingling of the Divine Essence with the Human Essence

The Lord's two essences were not merely added together; they were mingled together. Actually, any conceiving is a mingling, not merely an addition. With the Man-Savior it was not the case that the divine essence was simply added to the human essence. Rather, in the conception of the Man-Savior the divine essence and the human essence were mingled.

Some Bible students and even some Bible teachers have failed to understand the matter of mingling. In ancient times there was a debate regarding the mingling of the divine essence and the human essence in the Person of the Lord Jesus. Some who misunderstood this mingling said that it caused a third nature to be produced,

something which is neither divine nor human. To say that with respect to the Lord Jesus the mingling of the divine essence and the human essence produced a third nature, a nature that is neither fully human nor divine, is heretical. However, we wish to make it clear that this is not our understanding of the word "mingle." We agree with the first definition of this word given in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary: mingle--"to combine or join (one thing with another, or two or more things together), especially so that the original elements are distinguishable in the combination." According to this definition, when two or more things are mingled together, their original natures are not lost but remain distinguishable.

We may use tea as an illustration of mingling. When tea is mingled with water to make a beverage, neither the essence of tea nor the essence of water is lost. Instead, both essences remain. These two essences mingle together to produce a beverage, but they do not produce a third nature, something which is neither tea nor water.

Our Savior was conceived of the divine essence and born of the human essence. Therefore, He is a Person with two essences--the divine and the human--mingled together without a third nature being produced. Although the Lord has two essences, He is still a single complete Person, One who is both God and man.

Possessing Both the Divine Nature with the Divine Attributes and the Human Nature with the Human Virtues

As the Man-Savior, the Lord Jesus possesses both the divine nature with its divine attributes and the human nature with its human virtues. The divine attributes are related to what God is and has. We cannot speak exhaustively concerning the attributes of God. But we can say that the Lord Jesus possessed the nature of God with all the divine attributes.

I would call attention to the fact that here we are using

"attributes" in relation to God and "virtues" in relation to man. Because the Lord Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence, He possesses the divine nature with the divine attributes. Because He was born of a human virgin with the human essence, He possesses the human virtues. Therefore, while He was on earth, He lived a life that was both human and divine. He was a Man living a human life, but in that human life the divine attributes were expressed.

In the Gospel of John we see God expressing Himself in man. According to John 1:1 and 14, in the beginning was the Word, the Word was God, and this Word, which is God, became flesh. God became flesh to live a life expressing Himself in humanity. In the Gospel of John the emphasis is on God expressing Himself in man. But in Luke the emphasis is on a Man living a life to express God. It seems that these two matters are very similar; yet there is a difference. John emphasizes God's side, and Luke emphasizes man's side. In John we see God expressing Himself in humanity; in Luke we see a Man expressing God in His human living. As this Man lived on earth, in His living God's attributes were expressed.

We know that our Savior has both the divine essence and the human essence. However, in possessing the human essence He does not have anything related to man's fallen nature. According to John 1:14, God became flesh. But from Paul's word in Romans 8:3 we see that the Lord was in the likeness of the flesh of sin. This indicates that He was born with all the human virtues created by God, but with Him there was only the likeness of the flesh of sin.

As those who are fallen, we cannot realize how sweet and how pleasant was the man created by God. Imagine how sweet and pleasant Adam and Eve were before the fall. They had all the human virtues created by God. But due to the fall, these virtues were spoiled.

When the Lord Jesus was born of a human virgin with the human essence, He possessed the human virtues. However, the human essence of the Lord Jesus did not

include man's fallen nature. His human essence was that created by God. He had the appearance of fallen mankind, the likeness of the flesh of sin, but His human essence, as that created by God, was pure, sweet, and pleasant.

The makeup of the Man-Savior's being, His constitution, is a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. How marvelous that there could be One in this universe with such a composition! In the Man-Savior man and God, God and man, are mingled to form a composition full of the divine attributes and the human virtues.

We need to have this view of the Man-Savior as we read the Gospel of Luke. In the early years I did not have such a view of the Gospel of Luke. But eventually the Lord opened my eyes and I began to see that in Luke's narration we have One who is a composition of God and man. This understanding has been confirmed by the writings of others.

In the Gospel of Luke we see the God-man, a Person who is the mingling of divinity with humanity. In this Person we see all the attributes of God and all the human virtues.

The Divine Attributes Strengthening and Enriching the Human Virtues

If we read the Gospel of Luke carefully, we shall see that the divine attributes strengthen and enrich the human virtues. For example, the Bible clearly reveals that God is love (1 John 4:8) and that God loves (John 3:16). The Bible also says that as those created by God, we should love others (Rom. 13:9). God loves, and we also should love. However, we may love without having God's love to strengthen and enrich our love. Confucius said that we should love others. But he did not point out that human love can be strengthened and enriched by the divine love. In Luke we see a Man, the Man-Savior, who was very loving. Yet in His love there is the divine love strengthening and enriching the human love.

The Lord's living was the living of a Person who was a

wonderful composition of divinity and humanity. As such a Person, the Lord was constituted of the divine attributes and the human virtues.

We have indicated that in the Gospel of Luke there are a number of gospel messages, gospel parables and gospel cases. If we get into the depths of Luke's narration, we shall see that these three categories of things reveal that the living of the Lord Jesus on earth was fully strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes. As a result, He lived in the highest standard of morality. In the following message we shall consider in more detail the meaning of the highest standard of morality portrayed in the Gospel of Luke.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWO

INTRODUCTION, SUBJECT, AND CONTENTS OF THE GOSPEL

(2)

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:1-4

In the previous message we pointed out that the subject of the Gospel of Luke is the Man-Savior and His salvation in the highest standard of morality. We have seen that the Lord Jesus as the Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence and born of a human virgin with the human essence. Therefore, He possesses both the divine nature with its divine attributes and the human nature with its human virtues. In this message we shall go on to consider what it means to say that the Man-Savior's salvation is in the highest standard of morality.

A SALVATION IN THE LORD'S HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The Man-Savior's salvation, which is in the highest standard of morality, is a salvation in His human virtues with His divine attributes. Such a salvation is illustrated in the gospel parables and shown in the gospel cases recorded in Luke.

Gospel Parables

The parable of the good Samaritan in chapter ten is an excellent example. When we come to this chapter, we shall see that this Samaritan signifies the Lord Himself, who was slandered by being called a low and mean Samaritan (John 8:48; 4:9) by the self-exalting and self-justifying Pharisees.

According to this parable, a "certain man was going

down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who having stripped him and beat him, went away, leaving him half dead" (10:30). Both a priest and a Levite observed him and then passed by on the opposite side. Then a certain Samaritan came down to him and was moved with compassion (v. 33). "And coming to him, he bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine. And placing him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn and took care of him" (v. 34). In this simple story, which even children may appreciate, we see that the Man-Savior lived in the highest standard of morality. He cared for the wounded man, brought him to the inn, and said to the innkeeper, "Take care of him; and whatever you spend in addition, when I return, I will repay you" (v. 35). This is not only a matter of love; it is also a living in the highest standard of morality.

The three parables in Luke 15 also illustrate the Man-Savior's salvation in the highest standard of morality. These three parables form a full set. The good shepherd signifies God the Son as our shepherd, the woman signifies the Holy Spirit, and the loving father, of course, signifies God the Father. Hence, in these three parables we have the Trinity working together to seek, save, and receive a repentant sinner. The good shepherd loves the lost sheep, the woman treasures the lost coin, and the loving father receives the prodigal son when he returns.

Some readers of the Gospel of Luke may regard these parables merely as illustrating love. But we need to realize that it is Luke's intention in his narration to portray the divine Trinity full of the divine attributes shown in human virtues. In these parables we see not only the divine attributes, in particular, the attribute of love; we also see the divine attributes in human virtues.

Gospel Cases

The Man-Savior's salvation in the highest standard of morality is also shown in the gospel cases recorded in Luke. In 7:36-50 we have the case of the Lord Jesus forgiving a sinful woman. This woman was despised by the

Pharisee who had invited the Lord Jesus to eat with him. As we read this portion of the Gospel of Luke, we see that in dealing with this sinful woman, and also with the Pharisee, the Lord lived according to the highest standard of morality.

Another case that reveals the same high standard is the case of Zaccheus (19:1-10). Although Zaccheus, a tax collector, was an evil person, he was seeking the Man-Savior. Because he was seeking Jesus, "he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree that he might see Him" (v. 4). The Lord Jesus responded to Zaccheus, saying, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down; for today I must stay in your house" (v. 5). The Man-Savior's response must have far exceeded all that Zaccheus could have hoped for. The Man-Savior was not held back by the fact that Zaccheus was a despised man, one rejected by society. The Lord went with Zaccheus and stayed in his house. In His dealing with Zaccheus, the Man-Savior lived in the highest standard of morality.

Even when the Man-Savior was on the cross, He acted in the highest standard of morality in relation to the two criminals who were crucified with Him. One of the criminals said to the Lord Jesus, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (23:42). Immediately the Man-Savior answered, "Truly I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (v. 43).

In these three cases we have a portrait of the Man-Savior with the highest standard of morality. This is a crucial matter in the Gospel of Luke. This Gospel depicts a Man who possesses the divine nature with all the human virtues. In the Man-Savior the divine attributes are mingled with the human virtues as one unit. Therefore, the Lord's human virtues, according to this Gospel, are strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes.

THE CHRIST WHO LIVES IN US

Today the very Christ who lives in us is still the One who possesses the human virtues strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes. While He was on earth,

He lived a life in the highest standard of morality. Such a life was a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. Of course, the Lord Jesus lived this kind of life outside the disciples. But from the time of His resurrection He has been living this kind of life within the believers. This means that within us today the Man-Savior is still living a life in the highest standard of morality, a life that is a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. If we see this, we shall say with Paul, "It is no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Have you ever realized that the Christ who lives in you is a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues? The kind of life He lived on earth He is now seeking to live in us.

THE VIEW OF THE MAN-SAVIOR AND HIS SALVATION

We have seen that the Lord spoke in parables to illustrate a life in the highest standard of morality. We have also seen this life displayed in different gospel cases. Suppose you had been the criminal who asked the Lord to save him, and He immediately gave you more than you had asked without any terms or conditions. Perhaps you would say, "Oh, what love this is!" Actually, it is not adequate to call this love. This is the highest standard of morality.

Suppose you had been the one wounded by robbers and left to die without anyone to care for you. Then this good Samaritan came, was moved with compassion, and did everything necessary to save you. This also is something more than love--it is the highest standard of morality. I hope that we all shall see this.

The subject of the Gospel of Luke is the Man-Savior and His salvation in the highest standard of morality. If we have this view in our reading of this Gospel, it will become a new book to us. As we read chapter after chapter of the Gospel of Luke, we need to have the view of the Man-Savior and His salvation in the highest standard of morality.

CONTENTS

Presenting the Savior as a Genuine, Moral, and Perfect Man

The Gospel of Luke presents the Savior as a genuine, moral, and perfect Man. This Man revealed God among men in His saving grace to fallen mankind. I like the expression "saving grace." In the Gospel of Luke God is revealed in a Man who saves sinners by His grace. In this book we have a picture of a Man who is genuine, moral, and perfect, a Man who reveals God in His saving grace to fallen mankind. This Man did not reveal Himself. Instead, He revealed God in His saving grace.

Impressing Us with the Completeness and Perfection of the Man-Savior's Humanity

The contents of the Gospel of Luke impress us with the completeness and perfection of the Man-Savior's humanity. The more we read this Gospel, the more we are impressed that it is the record of a Man, a full, whole, complete, perfect, and real Man. In this Man God is revealed. Hence, this Man is God's expression. In all He did and said, He was a genuine, complete, moral, and perfect Man who revealed not Himself, but God primarily in the aspect of His saving grace.

Not Emphasizing the Dispensational Aspect or the Jewish Background

The contents of this Gospel do not emphasize the dispensational aspect or the Jewish background. This is in contrast to the Gospel of Matthew, which does stress both the dispensational aspect and the Jewish background.

Full of Gospel Messages, Gospel Parables, and Gospel Cases

The Gospel of Luke contains many gospel messages, gospel parables, and gospel cases. The gospel messages are found in 4:16-21; 7:41-43; 12:14-21; and 13:2-5; the gospel parables, in 10:30-37; 14:16-24; 15:3-32; and 18:9-14; and the gospel cases, in 7:36-50; 13:10-17; 16:19-31; 19:1-10; and 23:39-43. None of these messages, parables, or cases is

recorded in the other Gospels. All these gospel messages, parables, and cases are recorded uniquely in Luke's narration. If we spend time to consider these gospel messages, gospel parables, and gospel cases, we shall be helped in our preaching of the gospel.

Written to Mankind in General

The Gospel of Luke is written to mankind in general. Instead of being written to a particular kind of people, it is written to the entire human race. Luke 2:10 indicates this: "And the angel said to them: Do not fear, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be to all the people."

Bearing a Gentile Characteristic Rather than a Jewish One

The Gospel of Luke bears a Gentile characteristic rather than a Jewish one. One strong indication of this is 4:25-27, where the Lord refers first to the widow of Sidon and then to Naaman the Syrian.

According to the Sequence of Morality, Not of Historical Events

Instead of being written according to the sequence of historical events, the Gospel of Luke is written according to the sequence of morality. However, many readers of the New Testament do not realize this. As we read the Gospel of Luke, we shall find certain cases that are recorded in a sequence different from that in the Gospel of Mark. The reason for this is that Mark was written according to the sequence of historical events. But Luke narrates the stories in his Gospel according to the sequence of morality, not of history. In this respect Luke is similar to Matthew. Matthew's sequence is the sequence of doctrine concerning the kingdom, and Luke's sequence is the sequence of morality. Therefore neither Luke nor Matthew was written according to the sequence of historical events.

A particular case that illustrates the fact that the Gospel of Luke was written according to the sequence of morality is that of Judas leaving the Passover feast. According to the Gospel of Mark, Judas did not participate in the Lord's table. But Luke seems to indicate that Judas was present for the Lord's supper and left afterward. There has been discussion among Bible students regarding this matter.

We need to see the different views presented in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Matthew we have the view of doctrine; in Mark, the view of historical events; and in Luke, the view of morality. The Gospel of Luke emphasizes the morality of the Man-Savior. My burden in this message is to point out that the Man-Savior and His salvation are in the highest standard of morality.

THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY

Man Created in God's Image

At this juncture I would like to explain further what we mean by the highest standard of morality. In chapter one of Genesis we see that man was created in God's image and according to God's likeness. God is love and light. Love is the nature of God's being, and light is the nature of God's expression. Furthermore, God is holy and righteous. God is holy in His nature and righteous in His actions. These four attributes--love, light, holiness, and righteousness--are revealed in the law of God. In the law we have the basic principle of divine love, divine light, divine holiness, and divine righteousness.

To say that man was created in the image of God means that man was created according to what God is. Man was created according to the God who is love and light and who is also holy and righteous. However, at the time of his creation man did not have God within him. For this reason, God placed the man created by Him in front of the tree of life. This indicates that it was necessary for the God-created man to take God into him as his life. If man had taken God into him as life, then the divine attributes

of love, light, holiness, and righteousness would also have come into man.

The man created by God had only the appearance of God's love, light, righteousness, and holiness. Man cannot have the reality of these attributes unless he receives God into him as his life. We know that according to the book of Genesis man failed to take God into him as his life.

The Living of the Lord Jesus

One day God Himself became a Man named Jesus. This Man was conceived of the divine essence and born of the human essence, the very essence God created in man. This means that the human essence of which the Lord Jesus partook was that created by God according to what He is--the human essence with the appearance of God's love, light, holiness, and righteousness.

As we have seen, the Lord Jesus, the God-man, was a composition of the divine essence with all the divine attributes and the human essence with all the human virtues. When He was on earth, He lived a life that was a composition of the divine attributes and the human virtues. This is the highest standard of morality. The highest standard of morality is the living of the One whose life was a composition of God with the divine attributes and man with the human virtues. When we speak of the highest standard of morality, we are not using the word "morality" in a traditional way. By morality we mean the standard of life God requires.

From the beginning, in the first two chapters of Genesis, we see that man with the human virtues was created by God according to what He is. In particular, since God is light and love and is holy and righteous, He created man according to these attributes. The creation of man in the image of God is described in Genesis 1.

We have pointed out that at the time of his creation man did not have the reality of love, light, holiness, and righteousness. The reality of these divine attributes is actually God Himself. This means that through creation man had the image of these attributes, but he did not

have the reality of them. This was the reason God in Genesis 2 put man in front of Himself as signified by the tree of life, indicating that God wanted man to take Him as his life so that he might have the reality of the divine love, light, holiness, and righteousness. This would enable man to live a life in the highest standard of morality.

Although the man created by God failed to live such a life, the Lord Jesus, the Man-Savior, possessing the divine nature and the human nature, lived a life on earth with the attributes of God expressed in the virtues of man. This crucial matter is revealed in the Gospel of Luke.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THREE

THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMANITY WITH HIS DIVINITY

(1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:5-38

In the two foregoing messages we covered the introduction to the Gospel of Luke (1:1-4). With this message we come to the second major section of this Gospel, the section concerned with the preparation of the Man-Savior in His humanity with His divinity (1:5--4:13). This section covers a number of matters: the conception of the forerunner of the Man-Savior (1:5-25), the conception of the Man-Savior (1:26-56), His forerunner's birth and youth (1:57-80), the Man-Savior's birth (2:1-20), His youth (2:21-52), His inauguration (3:1-22), His status (3:23-38), and His test (4:1-13). In this lengthy section of the Gospel of Luke we have a full picture showing us how the Man-Savior was prepared for His ministry. In this message we shall consider first the conception of John the Baptist and then that of the Man-Savior.

HIS FORERUNNER'S CONCEPTION

Conceived of a Human Father in a Human Mother

Luke 1:5 and 6 say, "There was in the days of Herod, king of Judea, a certain priest named Zachariah, of the course of Abijah; and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." Zachariah and Elizabeth were God's chosen people, preserved in the custody of the law in the Old Testament.

They were brought forth by the law to be useful to God for the initiation of the gospel in the New Testament.

In 1:6 we are told that Zachariah and Elizabeth were righteous in the sight of God. This does not contradict Romans 3:20. Here "righteous" means to be right, blameless in the sight of God according to the Old Testament commandments and ordinances (Luke 2:25; Phil. 3:6). It does not mean that these righteous ones were not sinful, that they were without sin and sins. They were blameless, but they were not without blemish. They still needed the unblemished sin and trespass offerings in type (Lev. 4:28; 5:15) for their atonement that they might have contact with God.

Not by Natural Strength

The forerunner of the Man-Savior, John the Baptist, was not conceived by his parents' natural strength, for they were overage. Concerning this, 1:7 says, "And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in age." This was sovereign of the Lord. Thus they afforded God an opportunity to initiate His gospel, not by man's natural strength but by His divine act.

By the Divine Power in a Miraculous Way

Zachariah was a priest of the course of Abijah. This was the eighth of the twenty-four courses of priestly service ordained by David (1 Chron. 24:10). "And it came about, that while he served as priest in the order of his course before God, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense" (vv. 8-9). Zachariah burned the incense on the incense altar within the Holy Place (1:11; Exo. 30:6-8; 1 Sam. 2:28; 1 Chron. 23:13; 2 Chron. 29:11).

Luke 1:10 says, "And all the multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of the burning of incense." The prayer of God's people affords Him a way to carry out His plan.

According to 1:11 and 12, an angel of the Lord

appeared to Zachariah. The angel said to him, "Do not fear, Zachariah, because your petition was heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John" (v. 13). This indicates that Zachariah had prayed for his wife to bear him a son. This also indicates that our prayer carries out God's operation. Moreover, it implies that our natural strength must be brought to an end so that God's operation may begin by His divine act. This was revealed in the case of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17:15-19) and in the case of Hannah (1 Sam. 1:5-20).

God came in to cause Zachariah and Elizabeth to bring forth a child in a miraculous way. Hence, the conception of John the Baptist was by the divine power in a miraculous way (vv. 19-20). In Old Testament times God did this in bringing forth both Isaac and Samuel. Now in the case of John the Baptist, born of parents naturally unable to produce a child, God came in to enable them to have a son by His power.

In 1:13 we see that the child born to Zachariah and Elizabeth would be called John. The Greek word for John is *Ioannes,* meaning Jehovah is favorable, Jehovah shows grace, or Jehovah is the gracious Giver. This name is of Hebrew origin, Jochanan contracted into Johanan (2 Kings 25:23; 1 Chron. 3:24; 2 Chron. 28:12).

Separated unto God as a Nazarite and Filled with the Holy Spirit from His Mother's Womb

Luke 1:15 says concerning John the Baptist, "For he will be great before the Lord, and will by no means drink wine and strong drink; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." The word here concerning not drinking wine or strong drink indicates that John was to be a Nazarite (Num. 6:1-4). Instead of drinking wine, he would be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit replaces the wine (Eph. 5:18).

John the Baptist was born a priest, one chosen by God. But this chosen priest of God became a Nazarite in addition. According to chapter six of Numbers, a Nazarite

is not a chosen one; rather, a Nazarite is a volunteer. Therefore, John the Baptist had a dual status. On the one hand, as a priest he was chosen by God; on the other hand, as a Nazarite he was a volunteer. John volunteered himself to serve God.

Luke 1:15 says that John was to be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. The Holy Spirit is the first divine title ascribed to the Spirit of God in the New Testament. Such a title was not used in the Old Testament. (In Psa. 51:11 and Isa. 63:10-11 "the Holy Spirit" should be translated "the Spirit of holiness.") It was at this time, for the initiation of the gospel of God, to prepare the way for the Savior's coming and to prepare a human body for Him, that this divine title of God's Spirit was used. The preparing of the way for the Savior's coming required that His forerunner be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, so that he could separate the people unto God from all things other than God, making them holy unto Him for His purpose. The preparing of a human body for the Savior required that the Holy Spirit impart the divine nature into humanity, making man holy for the carrying out of God's plan of redemption.

John the Baptist was the first one in the New Testament who was filled with the Holy Spirit. Because he was filled with the Holy Spirit he could fulfill the words spoken concerning him in verses 16 and 17: "And many of the sons of Israel he will turn to the Lord their God. And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to children, and the disobedient to the prudence of the righteous, to prepare for the Lord a people made ready." This was the fulfillment of Malachi 4:5. That verse prophesied that Elijah would come. It was said of John the Baptist that he would go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. Therefore, in a sense, John may be considered "Elijah, who is about to come" (Matt. 11:14). However, the prophecy of Malachi 4:5 will actually be fulfilled in the great tribulation, when the real Elijah, one of the two witnesses, will come to strengthen God's people (Rev. 11:3-12).

THE CONCEPTION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

Conceived of the Holy Spirit in a Human Virgin

The Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence (v. 35) in a human virgin with the human essence (vv. 27-28, 31). In 1:26-56 we have record of His conception.

Verses 26 and 27 say, "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David; and the name of the virgin was Mary." Galilee was a region without fame, and Nazareth was a city people despised (John 7:52; 1:46). The virgin Mary lived in a despised city of a region without fame, but she was a descendant of the royal family of King David (Luke 1:31-32; Matt. 1:16).

According to 1:28-30, the angel told Mary that she was a favored one, one endued with grace, and that she had found favor, grace, with God.

Then in verse 31 the angel Gabriel went on to say, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus." "Jesus" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Joshua (Num. 13:16), which means Jehovah the Savior, or, the salvation of Jehovah. Hence, Jesus is not only a Man but Jehovah, and not only Jehovah, but Jehovah becoming our salvation. Thus, He is our Savior. He is our Joshua bringing us into rest (Heb. 4:8; Matt. 11:28-29), which is Himself as the good land to us.

In Luke 1:35 we see clearly that the Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; wherefore also the holy thing which is born will be called, Son of God." As the cloud overshadowed the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5) and the tabernacle (Exo. 40:34, 38), the power of the most High would overshadow Mary. It seems that, according to this verse, the Holy Spirit would be only upon Mary as the power for her to conceive the Holy Child. However, Matthew 1:18 and 20 tell us that Mary "was found having in womb out of the Holy Spirit" (lit.), and "the thing begotten (generated) in her is out of the

Holy Spirit" (lit.). This indicates that the divine essence out of the Holy Spirit had been generated in Mary's womb before she delivered the Child Jesus. Such a conception of the Holy Spirit in the human virgin, accomplished with both the divine and the human essences, constitutes a mingling of the divine nature with the human nature, producing a God-man, one who is both the complete God and perfect Man, possessing the divine nature and the human nature distinctively, without a third nature being produced. This is the most wonderful and most excellent Person of Jesus--Jehovah the Savior.

The conception of John the Baptist and that of Jesus the Savior are strikingly different in essence. The conception of John the Baptist was God's miracle, accomplished with the overage human essence, merely by the divine power, without the divine essence being involved, thus bringing forth a mere man who was only filled with the Spirit of God (1:15) but lacked the nature of God. The conception of the Savior was God's incarnation (John 1:14), constituted not only by the divine power, but also of the divine essence added to the human essence, hence producing the God-man of two natures--divinity and humanity. Through this, God joined Himself to humanity that He might be manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16) and might be a Man-Savior (Luke 2:11).

We have emphasized strongly that the Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence in a human virgin with the human essence. Here we see the two sources of the Lord's two essences. It is very clear that the conception of the Lord Jesus involved two sources--the Holy Spirit and the human virgin--and two essences--the divine essence and the human essence.

The conception of the Man-Savior involved a mingling of the divine essence and the human essence. Actually, any conception is a matter of mingling. With the conception of the Man-Savior the divine essence was not merely added to the human essence; on the contrary, the divine essence was mingled with the human essence.

In ancient times there was a debate regarding the word "mingling." Some who did not understand the matter of the mingling of the divine essence with the human essence in the Person of Jesus Christ taught the heresy that this mingling means that Christ was not quite God nor quite man but a third thing with a third nature, something neither God nor man. What a great heresy this was!

Because of this heretical teaching regarding mingling, not many teachers of the Bible have dared to use this word with respect to the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, even though this word has been used wrongly, the Bible reveals the truth that Christ our Lord is the mingling of God with man. But this mingling did not cause Him to lose either the divine nature or the human nature, and it did not produce a third nature. Rather, in this mingling both the divine essence and the human essence remain distinguishable, and no third nature, no third essence, is produced.

Some have opposed us and accused us falsely of teaching heresy because we teach the biblical truth of the mingling of the divine essence and the human essence in Christ. This opposition has caused us to study this matter further. The more we have studied, the more we have been confirmed in the truth concerning this mingling.

As we pointed out in Message One of this Life-study, we agree with the first definition of the word "mingle" given in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary: "to combine or join (one thing with another, or two or more things together), especially so that the original elements are distinguishable in the combination." Hence, to mingle is to combine two or more things together so that the original elements remain distinguishable.

This is certainly the situation regarding the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was conceived of two essences, the divine and the human. Hence, He was a mingling of God and man. But both the divine essence and the human essence remain and are distinguishable. These essences are mingled in one Person without the producing of a third nature. The Lord possesses two natures, and in Him each one is distinguishable. We need to be deeply impressed

with this matter, for it is the basic element for our knowledge of the wonderful Person of the Lord Jesus.

Born as the Son of God and a Descendant of David

Because the Lord Jesus was conceived of God the Spirit, He is the Son of God. Concerning Him, Luke 1:32 says, "He will be great, and will be called Son of the Most High." The Most High is a divine title. In Hebrew it is *Elyon* (Gen. 14:18), denoting the Supreme (God); hence, there is no article. Jesus will be great because He is the Son of the Most High, the Supreme God.

Luke 1:35 says that "the holy thing" born of Mary was to be called the Son of God. Because the conceiving was of the Holy Spirit, what was born of this conception was a holy thing, something intrinsically holy. This is Jesus our Savior.

The second part of 1:32 says concerning the Man-Savior, "The Lord God will give to Him the throne of David His father." Jesus, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a human virgin, will be the Son of the Most High God, and at the same time He will be the Son of a highly ranked man, David the King (Matt. 1:1; 22:45). His status is both divine and human.

Luke 1:33 goes on to say, "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall not be an end." The preceding verse unveils the family of Jesus, and this verse unveils His kingdom. Jesus will have the house of Jacob--the nation of Israel--as the center of His reign (Acts 1:6; 15:16), through which He will rule over the entire world as His kingdom (Rev. 11:15). He will rule the world first in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6) and then in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (Rev. 22:3, 5).

In the brief word spoken to Mary by the angel there is a clear revelation that the One who was to be born of her is both God and man. Because He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, He is the Son of God. Because He was also conceived in the human virgin, He is the Son of Man. On the divine side, He is the Son of God; on the human side, He is the Son of Man. According to the human side, He was a descendant of David to inherit the throne of David

and to reign over the house of Jacob forever in His everlasting kingdom.

Because the Lord Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of Man, sometimes He indicated to others that He is the Son of God, and at other times, that He is the Son of Man. Because He was conceived of two essences--the divine and the human--He is both the Son of God and Son of Man.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FOUR

THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMANITY WITH HIS DIVINITY

(2)

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-56

In the previous message we began to consider the conception of John the Baptist, the Lord's forerunner, and the conception of the Man-Savior. Luke 1:5-25 describes the conception of the forerunner, and 1:26-56, the conception of the Man-Savior. In this message we shall consider the blessing of the mother of the Man-Savior's forerunner (vv. 39-45) and the praise of the Man-Savior's mother (vv. 46-56).

THE BLESSING OF HIS FORERUNNER'S MOTHER

Filled with the Spirit

Luke 1:41 says, "And it came about as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, that the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist. This verse tells us that she was filled with the Spirit. There is no indication that she prayed or fasted in order to be filled with the Spirit. This verse simply says that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. By being filled with the Spirit she blessed Mary, the mother of the Man-Savior.

Blessing the Man-Savior's Mother and the Fruit of Her Womb

Verse 42 says, "And she lifted up her voice with a loud cry and said, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" Elizabeth's blessing by the Holy Spirit (v. 41) reveals the Savior's humanity as the fruit

and His deity as the Lord (v. 43). Her blessing also confirms Mary's faith in the Lord's word (v. 45). Such a blessing indicates that Elizabeth was also a godly woman, fit for God's use in carrying out His purpose.

The Greek word rendered "fruit" in verse 42, *karpos,* is used for Christ in the sense of offspring only here and in Acts 2:30. This word is used for the fruit of the tree of life in Revelation 22:2. Christ is the branch of Jehovah (Isa. 4:2) and of David (Jer. 23:5), and the fruit of Mary and of David that we may eat of Him as the tree of life (Rev. 2:7).

It is significant that Elizabeth blessed the fruit of Mary's womb. Instead of using the word "child," Elizabeth used the word "fruit." It is correct to say that the fruit here refers to a child. But this word also indicates that the Lord Jesus is fruit to us, the fruit for us to take in as our life supply.

Elizabeth also blessed Mary in verse 45: "And blessed is she who believed, because there shall be a completion of the things spoken to her from the Lord." In contrast to the unbelieving Zachariah (v. 20), Mary believed what the angel said to her. Elizabeth said to Mary that there would be a completion of the things spoken to her from the Lord. This was a prophecy by the Holy Spirit to confirm the Lord's word in verses 30 through 37 spoken to Mary by the angel Gabriel.

Recognizing the Fruit of the Womb of the Man-Savior's Mother as Her Lord

In verse 43 Elizabeth says, "And how can this be, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Elizabeth, being filled with the Holy Spirit, recognized the fruit of Mary's womb as her Lord. This indicates that she acknowledged the deity of the Child to be born of Mary (Psa. 110:1; Matt. 22:43-45).

When the word fruit is used in the Scriptures to denote a child, it refers to humanity. Hence, in 1:42 "fruit" refers to the Lord Jesus in His humanity. Now we see in verse 43 that Elizabeth went on to recognize this human One as her Lord

Elizabeth and Mary were cousins. No doubt, Elizabeth was much older than Mary. Nevertheless, this elderly woman recognized that the child of her younger cousin was her Lord. Even before His birth, Elizabeth recognized that the Lord Jesus, the Man-Savior, was both man and God. In her blessing, therefore, we have a revelation of the divine-human Person of the Man-Savior.

The Baby Leaping in Elizabeth's Womb with Exultation

Verse 41 says that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in Elizabeth's womb. The forerunner of the Man-Savior even exulted upon meeting the Savior, while both of them were still in their mothers' wombs. Concerning this, Elizabeth says in verse 44, "For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby leaped in my womb with exultation." This is marvelous and beyond our understanding.

THE PRAISE OF THE MAN-SAVIOR'S MOTHER

In 1:46-56 we have the praise of the Man-Savior's mother. Mary came to visit Elizabeth. When Elizabeth saw Mary, she blessed her. Mary responded to this blessing not by giving a blessing, but by offering praise to God.

Full of Quotations from the Old Testament

Mary's poetic praise is composed of many quotations from the Old Testament. This indicates that she was a godly woman, qualified to be a channel for the Savior's incarnation. It also indicates that the Lord Jesus would grow up in a family which would be filled with the knowledge and love of God's holy Word.

Although Mary was a young woman, she was very knowledgeable concerning the Old Testament and could quote verses from it in her praise to God. Actually, her praise was a composition of quotations from the Scriptures. Surely she was the right person for God to use in conceiving the Savior who was to be born.

Before Mary was visited by the angel to receive the

word concerning the conception of the Man-Savior, she was already full of the knowledge of God's Word. Many verses of the Scriptures had been absorbed into her being. Therefore, at the proper time she could pour out what was within her as she offered up praise to God.

Mary's praise indicates that in order for us to be used by God, we need to have certain qualifications. One qualification is the proper knowledge of the Word of God. I hope that the young people in particular will learn of Mary in this matter. Do you intend to be used by the Lord to bring forth something of the Lord, even, in a spiritual sense, to "conceive" the Lord Jesus and bring Him forth? If so, then you need to be qualified by being filled with the Scriptures, filled with the Word of God.

Her Spirit Having Exulted in God Her Savior

In verses 46 and 47 Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has exulted in God my Savior." First Mary's spirit exulted in God; then her soul magnified the Lord. Her praise to God was initiated from her spirit and then was expressed through her soul. Her spirit was filled with joy in God her Savior so that her soul manifested her joy for the magnification of the Lord. She lived and acted in her spirit, which directed her soul. Her exultation in God in her spirit was due to her enjoyment of God as her Savior, and her magnifying of the Lord in her soul was due to her exaltation of the Lord--Jehovah, the great To Be.

Mary's spirit exulted in God. To exult is higher than to rejoice. It is significant that Mary said that her spirit exulted in God her Savior, rather than in God her Creator. She regarded God as more than her Creator; she considered Him her Savior. She realized that she was a created person who had become fallen. Therefore, she needed her Creator to be her Savior.

Her Soul Magnifying the Lord

We have seen that in verse 46 Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord." Mary's praise was to magnify the Lord based upon her experience of God as her Savior through His everlasting mercy (vv. 47-50) and her

observation of others' experience of God's merciful and faithful doings (vv. 51-55). In content and standard, her praise is like some of the Old Testament Psalms. However, she does not say anything concerning Christ as does Elizabeth in her blessing (vv. 41-43) and Zachariah in his prophecy through the Holy Spirit (vv. 67-71, 76-79).

First Mary's spirit exulted in God her Savior. Then her soul magnified the Lord. In these verses we see that Mary regarded God as both her Savior and Lord. We all need to experience what Mary experienced in knowing God as our Savior and Lord. When we enjoy God as our Savior, exulting in Him, then we shall magnify Him as our Lord.

When we magnify God as our Lord, we serve Him. Actually, to magnify the Lord is to serve Him as Lord. We need to be impressed with the fact that to serve the Lord is not mainly to do things for Him. On the contrary, the most important aspect of serving the Lord is to magnify Him. We need to be those who live a life not merely of doing things for God but of magnifying Him.

Magnifying the Lord is a matter of our soul, not of our spirit. This means that magnifying the Lord involves our mind, emotion, and will. It involves our thoughts, our likes and dislikes, and our decisions. In all these things the Lord should be magnified. He should be magnified in our thoughts, in our likes and dislikes, and in our decisions concerning our direction.

Mary enjoyed God in the spirit as her saving One. Then her soul, her being, with her mind, emotion, and will, magnified the Lord. When Mary spoke these words, she was still living at the conclusion of Old Testament times. She had not yet fully been brought into the New Testament age. Nevertheless, she could be a person whose spirit exulted in God her Savior and whose soul magnified the Lord. We certainly need to learn of her to exult in the Lord with our spirit and magnify Him with our soul.

Praising God's Mercy and His Mighty Doings

In 1:48-50 Mary says, "Because He has looked upon the

low estate of His slave. For behold, from now on all generations will count me blessed; because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name; and His mercy is unto generations and generations to those who fear Him." Both Mary and Zachariah stress God's mercy (vv. 54, 58, 72, 78), realizing their low estate (v. 48) and humbly (v. 52) recognizing that they are not worthy of being favored by God. Both God's mercy and His grace are the expression of His love. When we are in a pitiful condition, His mercy first reaches us and brings us into a situation where God is able to favor us with His grace. For example, 15:20-24 tells us that when the father saw the prodigal son returning, he had compassion on him. That is mercy, as expressing the father's love. Then the father clothed him with the best robe and fed him with the fatted calf. That is grace, which also manifests the father's love. God's mercy reaches further and bridges the gap between us and God's grace.

In a sense, Mary was more knowledgeable of God than many believers today. In her praise she speaks of God's mercy, but she does not mention His grace. In order to receive God's grace, we need to be in a suitable condition. However, Mary realized that she and all the people at that time were in a poor condition. Because they were in a pitiful condition, they needed God's mercy.

Mary praised God for His mercy and His mighty doings. In verses 51 and 52 she says, "He has done mighty things with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in the understanding of their heart. He brought down potentates from thrones and exalted the humble." God did mighty things in taking care of His people in their low estate. Because their estate was so low, they needed God's mercy to reach them, for His mercy extends further than His grace.

In 1:53-55 Mary says, "He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He sent away empty. He has succored Israel His servant to remember mercy, even as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever." Verse 55 refers to God's faithfulness in keeping

His word. Both Mary and Zachariah emphasize not only God's mercy but also His faithfulness (vv. 70, 72). God's mercy takes care of their condition, and His faithfulness takes care of His position so that He can favor them with His gracious doings.

God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were His faithful word. Now God was visiting His people according to those promises.

We should appreciate Mary's praise. When she uttered this praise, she was a young woman, probably still in her twenties. Even though she was so young, she could offer up a praise that was a composition of quotations from the Old Testament related to her own experience of God as her Savior and Lord. She could speak concerning God's mercy and His mighty doings in caring for His people according to the faithful promises given to the fathers.

As we consider Mary's praise, we can see something of the reason she was chosen by God for the conception of the Man-Savior. No doubt Mary also taught the Lord Jesus many portions from the Scriptures as He was growing up.

Mary's praise is not doctrinal; on the contrary, it is experiential. She praised God from her experience. Mary said that her spirit exulted in God her Savior and her soul magnified the Lord. This was based on experience. Then she went on to praise God in His mercy and in His faithful doings in taking care of His people, who were in a low estate. God's doings were according to His promise, according to His faithful word given to the fathers.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIVE

THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMANITY WITH HIS DIVINITY

(3)

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:57-80

Luke 1:5-4:13 is a section concerned with the preparation of the Man-Savior in His humanity with His divinity. In this section we have already covered the conception of John the Baptist, the Lord's forerunner (1:5-25), and the conception of the Man-Savior (1:26-56). Now we shall go on to consider the birth and youth of the forerunner of the Man-Savior (1:57-80).

As we have begun to see, the preparation of the Man-Savior is in His humanity with His divinity. In principle, His preparation is the same as His conception, for in both the conception and the preparation we have the divine essence and the human essence. The conception of the Man-Savior was of the Holy Spirit with the divine essence in the womb of a human virgin with the human essence. In other words, the Lord's conception was of the divine essence in the human essence. Likewise, His preparation was in His humanity with His divinity. How excellent, marvelous, and extraordinary is this preparation!

In 1:5--2:52 we have the conception, birth, and youth of John the Baptist and that of the Man-Savior. We have pointed out that the conception of John the Baptist and that of Jesus the Savior are different in essence. The conception of John was God's miracle, accomplished with the overaged human essence, simply by the divine power without the divine essence being involved. Therefore, the result of this conception was simply a man, one who was filled with the Spirit of God (1:15) but who lacked the nature of God. The conception of the Man-Savior was God's

incarnation, constituted not only by the divine power, but also of the divine essence added to the human essence. Therefore, this conception produced the God-man, the One with two natures--divinity and humanity.

HIS FORERUNNER'S BIRTH

Born of His Mother Miraculously

John the Baptist was born of his mother miraculously. Concerning this miraculous birth, 1:57 and 58 say, "Now the time was fulfilled for Elizabeth to give birth, and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had magnified His mercy with her, and they rejoiced with her."

Circumcised on the Eighth Day

The Man-Savior's forerunner was circumcised on the eighth day. "And it came about on the eighth day that they came to circumcise the young child" (v. 59). This was according to the requirement in Leviticus 12:3.

Named John Miraculously

When some were about to call the forerunner of the Man-Savior "by the name of his father, Zachariah," his mother answered and said, "No, but he shall be called John" (1:59-60). Then some went on to say, "There is no one of your relatives who is called by this name" (v. 61). When they gestured to Zachariah as to what his child should be called, he wrote on a tablet, "John is his name" (v. 63).

In 1:13 Zachariah was told by the angel that Elizabeth would bear a son and that he would call his name John. The Greek word rendered John is Ioannes, meaning Jehovah is favorable, Jehovah shows grace, or Jehovah is the gracious Giver.

The people were right in saying that none of Elizabeth's relatives was named John. The Lord's forerunner was given this name because he was to be one

who would not keep the traditions. For this reason, he was not given a traditional name, but he was given a new name.

His Father's Prophecy

Filled with the Spirit

After Zachariah wrote John's name on the tablet, "his mouth was opened instantly, and his tongue loosed, and he spoke blessing God" (v. 64). In 1:67-79 we have a record of Zachariah's prophecy. According to verse 67, when Zachariah prophesied, he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Concerning God's Redemptive Move for His People unto Their Salvation

In verse 68 we have the beginning of Zachariah's prophecy: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and accomplished redemption for His people." Here we see that Zachariah's prophecy is concerning God's redemptive move for His people unto their salvation. God moved redemptively for the salvation of His people by raising Christ as a horn of salvation in the house of David in His humanity and as the rising sun from on high in His deity through God's rich mercy according to His holy covenant (vv. 68-73, 76-79). Zachariah's prophecy brings in more light concerning the divine-human Person and the saving work of the Man-Savior than Elizabeth's blessing brings in, yet it still bears an Old Testament color in the Old Testament style and flavor, just as that borne by Mary's praise and Elizabeth's blessing.

Zachariah's prophecy concerns God's move. This is the move of God's redemption for His people resulting in their salvation. By raising up Christ as a horn of salvation and as the rising sun, God's redemptive work results in the salvation of His people.

In 1:69 Zachariah says, "And raised a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant." This horn of salvation is Jesus the Savior, who came out of the house of David (Jer. 23:5-6). A horn signifies fighting power. Hence, the horn of salvation is the fighting power of God's

salvation in the house of David. The phrase "the house of David" indicates that this salvation is in the humanity of the Man-Savior.

In verse 70 we see that the raising up of the horn of salvation was according to what God spoke "through the mouth of His holy prophets from of old." This refers to God's faithfulness in keeping His word.

After speaking of Christ in His humanity, Zachariah goes on to speak of Him in His deity: "Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun from on high shall visit us, to appear to those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (vv. 78-79). Jesus the Savior is the dawning sun to the dark age. His coming ended the night of the Old Testament and began the day of the New Testament. As the fruit in Elizabeth's blessing (v. 42), He is life to us (John 14:6); as the sun in Zachariah's prophecy, He is the light to us (John 9:5; Matt. 4:16). As such a One, He is the Accomplisher and the center of God's redemption for His people's salvation.

In 1:78 Zachariah speaks of the Lord as the rising sun from on high. Whereas the horn of salvation is from the house of David, the rising sun is from on high, that is, from God. This means that it is in His deity that the Lord is the rising sun from on high.

When we compare Zachariah's word in verse 69 with that in verse 78, we see that he speaks concerning Christ's dual Person. He speaks concerning His humanity and His deity. In His humanity Christ is the horn of salvation raised up by God in a human house, the house of David. In His deity He is the rising sun from the heavens. The Lord, therefore, is both Man and God. As Man, He is the horn of salvation; as God, He is the rising sun. God's redemptive work for the salvation of His people is accomplished by raising up Christ in the two aspects of the horn of salvation and the rising sun.

God's redemptive work is also through His mercy according to His holy covenant. Regarding this, Zachariah

says, "To show mercy to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father" (vv. 72-73). Here Zachariah says that God remembered His covenant. This refers to God's faithfulness in keeping His word, which was made His covenant by His oath.

God's covenant is enacted upon His promise (Heb. 8:6). A promise is a common, ordinary word, a word without confirmation. In the Old Testament, after God made a promise, He sealed it with an oath. He swore by His Godhead to confirm His promise, by His oath thus making the promise His covenant.

In verses 74 and 75 Zachariah goes on to say, "To grant us that, having been delivered out of the hand of our enemies, we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days." Literally, the word rendered "serve" in verse 74 means to serve as priests. This service will be in holiness and righteousness. Holiness is mainly toward God, and righteousness is mainly toward men. This Gospel stresses the humanity of Jesus. Hence, it singles out holiness and righteousness here as the main characteristics of human behavior toward God.

In verses 76 and 77 Zachariah prophesies concerning his own son, the forerunner of the Man-Savior: "And you also, young child, shall be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in forgiveness of their sins." The "Lord" in verse 76 is Jesus the Savior (1:17; Mal. 3:1).

Zachariah prophesied that the forerunner would go before the Lord to prepare His ways. The angel had told Zachariah that his son would turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God and "prepare for the Lord a people made ready" (Luke 1:16-17). He would prepare the way of the Lord by changing people's minds, turning their minds toward the Lord and making their hearts right, thus causing every part of their hearts to be straightened by the Lord through repentance so that the Man-Savior could enter into them to be their life and take possession of them.

Bringing in More Light concerning the Divine-Human Person and the Saving Work of the Man-Savior

Zachariah's prophecy brings in more light concerning the divine-human Person and the saving work of the Man-Savior than is found in the blessing of Elizabeth or the praise of Mary. If we compare Elizabeth's blessing, Mary's praise, and Zachariah's prophecy, we shall see that Zachariah's prophecy sheds more light concerning God's move on earth than is shed by either Elizabeth's blessing or Mary's praise. In this prophecy we have a revelation of Christ in His divine-human Person and His saving work.

HIS FORERUNNER'S YOUTH

Luke 1:80 speaks concerning the youth of the Man-Savior's forerunner: "And the young child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his presentation to Israel." This verse mentions two things: that the forerunner became strong in spirit and that he was in the wilderness until the day he was presented to Israel.

The forerunner's mother and father were both filled with the Holy Spirit (vv. 41, 67). Hence, it was easy for their child to grow and become strong in his spirit, with the result that he lived in the wilderness. For him to grow and become strong in spirit means that he was with God and for God. For him to live in the wilderness was to be away from man's culture and religion so that God might have a free and clear way to use him as the forerunner of the Savior.

As one who was born a priest, John, like Samuel, should have spent much time in the temple. However, as a New Testament Nazarite, John lived in the wilderness, not in the temple. The wilderness is a place without culture, tradition, or religion. By living in the wilderness, John cut himself off from everything of his background. He was a Jew, but he did not live as a Jew. He was a priest, but he did not live as a priest. On the contrary, the Lord's forerunner lived as an uncultured person.

We know from Matthew 3:3 that the forerunner of the Man-Savior began his ministry in the wilderness. This implies that God intended His New Testament economy to begin in an absolutely new way. Therefore, John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea (Matt. 3:1).

As the initiation of God's New Testament economy, this preaching was not done in the holy temple within the holy city, where the religious and cultured ones worshipped God according to their scriptural ordinances. Rather, it began in the wilderness, in an uncultured way, not keeping any regulations of the old way. This indicates that the old way of the worship of God according to the Old Testament was repudiated, and a new way was about to be brought in.

The word "wilderness" in Luke 1:80 and Matthew 3:1 and 3 indicates that the new way of God's New Testament economy is contrary to religion and culture. It also indicates that nothing old was left, and something new was about to be established.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIX

THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMANITY WITH HIS DIVINITY

(4)

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-52

In this message we shall consider the birth and youth of the Man-Savior. His birth is described in 2:1-20, and His youth, in 2:21-52.

HIS BIRTH

In the Reign of Caesar Augustus

Luke 2:1-3 says, "Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus for all the inhabited earth to be enrolled. This first enrollment took place when Quirinius governed Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city." Augustus Caesar, the second of the Caesars, was the successor of Julius Caesar. It was during the reign of Caesar Augustus that the Lord Jesus was born.

A decree went out from Caesar Augustus for all the inhabited earth to be enrolled. This was sovereign of God, as mentioned in Proverbs 21:1. By this enrollment Mary and Joseph were brought from Nazareth to Bethlehem so that the Savior might be born there for the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the place of His birth (Micah 5:2; John 7:41-42).

At Bethlehem

Luke 2:4-6 say, "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to David's city, which is called Bethlehem, because he was out of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, who

was espoused to him and was pregnant." The house and family of David were the royal house and family in line to inherit the throne of David (3:23-31; 1:32; see Matt. 1:6-16). Apart from the decree of Caesar Augustus, it might not have been possible for Joseph and Mary to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Such a move was necessary in order for Christ to be born in Bethlehem to fulfill the prophecy in the Old Testament.

Laid in a Manger

Verse 7 says, "And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn; and she wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." The Man-Savior's life began with a manger in the lowest estate. This beginning was due to the fact that fallen mankind was fully occupied with its own fallen activities. We may say that the manger is a symbol of the Savior's human living.

Luke presents a Man-Savior. Following the narration of His conception, Luke gives us, in this chapter, an excellent record concerning certain aspects of the Man-Savior's human life. Luke describes His genuine human birth according to the law of God's creation of man so that He might be a Man-Savior for the salvation of man. He gives an account of His physical circumcision according to the law of God's ordination (2:21-24) so that He might be the legal seed of Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14), to be the One in whom the promise of God to Abraham--"in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3)--as the gospel preached to him (Gal. 3:8), could be carried out for all the nations (Gal. 3:14). In this chapter we see the Man-Savior's human growth according to the law of human life (v. 40), so that He might be a perfect Man to express God for the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. Finally, Luke records the Lord's proper boyhood, the boyhood of the One who grew in the interest of God in relation to His deity as the Son of the Father (vv. 40-52), so that He might have the full measure of wisdom, stature, and favor with God and men.

The record in this chapter concerning the Savior's birth and youth is completely different from that in Matthew 2. What Matthew records of events that took place at the Savior's birth and during His youth constitutes striking evidence of Christ's legitimate kingship. Luke's record of the same birth and the same youth is of another category, that of events which offer strong proof of Jesus' genuine humanity. The two records cover only two of the different aspects of the Savior's wonderful status. Whereas Matthew's record testifies that Christ is the proper King prophesied in the Scriptures, Luke's record concerning the youth of Jesus proves that He is a proper man. The two are absolutely different.

Announced to the Shepherds by an Angel

The birth of the Man-Savior was announced to the shepherds by an angel as the good news of great joy to all the people (2:8-10). Verse 8 says, "And there were shepherds in the same country, living in the fields and keeping the nightwatches over their flock." Their work in shepherding the flock (which provided not only food for man but also offerings to God) and their diligence in keeping the nightwatches qualified them to be the first to receive the good news of the wonderful birth of the Savior announced by the angel. When the angel of the Lord stood by the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, they feared greatly (2:9). Literally, the Greek words rendered "feared greatly" mean feared a great fear.

In verses 10 and 11 the angel said to the shepherds, "Do not fear, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be to all the people, because a Savior was born to you today in David's city, who is Christ the Lord." This good news of great joy was announced to all people. This means that this news was announced not only to the Jewish people but to all of mankind.

In verse 12 the angel went on to say, "And this is the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." A baby in a manger, signifying smallness in lowliness, was a sign of the Man-Savior's life.

This little baby is called the mighty God in the prophecy concerning the Man-Savior (Isa. 9:6).

A Multitude of the Heavenly Army Joining the Angel and Praising God

Luke 2:13 and 14 say, "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying, Glory in the highest places to God, and on earth peace among men of His good pleasure." The exultation of the angels, who were excited by the birth of the Savior for man's salvation (see 15:7), resulted in praise to God. According to verse 14, the coming of the Savior rendered glory to God in the heavens and brought peace to men on earth. In verse 14 "men of His good pleasure" are men chosen by God according to His good pleasure (Eph. 1:5).

The praise of the heavenly army has two aspects: glory in the highest places to God and peace among men on earth. The salvation of the Man-Savior has accomplished these two matters. It has brought glory to God in the highest and peace to men on earth. Christ is for God's glory and man's peace.

Witnessed by the Shepherds and Spoken of to Others by Them

In 2:15-20 we are told that the shepherds went to Bethlehem and "found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger" (v. 16). The good news concerning the Man-Savior's birth was first announced by an angel to the shepherds. We may say that the angel preached the gospel to them. Then the shepherds, after hearing the preaching of the angel and after coming to see the little child, began to preach to others. Verse 18 says, "And all those who heard marveled concerning the things spoken to them by the shepherds." After seeing the Child Jesus, "the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken to them" (v. 20).

HIS YOUTH

Circumcised and Named

Luke 2:21 speaks of the circumcising and naming of the Lord Jesus: "And when eight days were fulfilled to circumcise Him, His name was called Jesus, the name called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb." According to the law, every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day and named on that day. The Lord Jesus was circumcised and named on the eighth day.

Presented and Adored

In 2:22-39 we have an account of the Man-Savior being presented and adored. As a Child, on the one hand, He was presented, offered, to God; on the other hand, simultaneously He was adored, praised, and worshipped by man.

Concerning the presenting of the Man-Savior, 2:22-24 says, "And when the days were fulfilled for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, even as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord, and to give a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves or two young doves." That the Man-Savior might be a proper Israelite as a proper Man before God and men, whatever was required in the law was fully fulfilled in verses 21 through 24.

Verse 24 speaks of a pair of turtledoves or two young doves. This kind of sacrifice indicates the poverty of the offerers (Lev. 12:8), which also was a characteristic of the Man-Savior's life.

Adored by Simeon

In 2:25-35 the Child Jesus was adored by Simeon. Verse 25 says, "And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him." Simeon was righteous mainly toward men and devout toward God. As such a one, he was

looking for the consolation of Israel. The Man-Savior is the consolation of God's chosen people.

Simeon's adoration of Jesus was in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was upon him (v. 25), it had been communicated to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Christ (v. 26), and he came into the temple in the Spirit (v. 27).

When Joseph and Mary "brought in the little child Jesus for them to do according to the custom of the law concerning Him" (v. 27), Simeon received Him into his arms and blessed God and said, "Now You are releasing Your slave, Master, according to Your word, in peace; because my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all the peoples, a light for revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (vv. 28-32). In verses 30 and 32 Simeon speaks of salvation and light. The Man-Savior is God's salvation to His people and also a light for the Gentiles and the glory of Israel.

In 2:34 and 35 Simeon says to Mary, "Behold, this One is appointed for the falling and rising up of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against (and a sword will even go through your own soul), so that the reasonings of many hearts will be revealed." Here we see that the Man-Savior was appointed by God to be a test to the children of Israel so that many of them would be stumbled by Him and many raised up by Him (Rom. 9:33).

The Man-Savior is also a sign, a token, spoken against, contradicted or opposed by the people who take sides with His enemy, so that the reasonings of many hearts may be revealed.

In Simeon's word the Man-Savior is revealed as the consolation of Israel, God's salvation, a light for the Gentiles, the glory of Israel, a test to Israel, and a sign opposed.

In verse 35 Simeon told Mary that a sword would even go through her own soul. This indicates that while the Man-Savior as a sign is spoken against, the suffering also goes through the inner being of the one who brings Him

forth. This is the experience of His suffering in experiencing Him.

In verse 35 Simeon also speaks of the reasonings of many hearts being revealed. What is within man's heart is easily revealed by his attitude toward Christ.

Adored by Anna

In 2:36-39 we have Anna's adoration of the Child Jesus. Verse 36 says, "And there was Anna, a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity." Anna was a widow "up to the age of eighty-four, who did not depart from the temple, serving with fastings and petitions night and day" (v. 37). Verse 38 says, "At that very hour she came up and returned thanks to God, and spoke concerning Him to all those looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Here the word "redemption" indicates that the Man-Savior is the redemption of God's people. Anna returned thanks to God for the Man-Savior and spoke concerning Him as the redemption of God's people.

In 2:21-38 we see that the Man-Savior, in order to be a proper Israelite according to the law, was circumcised, named, and offered to God. Luke 2:39 says, "And when they had finished all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth." The Man-Savior was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, and He remained there just briefly. He was raised in Nazareth, a despised city in Galilee, a despised region. Being despised was also a characteristic of the Savior's human life.

Growing in Stature of Body, Becoming Strong in Spirit Being Filled with Wisdom, and the Grace of God Being upon Him

Luke 2:40 says, "And the little child grew and became strong, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." He grew in stature of body (v. 52), and He became strong in spirit (see 1:80).

Verse 40 says that as the Man-Savior was growing, He was being filled with wisdom. This wisdom, which came from the Savior's deity (Col. 2:2-3), was revealed in proportion to the measure of His bodily growth.

Verse 40 also tells us that the grace of God was upon Him. As a Man, even Jesus needed the grace of God for His human life. He was filled with wisdom from His deity, and He needed the grace of God for His humanity.

As God, the Man-Savior did not need grace. However, as a Man He needed the grace of God. Therefore, we are told in verse 40 that the grace of God was upon Him.

As human beings, we all need God's wisdom and grace. Wisdom is related to the way of doing things, and grace, to the power, the ability, to carry out those things. In our living we first need the way to do a particular thing; then we need the power to do it. Wisdom is the way, and grace is the power. We need wisdom in order to have the proper way. However, wisdom itself is not enough. We also need grace. If we do not have grace, we shall not have the power, strength, or energy to carry out a certain matter in the proper way. If we have wisdom without grace, we shall be disappointed because we shall not be able to fulfill our responsibility. But we may have God's wisdom for our way and God's grace for our power, strength, and energy. The Man Jesus lived in God's wisdom and grace.

Caring for God's Interest at the Age of Twelve and Subjecting Himself to His Parents

In 2:41-51 we see that the Lord Jesus cared for God's interest at the age of twelve and also subjected Himself to His parents. Verse 42 says, "And when He became twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the feast." At the age of twelve, a boy was called by the Jews "son of the law," and first incurred legal obligation (Alford). The number twelve also signifies eternal perfection in God's administration. Hence, "twelve years old" indicates that what the Lord did here was perfectly related to God's administration.

This verse says that they went up "according to the custom of the feast." This custom was ordained by God for one to be a legal male in Israel (Deut. 16:16).

According to verses 43 through 48, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, and His parents did not know it. When they realized that He was not with them in the caravan, they returned to Jerusalem searching for Him. When they found Him, His mother said to Him, "Child, why did You treat us like this? Behold, Your father and I are greatly distressed seeking You" (v. 48). The Lord replied, "Why is it that you were seeking Me? Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?" (v. 49). This indicates that the boy Jesus was caring for the interests of God. The words "My Father" in verse 49 point to the deity of the boy Jesus (John 5:18). In His humanity He was the son of His parents; in His deity He was the Son of God the Father.

Verse 51 says that the Lord Jesus "went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them." Here we see the subjection of His humanity to His human parents.

In 2:41-51 we again see the Lord's dual status, His status as the Son of God and the Son of Man. As the Son of God, He cared for God's interests. As the Son of Man, He was obedient in His humanity to His human parents.

Advancing in Wisdom and Stature and in Favor with God and Men

In 2:52 we have the conclusion of the section concerning the youth of the Man-Savior: "And Jesus kept advancing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men." As in verse 40, this wisdom of the Savior's deity was revealed in proportion to the measure of His growth. The Greek word for "stature" denotes not only stature as in 19:3, but also age.

We are told in verse 52 that the Man-Savior advanced in favor with both God and men. He advanced in favor with God because He was growing in the expression of God according to God's desire. He advanced in favor with men because He was growing in human virtues, which are

gracious to men. Hence, He was growing as a God-man before God and men. Both God and men were pleased with Jesus, happy with Him.

As we have pointed out, all the incidents narrated by Luke in chapter two of this Gospel are strong evidences that the Lord Jesus was a real, genuine, proper, and perfect Man. However, in chapter two of the Gospel of Matthew we have another category of events, and those events prove that the Lord Jesus was a King, a true descendant of David to inherit the throne and the kingdom. Therefore, both Matthew 2 and Luke 2 speak concerning the youth of Christ. But they reveal different aspects of His status--His status as the King and His status as a real Man. In order for Him to be the King, there was the need of certain events to prove that He was the genuine heir and successor of David's throne. In order for Him to be revealed as a real Man, there was the need of evidences to prove the genuineness of His humanity. Thus, in chapter two of Luke we have clear and strong proof that the Lord Jesus was a proper and genuine Man.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVEN

THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMANITY WITH HIS DIVINITY

(5)

Scripture Reading: Luke 3:1-22

In this message we shall consider the inauguration of the Man-Savior (3:1-22). First He was introduced by John the Baptist (vv. 1-20), and then He was baptized (v. 21) and anointed (v. 22).

As we shall see, the inauguration of the Man-Savior mainly involves His being baptized by John the Baptist and His being anointed by the Father. Actually, this inauguration is an introduction, but it is more than merely an introduction. To introduce a person does not mean to officially put him into office. But to inaugurate a person means not only to introduce him, but also to usher him officially into his office.

In the foregoing chapters, the Man-Savior was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. Through His conception, birth, and youth He was prepared as a complete Person to be our Savior in His humanity with His divinity. Now in chapter three it is necessary for Him to be introduced and ushered into His ministry. Therefore, in 3:1-22 we have a record of the inauguration of the Man-Savior. Regarding this inauguration, both John the Baptist and God the Father played a part. John did something on man's side, and the Father did something on God's side.

INTRODUCED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

Preaching the Baptism of Repentance

In 3:3-14 we see that John the Baptist came preaching the baptism of repentance. Verse 3 says that "he came into

all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins." Repentance is a matter of changing the mind, of turning the mind to the Man-Savior. Baptism is a matter of burying the repenting people, terminating them so that the Man-Savior may germinate them by regeneration (John 3:3, 5-6).

According to 3:3, the baptism of repentance was for the forgiveness of sins. The Greek word translated "for" also means unto. Repentance with baptism is for, and results in, forgiveness of sins, so that the obstacle of man's fall may be removed and man may be reconciled to God.

Luke 3:4 through 6 say, "As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, A voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. Every ravine shall be filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked places shall become straight, and the rough places smooth roads; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." In 3:4 to prepare the way of the Lord and to make His paths straight means to change people's minds, turning their minds toward the Man-Savior. It also means to make their hearts right, to straighten every part of their hearts through repentance, so that the Man-Savior may enter into them to be their life and take possession of them.

In 3:5 ravine, mountain, crooked places, and rough places are figures of speech describing the condition of men's hearts toward God and toward each other and the relationships among men (1:16-17). Both the condition of men's hearts and their relationships need to be dealt with for the way to be prepared for the Savior's coming.

Verse 6 says that all flesh will see the salvation of God. Here "flesh" refers to fallen men, and "salvation" denotes the Savior as the salvation of God.

John's Word to the Crowds

In 3:7-9 John said to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, "Brood of vipers! Who prompted you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce then fruits worthy of

your repentance, and do not begin to say among yourselves, We have Abraham for our father, for I tell you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children to Abraham. And already also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire." "Brood of vipers" in verse 7 equals "children of the Devil" in 1 John 3:10.

In verse 8 John the Baptist told the people that God was able to raise up children to Abraham out of the stones. Due to the impenitence of the Jews, both this word and the word in verse 9 have been fulfilled. God has cut them off and raised up the believing Gentiles to be children unto Abraham in faith (Rom. 11:15, 19-20, 22; Gal. 3:7, 28-29). This also indicates that the kingdom of God is constituted not of children of Abraham by birth, but of children of Abraham by faith.

In verse 9 John says that every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and cast into the fire. This fire is the fire in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15), where the unbelievers will suffer eternal perdition.

In 3:10-14 we have a record of John's word to the crowds, to the tax collectors, and to some who were serving in the military. To those of the crowd who asked him what to do, John said, "He who has two tunics, let him share with the one who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise" (v. 11). To the tax collectors who came to be baptized, John said, "Exact no more than what you have been instructed" (v. 13). To those serving in the military he said, "Extort nothing from anyone by force, nor take anything from anyone by false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages" (v. 14). What John says here is related to morality. By this we see that in his Gospel Luke emphasizes morality because his intention is to present the Man-Savior in the highest standard of morality.

Recommending the Man-Savior

In 3:15-17 we have John the Baptist's recommendation of the Man-Savior. Verse 15 says, "Now while the people were in expectation and all were reasoning in their hearts

concerning John, whether he might be the Christ." Here we see that the people were expecting to know whether John might be the Christ, the Messiah (John 1:19-27).

In verses 16 and 17 John said, "I indeed baptize you with water, but He who is stronger than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire; whose winnowing shovel is in His hand to thoroughly cleanse His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here we see that although John preached a baptism of repentance, the goal of his ministry was a wonderful Person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He did not make himself the center of his ministry, as a magnet attracting others to himself. He realized that he was only a messenger sent by Jehovah of hosts to bring people to Jesus Christ and exalt Him as the goal of his ministry.

In verse 16 John said that he baptized with water, but the One coming, the Man-Savior, will baptize people in the Holy Spirit and fire. Water signifies death and burial for the termination of repenting people; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life and resurrection for the germination of terminated people. The first was a sign of John's ministry of repentance; the latter, a sign of the Man-Savior's ministry of life. John buried the repenting people into the death-water; the Man-Savior raised them up for their regeneration in the Spirit by His resurrection life.

The death-water, pointing to and signifying the all-inclusive death of Christ, into which His believers are baptized (Rom. 6:3), buried not only the baptized people but also their sins, the world, and their past life and history (just as the Red Sea buried Pharaoh and the Egyptian army for the children of Israel--Exo. 14:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:2), and separated them from the God-forsaking world and its corruption (just as the flood separated Noah and his family from the world--1 Pet. 3:20-21).

The Holy Spirit, into whom the Man-Savior baptizes those who believe in Him, is the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:9). Hence, to be baptized in the Holy

Spirit is to be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3), into the Triune God (Matt. 28:19), and even into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13), which is joined to Christ in the one Spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). It is through baptism in such a water and in such a Spirit that the believers in Christ are regenerated into the kingdom of God, into the realm of the divine life and the divine rule (John 3:3, 5), that they may live by the eternal life of God in His eternal kingdom.

According to the context, "fire" in 3:16 and 17 is not the fire in Acts 2:3, which is related to the Holy Spirit. Rather, the fire in these verses is the fire of the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). The word spoken by John the Baptist here means that if the people will truly repent and believe in the Lord Jesus, the Lord will baptize them in the Holy Spirit so that they may have eternal life. Otherwise, the Lord will baptize them in fire, putting them into the lake of fire for eternal punishment. John's baptism was only for repentance, to usher people to faith in the Lord. The Lord's baptism is either for eternal life in the Holy Spirit or for eternal perdition in fire.

In these verses there are three kinds of baptism: the baptism in water, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the baptism in fire. The baptism in water is for repentance, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for life, and the baptism in fire is for perdition.

Luke 3:17 indicates that the Lord will gather the wheat into His barn, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Those typified by the wheat have life within. The Lord will baptize them in the Holy Spirit and gather them into His "barn" in heaven by rapture. Those typified by the chaff, like the tares in Matthew 13:24-30, are without life. The Lord will baptize them in fire, putting them into the lake of fire. "Chaff" in 3:17 refers to the impenitent Jews, whereas the tares in Matthew 13 refer to nominal Christians. The eternal destiny of both will be the same--perdition in the lake of fire (Matt. 13:40-42).

Exhorting and Bringing Good News

Luke 3:18 says, "So, with many and various things he

exhorted and brought good news to the people." The Greek word rendered "brought good news" is *euaggelizo*. This word means to evangelize, to announce good news, to declare or bring glad tidings, to preach the gospel. To bring good news of the kingdom of God (4:43) is to preach the kingdom of God as the gospel, the good news.

THE BAPTISM AND ANOINTING OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

In 3:21 and 22 we have the baptism and anointing of the Man-Savior: "Now it came about that, when all the people were baptized, and as Jesus was baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him; and a voice came out of heaven, You are My beloved Son, in You I delight." The Lord Jesus was baptized not only to fulfill righteousness according to God's ordination (Matt. 3:16), but also to allow Himself to be put into death and resurrection that He might minister not in a natural way, but in the way of resurrection. By being baptized He lived and ministered in resurrection even before His actual death and resurrection three and a half years later.

The Lord's being baptized to fulfill God's righteousness and to be put into death and resurrection brought Him three things: the open heaven, the descending of the Spirit of God, and the speaking of the Father. This should be the same with us today in our experience.

Luke 3:22 says that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Man-Savior in bodily form as a dove. Before the Spirit of God descended and came upon Him, the Lord Jesus was conceived and born of the Spirit (Luke 1:35). This proves that He already had the Spirit of God within Him for His birth. Now, for His ministry, the Spirit of God descended upon Him. This was the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1; 42:1; and Psalm 45:7 to anoint the Man-Savior and introduce Him to His people.

Luke 3:22 says that the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove. A dove is gentle, and its eyes can see only one thing at a time. Hence, a dove signifies gentleness and singleness in sight and purpose. By the Spirit of God

descending upon Him as a dove, the Lord Jesus ministered in gentleness and singleness, focusing solely on the will of God.

In 3:22 we are also told that a voice came out of heaven, saying, "You are My beloved Son, in You I delight." Whereas the descending of the Spirit is the anointing of Christ, the speaking of the Father is a testimony to Him as the beloved Son. Here we have a picture of the divine Trinity: the Son standing on earth, the Spirit descending upon the Son, and the Father speaking concerning the Son. This proves that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit exist simultaneously. This is for the accomplishment of God's economy.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE EIGHT

THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMANITY WITH HIS DIVINITY

Scripture Reading: Luke 3:21-22

In this message we shall continue to consider the inauguration of the Man-Savior (3:1-22). In His inauguration into His ministry, the Man-Savior was introduced by John the Baptist (3:1-20). Then He was baptized (v. 21) and anointed (v. 22). We need to pay particular attention to the significance of the baptism and anointing of the Man-Savior.

THE BAPTISM OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

Putting Himself Aside to Express God

The fact that John the Baptist baptized the Man-Savior with water indicates that it was necessary even for Him to be baptized. For the Lord Jesus to be baptized means that He put Himself aside. He allowed Himself to be put into death so that He might minister not in a natural way, but in the way of resurrection. Therefore, as a Man it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to put Himself aside in order that He might live God.

If we would have a proper understanding of the significance of the baptism of the Man-Savior, we need to consider further what is the highest standard of morality. The highest standard of morality is actually the result of the God-created man (Gen. 1) with the human virtues created by God plus the tree of life (Gen. 2), a tree that signifies God as life to us with all His divine attributes. What is the highest standard of morality? The highest

standard of morality is the result of the God-created man plus the tree of life.

In the man created by God there were the human virtues. These virtues are in God's image and according to His likeness. In particular, these virtues are according to God's love, light, holiness, and righteousness. According to chapter two of Genesis, this God-created man with his human virtues was placed in front of the tree of life. The tree of life signifies God as life with His divine attributes. When the tree of life is added to the God-created man, the result is a living in the highest standard of morality.

The Lord Jesus was baptized in order that He might live a human life expressing God's attributes. If we see this, we shall realize that not only does fallen man need to be set aside, but even the man created by God in His image needs to be set aside so that he may live a life that expresses God. Therefore, no matter what kind of person we may be, if we would live a life to express God, we need to be put aside.

Although the Lord Jesus was a complete and perfect Man, He needed to be put aside in order to live a life that expressed God. To be baptized simply means to be put aside, to be terminated and buried so that we may live not by ourselves but by God. If we are set aside in this way, we shall be able to live a human life with the divine attributes expressed in the human virtues.

In the Likeness of the Flesh of Sin

The Lord Jesus was a perfect Man, a Man with all the human virtues, yet He was nevertheless in the likeness of the flesh of sin. Of course, the Lord Jesus did not have the nature of fallen mankind; however, He did possess the likeness, the outward form or appearance, of fallen mankind. In Romans 8:3 Paul says that Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin. He did not have the nature of sin, but He had the likeness, the appearance, the form, of the flesh of sin. It was necessary for this likeness of the flesh of sin to be judged, terminated, and buried. This was another reason for the baptism of the Man-Savior.

The Representative of Mankind

When the Lord Jesus came out to minister at the age of thirty, He was the representative of mankind in two aspects. On the one hand, He represented the God-created man; on the other hand, in appearance He represented fallen man. Have you ever realized that when the Lord Jesus came to be baptized by John, He represented the God-created man and, in outward appearance, the fallen man? We would emphasize the fact that the Lord Jesus did not have the actual nature of fallen man, but He did have the appearance of fallen man. Therefore, in actual nature He represented the God-created man, and in appearance, likeness, but not in nature, He also represented fallen man. In His actual human nature He represented the man created by God; in appearance He represented the man who had become fallen.

We have seen that fallen man certainly needs to be judged, terminated, and buried. We have also seen that even the God-created man must be set aside in order to live a life in which the human virtues express the divine attributes. For this, even a good, complete, and perfect God-created man must be set aside. This is the reason that the Lord Jesus as the God-man said in the Gospel of John that He did not do anything by Himself. In John 5:19 He said, "The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing." In John 5:30 He said again, "I can do nothing from Myself." In John 8:28 the Lord declared, "I do nothing from Myself."

In order that He might express God in His human living, at the beginning of His ministry the Lord put Himself aside through baptism. He was a perfect and complete Man, but He would not live by Himself. Instead, He lived by God the Father who was in Him. This matter is crucial, and we all need to see it.

Our Need to Be Terminated and Buried

The first aspect of the Lord's inauguration was for Him to be set aside. This principle applies to all of us in our service to God. If we would enter into a particular service

to God, we need to be set aside; that is, we need to be terminated and buried. Both as a God-created man and as a fallen man, we need to be terminated. The first aspect of the Man-Savior's inauguration into His ministry for God was for Him to be set aside. We also need to be terminated and buried in the waters of death.

THE ANOINTING OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

Immediately after the Lord Jesus was baptized, He was anointed by God: "The Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him; and a voice came out of heaven, You are My beloved Son, in You I delight" (v. 22). After John the Baptist had baptized the Lord Jesus, God the Father sent His Holy Spirit upon this baptized Man. Hence, the Spirit of God descended upon a terminated and buried Man to inaugurate Him into His living ministry for God.

The Holy Spirit in Essence and in Power

The Holy Spirit's conceiving of Jesus in 1:35 is essential, related to the divine Being, the divine Person, of Jesus. The essence of the Holy Spirit's divine element in the conception of Jesus is unchangeable and cannot be removed. However, the Holy Spirit's descending upon Jesus here is economical, related to the ministry, the work, of Jesus. The power of the Holy Spirit for the ministry of Jesus (4:1, 14, 18; Matt. 12:28) is removable according to the condition of need for it. It was in this economical way that God forsook Jesus and left Him when He was carrying the sinners' sin in dying for them on the cross (Matt. 27:46). Before the Holy Spirit in power descended upon Him, He already had the Holy Spirit in essence from His birth. Furthermore, while the Holy Spirit in power was descending upon Him, He was existing with the Holy Spirit in essence.

The Holy Spirit in Relation to the Lord's Person and Work

At this point I would like to say a further word concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus and His work. The

Lord's Person is His being, His existence, and His work is His ministry or His office. Therefore, with the Lord Jesus there is the matter of His Person and the matter of His ministry. For His Person He had the Holy Spirit as His intrinsic essence from the time of His conception. This is the Spirit for the Lord's being, for His existence. He was constituted of the Holy Spirit as the intrinsic essence of His being when He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary. Hence, He was born with the Holy Spirit as His essence. In other words, He was born with the essential Spirit for His Person, being, existence.

For thirty years the Lord Jesus lived on earth by the Holy Spirit as the intrinsic essence of His Person. Then at the age of thirty He came forth to work, to minister, to fulfill His office. For His ministry He needed the Holy Spirit in a further way, not essentially but economically. After He was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form as a dove. This was the Holy Spirit coming upon the Lord economically for the carrying out of God's economy through the Lord's ministry.

Two Aspects of the Holy Spirit

With the Lord Jesus

It is very important that we see these two aspects of the Holy Spirit--the essential aspect and the economical aspect. The essential aspect of the Holy Spirit is for the Person, the being, the existence, of the Lord Jesus. The economical aspect of the Spirit is for the Lord's work, ministry, and office.

I can testify that for more than fifty years I have been studying the Bible for the purpose of understanding these aspects of the Holy Spirit. In 1934 I was given the responsibility of editing the paper entitled *The Christian*. For that paper I wrote some articles on the two aspects of the Holy Spirit--the inward aspect for life and the outward aspect for work. However, only in recent years have I seen clearly that the inward aspect of the Holy Spirit, which we may call the indwelling of the Spirit, is a matter of the

essential Spirit, the Spirit for essence, being, existence, and that the outward aspect of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit coming upon us, is the economical Spirit for work, for service. The outward aspect is not a matter of essence for existence; it is a matter of economy related to the work and ministry we render to God and the office we fulfill.

With the Believers

In principle, both aspects of the Holy Spirit are the same with us as they were with the Lord Jesus. With Him there was the essential aspect for His Person and the economical aspect for His ministry. With us, there is also the essential aspect of the Spirit for our existence as regenerated believers, and there is the outward aspect of the Spirit for our Christian work.

For many years I was not able to understand or explain adequately why the Lord Jesus, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and who lived by the Spirit for thirty years, still needed the Spirit to descend upon Him at the time of His baptism. When He was baptized, did He not already have the Spirit within Him? Certainly He already had the Spirit inwardly. Then why did the Spirit descend upon Him? This definitely does not indicate that there are two Spirits, one who indwelt the Lord Jesus and one who descended upon Him. Since there is only one Spirit (Eph. 4:4), how could this one Spirit both indwell the Lord Jesus and descend upon Him? The answer to this question lies with understanding that with the one Spirit there are two aspects, the essential aspect and the economical aspect.

For Existence and for Ministry

Through years of study not only of the Bible but also of other writings, we have been enlightened to see the essential and economical aspects of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we have the confidence to say that the indwelling Spirit is essential; it is a matter of essence for being, for existence. The outward aspect of the Spirit is economical; it is for the fulfilling of an office and the carrying out of the ministry that accomplishes God's economy. This economical aspect is not for existence, for

being. Rather, this aspect of the Holy Spirit is for work, for ministry. Praise the Lord for these two aspects of the Holy Spirit!

In Luke 3:21 and 22 we see that the Lord Jesus as the Man-Savior was inaugurated into His office and ministry by two steps. These two steps are baptism in water and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. After the Lord Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, God the Father sent the Holy Spirit upon the Lord economically for His ministry. It was in this way that the Man-Savior was inaugurated.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE NINE

THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMANITY WITH HIS DIVINITY

(7)

Scripture Reading: Luke 3:23--4:13

In this message we shall consider the status and the test of the Man-Savior (3:23--4:13).

HIS STATUS

In 3:23-38 we see the status of the Man-Savior. Verse 23 says, "And Jesus Himself, when beginning His ministry, was about thirty years old, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Heli." Thirty was the full age for God's service (Num. 4:3, 35, 39, 43, 47).

Four Aspects of the All-inclusive Christ

The record of John's Gospel, the Gospel of the God-Savior, begins from God and comes to man (John 1:1, 14). That Gospel emphasizes His divinity in order to attest to His divine-human status. The genealogy of Luke's Gospel, the Gospel of the Man-Savior, begins from man and traces back to God (vv. 23, 38). This Gospel emphasizes His humanity to affirm His human-divine status.

Christ as the wonderful center of the Bible is all-inclusive, having many aspects. The New Testament at its beginning presents four biographies to portray the four main aspects of this all-inclusive Christ. The Gospel of Matthew testifies that He is the King, the Christ of God according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, the One who brings the kingdom of the heavens to earth. The Gospel of Mark presents Him as the Slave of God, the One who labors for God faithfully. Mark's account is most simple, for a slave does not need a detailed record. The

Gospel of Luke presents a full picture of Christ as the only proper and normal man who ever lived on earth, and thus the Savior of mankind. The Gospel of John unveils Him as the Son of God, the very God Himself, to be life to God's people. Among the four Gospels, Matthew and Luke have a record of genealogies; Mark and John do not. To testify that Jesus is the King, the Christ of God prophesied in the Old Testament, Matthew needs to show us the antecedents and status of this King, proving that He is the proper successor to the throne of David. To prove that Jesus is a proper and normal Man, Luke needs to show the generations of this Man, attesting that He is qualified to be the Savior of mankind. For the record of a slave, Mark does not need to tell us His origin. To unveil that Jesus is the very God, neither does John need to give us a human genealogy. Rather, John declares that as the Word of God He is the very God in the beginning.

Two Genealogies

In 3:23-38 the Man-Savior's genealogy is traced backwards from Jesus to Adam. Verse 38 says, "The son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God." The kingdom, of which Christ is the King, is composed of Abraham's descendants, including both his descendants in the flesh and those in faith. For this reason, the genealogy of Christ in Matthew begins with Abraham, the father of the called race, not with Adam, the father of the created race. God's kingdom is built not with the created race of Adam, but with the called race of Abraham, including both the real Israelites (Rom. 9:6-8) and the believers in Christ (Gal. 3:7, 9, 29). To prove that Jesus is a proper Man to be the Savior of mankind by relating His genealogy, Luke traces back to Adam, the first generation of mankind.

The phrase "son of God" used with respect to Adam in Luke 3:38 does not mean that Adam was born of God and possessed the life of God, just as "the son of Joseph" does not mean that Jesus was born of Joseph, but that it was

supposed that He was the son of Joseph (v. 23). Adam was created by God (Gen. 5:1-2), and God was his origin. Based upon this, it may be said that he was the son of God, even as the heathen poets considered all mankind to be the offspring of God (Acts 17:28). They were only created by God, not regenerated of Him. This is absolutely and intrinsically different from the believers in Christ being the sons of God. They have been born, regenerated, of God and possess God's life and nature (John 1:12-13; 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4).

God, Adam, Abraham, and Jesus

From Jesus (Luke 3:23) back to God are seventy-seven generations of the history of God's creation, man's fall, God's promise, and man's salvation: of God man was created (v. 38; Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7); in Adam man became fallen (v. 38; Gen. 3); through Abraham man received God's promise (v. 34; Gen. 12:1-3); and in Jesus who is Christ man is saved (v. 23; 2:10-11).

We need to be impressed with the fact that the genealogy of the Lord Jesus in Matthew begins with Abraham and comes down to Christ, whereas the genealogy in Luke traces backward from Jesus to God. In Luke's genealogy four names are especially striking: God, Adam, Abraham, and Jesus. We were created by God, we became fallen in Adam, we received God's promise in Abraham, and we were saved in Jesus who is Christ. Therefore, we were created, we became fallen, we received the promise, and we have been saved. We can praise the Lord for God, Abraham, and Jesus. After we were created by God and became fallen in Adam, we received the promise of God's salvation in Abraham. Then in Jesus, who is Christ, we have been saved. This is a summary of the genealogy of our Man-Savior.

Our Man-Savior did not come to save us merely in an objective way. Rather, He came to save us by joining Himself to us. In Him we have God joining Himself with man. This genealogy begins with a man and ends with God. How wonderful! Because the Lord's genealogy begins

with man and ends with God, passing through Abraham and Adam, it is truly unique.

We may say that the Lord's genealogy and status are also ours. We were created by God, we became fallen in Adam, we received the promise in Abraham, and we have been saved in Jesus, who is Christ. The Lord was in God, in Adam, and in Abraham. We also were in God, Adam, and Abraham, and now we are in Jesus, our Man-Savior.

HIS TEST

Led by the Spirit

In 4:1-13 we have the test of the Man-Savior. Luke 4:1 says, "And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by the Devil." Matthew 4:1 tells us that the Lord Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. After being baptized in water and anointed with the Spirit of God, Jesus as a Man moved according to the leading of the Spirit. First of all, the Spirit led the anointed Man-Savior to be tempted by the Devil. This temptation was a test to prove that He was qualified to be the Man-Savior.

The Greek word translated "Devil" is *diabolos,* meaning accuser, slanderer (Rev. 12:9-10). The Devil, who is Satan, accuses us before God and slanders us before men.

In Matthew 6:13 the Lord Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Do not bring us into trial." The Lord, however, was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness in order that He might be tempted by the Devil. The Lord Jesus was strong, and He could withstand temptation. We, on the contrary, are not able to withstand temptation at all. We should not be proud, thinking that because we have the essential Spirit and the economical Spirit we are now able to withstand temptation. Such a thought indicates that we do not know ourselves.

The Lord Jesus is the only One who can stand the temptation of God's enemy. When He was on earth, He was perfect and strong. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, who is God reaching man, led this perfect Man into temptation in order to defeat God's enemy. Through the testing of the

Man-Savior, God was able to show His enemy, Satan, the Devil, that there is a Man who can withstand temptation.

The Holy Spirit will never lead us to be tempted by the Devil, because we are not able to withstand Satan's temptation. Even though we have been regenerated and to some extent sanctified and transformed, we nevertheless are not able to withstand the temptation of the evil one. Therefore we need to pray, "O Father, do not lead me into temptation." No matter how strong we may feel, we actually are weak and cannot stand Satan's temptation. The only One in this universe with the humanity that can withstand the temptation of God's enemy is the Lord Jesus, our Man-Savior.

Standing as a Man before the Devil

According to Luke 4:3, the Devil said to the Lord Jesus, "If You are the Son of God, speak to this stone that it may become bread." Jesus replied, "It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone." The newly anointed Man-Savior had not eaten anything for forty days (vv. 1-2). Although He stood on the ground of a man, He was also the Son of God, as God the Father had declared at His baptism (3:21-22). For the Lord Jesus to accomplish His ministry, He had to defeat God's enemy, the Devil, Satan. This He had to do as a Man. Hence, He stood as a Man to confront the enemy of God. The Devil, knowing this, tempted Him to leave the standing of man and assume His position as the Son of God. Forty days before, God the Father declared from the heavens that Jesus was the beloved Son of the Father. The subtle tempter took that declaration as the ground to tempt the Lord Jesus. If the Lord assumed His position as the Son of God before the enemy, He would have lost the standing to defeat him.

To cause a stone to become bread would certainly have been a miracle. That was proposed by the Devil as a temptation. Many times the thought of having a miracle performed in certain situations is a temptation from the Devil. The Devil's temptation of the first man, Adam,

concerned the matter of eating (Gen. 3:1-6). Now his temptation of the second Man, Christ, also concerned the matter of eating. Eating is a trap used by the Devil to snare man.

The Devil tempted the Man-Savior to take His position as the Son of God. But the Lord Jesus answered by saying, "Man shall not live on bread alone." This indicates that He stood in the position of man to deal with the enemy. The demons addressed Jesus as the Son of God (Matt. 8:29), but the evil spirits do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh (1 John 4:3), because in confessing Jesus as a Man they admit they are defeated. Although the demons confess Jesus as the Son of God, the Devil does not want people to believe He is the Son of God, because in so believing they will be saved (John 20:31).

Worshipping and Serving God Only

Luke 4:5-7 says, "And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in a moment of time. And the Devil said to Him, To You I will give all this authority and their glory, because to me it has been delivered, and to whomever I want I give it. If You therefore worship before me, it shall all be Yours." The Devil told the Lord Jesus that the kingdoms of the inhabited earth had been delivered to him. This must have taken place in the preadamic age. The Devil's word here indicates that when God anointed the Archangel to be the head of the preadamic age (Ezek. 28:13-14), the authority and glory of the kingdom of the earth must have been given to him. The Lord's word in John 12:31 confirms this. After Satan rebelled against God and became God's enemy, he was judged by God (Isa. 14:12-15), but the full execution of God's judgment upon him will not be completed until the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:7-10). Hence, before that time he still has authority over the kingdoms of the earth. He tempted the Lord Jesus by offering this authority and its glory to Him. His evil offer was rejected by God's Christ, but it will be accepted by the Antichrist, the man of lawlessness (2 Thes. 2:3-4), at the

end of this age (Rev. 13:4) to execute his evil wiles against God.

In Luke 4:8 we have the Lord's answer to the Devil's temptation: "It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone you shall serve." The Man-Savior defeated the Devil by standing on the ground of man to worship and serve God only. To worship or serve anything other than God for gain is always the Devil's temptation to secure worship.

Refusing to Demonstrate That He Is the Son of God

In Luke 4:9-11 we have the Devil's third temptation of the Man-Savior: "And he led Him into Jerusalem and set Him on the wing of the temple, and said to Him, If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, To His angels He will give a charge concerning You to protect You, and, On their hands they will lift You up, lest at any time You strike Your foot against a stone." But Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (v. 12).

This temptation is related to religion. The Devil tempted the Man-Savior to demonstrate from the wing of the temple that He is the Son of God. But there was no need for the Lord Jesus to do this. This was a temptation to show that as the Son of God He was able to act miraculously. The thought of doing things miraculously in religion is a temptation of the Devil.

An Indication of the Highest Standard of Morality

In the Gospel of Luke the sequence of the temptations is different from that in the Gospel of Matthew. The sequence in Luke is related to the highest standard of morality. Furthermore, in Luke the temptation to worship the Devil in exchange for the kingdoms of the earth is given in more detail. This also indicates the highest standard of morality.

Suppose you were offered all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth with their authority and glory. What would you do? I do not think any of us would be able to resist this temptation. However, the Man-Savior, the One

who lived in the highest standard of morality, could not be seduced or moved by anything. Only a life in the highest standard of morality, that is, a life in which the divine attributes are expressed in the human virtues, can withstand such a temptation. I mention this to point out again that Luke's record continually emphasizes the highest standard of morality.

The Devil Leaving the Man-Savior

In 4:1-13 the Man-Savior stood against the tempter and won the victory. The tempter was defeated and left Him. Concerning this, 4:13 says, "And when the Devil had concluded every temptation, he went away from Him until an opportune time." This indicates that the Devil would seek for another time and would come back to tempt Him again and again at any time he saw fit (Matt. 16:22-23; John 8:40; Luke 22:53; John 6:70-71). The Devil went away from the Lord Jesus, but he did not leave Him permanently. Instead, he went away until an opportune time.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TEN

THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMANITY WITH HIS DIVINITY

(8)

Scripture Reading: Luke 3:21-22; 4:1-13

SOME OF THOSE INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

The Archangel Gabriel

In the first three and a half chapters of the Gospel of Luke we see that two angels and a number of human beings were involved in the preparation of the Man-Savior. In 1:30-35 we have the prophecy of the archangel Gabriel, who came to Mary and told her that God intended that she conceive the Man-Savior. In that prophecy Gabriel spoke of four matters concerning the coming Man-Savior. First, Gabriel said that the Man-Savior would be called Jesus (1:31), which means Jehovah the Savior, or the salvation of Jehovah. Second, Gabriel indicated that the coming Man-Savior would be called Son of the Most High (v. 32), a title that refers to His deity. Third, Gabriel said, "The Lord God will give to Him the throne of David His father" (v. 32). Here we see that in His humanity the coming Savior was to be a descendant of David. Fourth, the archangel Gabriel refers to the coming Savior as "the holy thing" which is to be born and who will be called Son of God (v. 35). Therefore, according to Gabriel's word, the Man-Savior is Jesus, the Son of the Most High, a descendant of David, and the holy thing.

Elizabeth

In 1:42 and 43 we have part of Elizabeth's blessing, a blessing by the Holy Spirit. In these verses Elizabeth says,

"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And how can this be, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Here Elizabeth speaks of the Man-Savior as the fruit of Mary's womb and as the Lord. The "fruit" refers to His humanity, and "Lord" refers to His deity.

Zachariah

Baptist, we have three matters concerning the Man-Savior. In 1:69 Zachariah speaks of Him as a "horn of salvation for us in the house of David." Then in 1:78 he speaks of Him as "the rising sun from on high" that shall visit us. In verse 76 Zachariah also refers to the Man-Savior as the Lord. In the prophecy of Zachariah, the father of John the The horn of salvation refers to the Lord's humanity; the rising sun from on high denotes His divinity. Zachariah knew that his son, John, would prepare the way for this One, who is the Lord.

Another Angel

In 2:11 we have the angel's announcement at the birth of the Man-Savior: "A Savior was born to you today in David's city, who is Christ the Lord." In the angel's announcement the Man-Savior is mentioned as being the Savior, Christ, and the Lord.

Simeon

More aspects of the Man-Savior are revealed in Simeon's adoration of Him. In 2:25, 30-32 and 34 we see that the Man-Savior is revealed as the consolation of Israel, God's salvation to all peoples, a light for the Gentiles, the glory of Israel, a test to Israel, and a sign spoken against.

Anna

Finally, we have Anna's adoration. In her adoration there is mention of the Man-Savior as the redemption of God's people (2:38).

Matters Related to the Man-Savior

In the word spoken by the archangel Gabriel,

Elizabeth, Zachariah, the angel who announced the Lord's birth, Simeon, and Anna we have seventeen matters related to the Man-Savior: Jesus, the Son of the Most High, the descendant of David, the holy thing, the fruit of the womb, the Lord, the horn of salvation, the rising sun, the Savior, Christ, the consolation of Israel, God's salvation, a light for the Gentiles, the glory of Israel, a test to Israel, a sign spoken against, and the redemption of God's people. When we consider all these aspects of the Man-Savior, we see that He is not only both God and man, but everything God intended to give to His people and do for them.

If we read carefully the first three and a half chapters of the Gospel of Luke, we shall see that the preparation of the Man-Savior involved two angels and at least five human beings. The first of the angels was the archangel Gabriel. Gabriel is noted for bringing good news to God's people. Gabriel brought good news not only in Luke, but also in Daniel, where he spoke concerning the seventy weeks (Dan. 9:24-27). The second angel was the one who made the announcement to the shepherds concerning the birth of the Man-Savior. It is possible that this one who made the announcement was also Gabriel. However, it is my belief that it was a different angel who announced the Lord's birth.

Joseph

The five people involved in the preparation of the Man-Savior were Zachariah, Mary, Elizabeth, Simeon, and Anna. We may also mention Joseph, who played a part in the preparation of the Man-Savior. It was he who brought Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

All these people were righteous and holy, living a life according to God's written Word. Mary and Joseph were young, and Zachariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, and Anna were elderly. Here we see that different kinds of people were involved in the preparation of the Man-Savior. I encourage you to study these three and a half chapters of Luke again and pay attention to the different aspects of the Man-Savior revealed in them.

GOD'S INTENTION TO HAVE A GOD-MAN

The Man Created by God

In the Gospel of Luke we see the kind of man God intended to have in Genesis 1 and 2. This means that God's intention was to have a God-man. In Genesis 1 we have the man created by God in His image. For man to be created in God's image means that man is created according to God's attributes. God is love and light, and He is also holy and righteous. Love, light, holiness, and righteousness are God's attributes, and God created man according to these attributes. However, the man created by God in Genesis 1 merely bore God's image. He did not have God within him. Hence, he was merely a God-created man; he was not yet a God-man.

The Tree of Life

Because God wanted the man created by Him to become a God-man, after creating man God placed him in front of the tree of life. The tree of life denotes God. God's intention was that the man created by Him would receive Him, as signified by the tree of life, and thereby become a God-man.

In Genesis 1 we have the man created by God. In Genesis 2 there is the indication that God wanted the man created by Him to receive Him by partaking of the fruit of the tree of life. However, the created man failed in that he did not receive the tree of life. Because man did not partake of the tree of life, he remained simply a God-created man.

The Failure of the God-Created Man

In Genesis 3 the enemy, the tempter, came in to tempt the man God had created. Because man had not become a God-man, because he did not actually have God within him, he was not able to withstand the enemy's temptation. The reason Adam could not withstand the temptation was that he was merely a God-created man, not a God man. It is very important for us to see this.

The Man Equipped by God and with God

In Genesis 1 and 2 we have a God-created man, a man who was not able to withstand the temptation of God's enemy. If we were Adam and if we knew what we know today, it may be that we would have partaken of the tree of life immediately in order to equip ourselves with the Triune God. God Himself is man's equipment. Once we become equipped with the Triune God by partaking of the tree of life, we become a God-man.

As the God-man, the Lord Jesus did not wait for the tempter to come to Him. Rather, led by the Spirit, the Lord went out to meet the tempter. In Genesis 3 the tempter came to an unequipped man. But in Luke 4 the equipped Man went out to meet the tempter.

In Genesis 3 the God-created man was not equipped by God and with God. Instead, he was a man without God as his equipment. At this point I would refer you to Paul's word concerning the armor of God: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the Devil" (Eph. 6:11). To put on the armor of God simply means to put on God as our armor, that is, to equip ourselves with God. In Ephesians 6 the church as the corporate new man is equipped with God as his armor. Every piece of this armor is an attribute of God.

In contrast to Adam, who did not equip himself with God, the Lord Jesus was born a God-man. Because He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, He had the essence of God. In His very being He had the divine essence as His element. For thirty years He lived in this divine essence. He was conceived of this essence, He was born of this essence, and He grew in this essence and lived by it. How marvelous! The Lord was not only full of God--He was God. Because He was God in man, He was the God-man.

When the Lord Jesus came forth to minister at the age of thirty, He denied Himself and was baptized. When Adam was in the garden, he did not deny himself. He did not set himself aside. This was one reason Adam failed.

When the Lord Jesus set Himself aside at the time of His baptism, the economical Spirit descended upon Him to

anoint Him. As a result, He was a Person both essentially of God and economically for God. He was a Person saturated with God Himself essentially and anointed with God economically. Inwardly, He had God as His intrinsic element, and outwardly He was covered with God as His power. The Man-Savior was full of God inwardly and clothed with God outwardly. As such a Person, He was equipped and ready to fight against God's enemy and defeat him.

Instead of waiting for the enemy to come to Him, the Lord Jesus, being led of the Spirit, went to the place where the enemy was. The enemy came to the garden to attack Adam, but Jesus went to the wilderness to attack the enemy. When He was led by the Spirit to the wilderness, He was full of God essentially and economically. Thus, He was ready and equipped to deal with the enemy. He went into the wilderness as a warrior and, in the highest standard of morality, He defeated Satan.

When the Lord Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil, He was the highest kind of man. Not only was He a man created by God; He was also a man equipped with God. He was a God-man, the One in the highest standard of morality.

The One in the Highest Standard of Morality

This morality is a matter of having the human virtues strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes. When the human virtues created by God are strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes, that is the highest standard of morality. God is expressed in the living that is according to the highest standard of morality. If we understand this matter, we shall understand the basic and crucial principle followed by Luke in writing his Gospel.

The living in the highest standard of morality is the underlying principle in the Gospel of Luke. In this Gospel we see the Lord Jesus as the God-equipped Man living a life to express God. Because He expressed God, He lived in the highest standard of morality.

This highest standard of morality revealed in the

Gospel of Luke is much higher than the morality taught in any kind of philosophy. Confucius, for example, taught morality, but what he taught was not the highest standard of morality. On the contrary, at most, it was a matter of the development of the human virtues. There was no strengthening or enriching of the human virtues with the divine attributes.

In order to be strengthened and enriched in our human virtues with the divine attributes, we need to have God within us essentially, and we need to have God upon us economically. This means that we need to be born of God in order to possess God's essence. We also need to be anointed with God in order to have Him as our power. When we have been born of God to have His essence and have been anointed by Him to have Him as our power, then we become a God-man, ready to live in the highest standard of morality. In this kind of living the human virtues are strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes.

Qualified to Carry Out His God-given Ministry

In 4:1-13 we see that the fully equipped Man-Savior was led by the Spirit to the wilderness where He faced the tempter and defeated him. His victory qualified Him to carry out His God-given ministry. For this reason, from 4:14 He began to minister. The preparation of the Man-Savior, therefore, was completed in His being tested. After gaining the victory over the Devil's temptation, He was fully prepared and equipped to carry out the ministry God had given Him.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE ELEVEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 4:14-44

In this message we shall consider 4:14-44. These verses begin the third major section of the Gospel of Luke. The first section is the introduction (1:1-4), and the second concerns the preparation of the Man-Savior in His humanity with His divinity (1:5--4:13). The third section, which is quite lengthy, covers the ministry of the Man-Savior in His human virtues with His divine attributes (4:14--19:27). In 4:14--9:50 we have the ministry of the Man-Savior in Galilee. Then from 9:51--19:27 we have a record of His ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S HUMAN VIRTUES AND DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The ministry of the Man-Savior was in His human virtues with His divine attributes. We have seen that the preparation of the Man-Savior was in His humanity with His divinity. The conception, birth, and growth of the Man-Savior were all in His humanity with His divinity. After undergoing a full preparation, He began to minister. Like His preparation, His ministry was in His humanity with His divinity. In particular, His ministry was not only in His humanity but in His human virtues, and not only with His divinity but also with His divine attributes. The Man-Savior ministered in His human virtues with His divine attributes.

The Case of a Sinful Woman

As a help in understanding the expression "in His human virtues with His divine attributes," let us use some cases in the Gospel of Luke as illustrations. In 7:36-50 a sinful woman came into the home of a Pharisee who had invited the Lord Jesus to eat with him. As we read the account of this incident, we see that Jesus, the Man-Savior, conducted Himself in His human virtues. He was not at all bothered by that sinful woman, even when "she began to wet His feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hair of her head" and when "she kissed His feet affectionately and anointed them with the ointment" (v. 38). If we had been the Lord Jesus, we probably would have been troubled by the behavior of this woman. We might have said to her, "Don't you know that I am a guest in this house? Can't you see that I am eating?" However, to act in that way would be to fail to act in the proper human virtues. In this situation the Man-Savior was very kind and patient, realizing that this woman had been convicted of her sins.

He was also merciful. People often speak about love, but rarely about mercy. Mercy, however, is more tender than love. To be merciful is to sympathize with others in their poor condition and low estate.

In addition to exercising kindness, patience, and mercy toward the woman, the Lord Jesus also exercised His understanding. Often we fail to understand others, but the Lord Jesus was very understanding in the case of this woman. Furthermore, He was wise and loving.

Perhaps you are wondering what divine attributes are expressed in 7:36-50. First, here we have the divine forgiveness (7:47-48). God is the only one who can grant forgiveness of sins. He alone is qualified to forgive sins. Therefore, forgiveness is one of the divine attributes.

In 7:50 the Lord Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." The giving of peace is also a divine attribute. God is the only one who can give inner peace.

In 7:36-50 we see the Man-Savior in the house of a Pharisee acting in His human virtues with His divine

attributes. He could behave in such a manner because He was the God-man. We may say that He was a man equipped by God and with God. He possessed all the human virtues created by God, and He also had the divine attributes. Hence, He acted in the highest standard of morality, for His human virtues expressed His divine attributes.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The Man-Savior's human virtues and divine attributes are also revealed in the parable of the good Samaritan (10:25-37). The good Samaritan signifies the Man-Savior. It is easy to see the human virtues of the Samaritan, but where in this parable do we see the divine attributes? The Lord's divine attributes are seen in the Samaritan's bringing the wounded one to an inn. "And on the next morning, taking out two denarii, he gave them to the innkeeper and said to him, Take care of him; and whatever you spend in addition, when I return, I will repay you" (10:35). Here we see something of the Lord's divine attributes. Who besides God can do things in such an unexpected, unanticipated way? If this One were not God, how could He have spoken these words to the innkeeper? The Lord's doing the unexpected may be considered an expression of His divine attributes.

The Lord's Word to the Thief

The Lord also acted in His human virtues with His divine attributes when He was on the cross. The thief said to Him, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (23:42). The Lord replied, "Truly I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (v. 43). Here we see the human virtues expressing the divine attributes. In the Lord's word to the thief we see not merely the human virtues, but also the divine attributes manifested in the Lord's human virtues. Although He was a man, He was filled with all the divine attributes. Therefore, He could act in His human virtues with His divine attributes. These illustrations should help us understand how the Lord

ministered in His human virtues with His divine attributes.

PROCLAIMING THE JUBILEE OF GRACE

Luke 4:14 and 15 say, "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee; and news concerning Him went out through all the surrounding country. And He was teaching in their synagogues, being glorified by all." The Spirit in verse 14 is the Holy Spirit who descended upon the Lord Jesus at the time of His baptism for the accomplishment of His ministry. Therefore, He had the Holy Spirit both essentially for His being and economically for His ministry.

Teaching in the Synagogues

According to verse 15, the Lord was teaching in the synagogues. A synagogue is a meeting place where the Jews read and learn the Holy Scriptures (Acts 13:14-15).

Man's fall into sin broke his fellowship with God, making all men ignorant of the knowledge of God. Such ignorance issued first in darkness and then in death. The Man-Savior, as the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5), came to Galilee, the land of darkness, where people were sitting in the shadow of death, as a great light to shine upon them (Matt. 4:12-16). His teaching released the word of light to enlighten those in the darkness of death so that they might receive the light of life (John 1:4). The teaching of the Man-Savior was to bring people out of satanic darkness into the divine light (Acts 26:18).

The Spirit of the Lord upon the Man-Savior

The Man-Savior came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. According to His custom, He entered on the Sabbath day into the synagogue and stood up to read. The book, the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, was handed to Him. Then He opened the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and

recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (4:18-19). After the Lord closed the book and gave it back to the attendant, He sat down. Then He said to the people, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your ears" (v. 21).

Here we see that the Spirit of the Lord was upon the Man-Savior because God had anointed Him to bring good news to the poor. The Greek word rendered "bring good news" is *euaggelizo,* which means to evangelize, to announce good news. To preach the gospel was the first commission of the Savior as God's anointed One, the Messiah. The good news was to be preached to the poor, that is, to the poor in heavenly, spiritual, and divine things (12:21; Rev. 3:17; see Matt. 5:3).

Luke 4:18 speaks of captives, the blind, and those who are oppressed. The captives are prisoners of war, as exiles and prisoners under Satan's bondage (Isa. 42:7). The blind include those who are physically and spiritually blind (Zeph. 1:17; John 9:39-41; 1 John 2:11; Rev. 3:17). Recovery of sight is related to release from the power of Satan (Acts 26:18). The Greek word translated "oppressed" comes from a verb meaning to break in pieces (Matt. 12:20). Those who are oppressed are those oppressed under Satan in sickness or in sin (Luke 13:11-13; John 8:34).

The Acceptable Year of the Lord

In Luke 4:19 we see that the Man-Savior was anointed to "proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." This acceptable year is the New Testament age typified by the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17), the time when God would accept the returned captives of sin (Isa. 49:8; 2 Cor. 6:2) and when the oppressed under the bondage of sin would enjoy the release of God's salvation.

In 4:18 and 19 the Man-Savior proclaims the jubilee of grace. This indicates that He began His ministry by proclaiming the jubilee of grace. The term "the acceptable year of the Lord" denotes the jubilee described in Leviticus 25. According to this chapter, the year of jubilee was a

time when slaves were released and property was returned to the rightful owners. Hence, the year of jubilee was a year of release, freedom, and return of lost property. Those who had been sold into slavery were released during the year of jubilee.

Words of Grace

Luke 4:22 says, "And all were bearing witness to Him and marveling at the words of grace proceeding out of His mouth; and they were saying, Is this not Joseph's son?" The words of grace refer to the words in verse 21, including the words in verses 18 and 19, which are words of the gospel. Verse 22 indicates that those in the synagogue knew the Savior according to the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16), not according to the Spirit (Rom. 1:4).

Although the people marveled at the words of grace that proceeded out of the Lord's mouth, it is not likely that they understood these words. This was the actual beginning of the dispensation of grace. The dispensation before that day was the dispensation of law. But in Luke 4 the divine jubilee, the jubilee of grace, was proclaimed by the Man-Savior.

In 4:23-27 the Lord Jesus warned the people using the case of the widow of Sarepta, a case of feeding, and the case of Naaman of Syria, a case of cleansing. The case of the widow of Sarepta was a case of feeding, signifying the Lord's feeding of the hungry (John 6:33, 35). The case of Naaman was a case of cleansing, signifying the Lord's cleansing of sinners (1 Cor. 6:11). The Savior's mentioning of these two cases implies that His gospel would turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:45-48). This does not mean that His standard of morality was unable to cover the Jews; on the contrary, it indicates their hardhearted rejection of Him.

Luke 4:28-30 says, "And all in the synagogue were filled with anger when they heard these things; and they rose up and cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down the cliff. But He, passing through their midst, went away." It certainly was not reasonable for those in the synagogue to be filled with anger.

Although they marveled at the words of grace proceeding out of the Lord's mouth, they were nevertheless filled with anger. They rose up, cast Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill. But He passed through their midst and went away. This shows His steadiness under the threatening of His opposers.

CARRYING OUT HIS FOURFOLD COMMISSION

In 4:31-44 the Man-Savior carried out His fourfold commission. This commission included teaching (vv. 31-32), casting out demons (vv. 33-37, 41), healing diseases (vv. 38-40), and preaching the good news of the kingdom of God (vv. 42-44). When the crowds tried to detain the Lord Jesus, He said, "I must bring good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this I was sent" (v. 43). As in verse 18, the Greek word translated "bring good news" is *euaggelizo*. This word means evangelize, to announce good news, to declare (bring) glad tidings, to preach the gospel. Hence, to bring good news of the kingdom of God is to preach the kingdom of God as the gospel, the good news.

The kingdom of God is the Savior (17:21) as the seed of life, sown into His believers, God's chosen people (Mark 4:3, 26), and developing into a realm which God may rule as His kingdom in His divine life. Its entrance is regeneration (John 3:5), and its development is the believers' growth in the divine life (2 Pet. 1:3-11). It is the church life today, in which the faithful believers live (Rom. 14:17), and it will develop into the coming kingdom as an inheritance reward (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5) to the overcoming saints in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6). Eventually, it will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God, an eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God's eternal life for all God's redeemed to enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5, 14). Such a kingdom, the kingdom of God, is what the Savior preached in Luke 4 as the gospel, the good news.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWELVE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(2)

Scripture Reading: Luke 4:14-21, 31-44; 5:1-11

PROCLAIMING THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD

In the foregoing message we pointed out that the Lord Jesus began His ministry by proclaiming the jubilee of grace. In the word of 4:19, He proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord. This is the New Testament age typified by the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17). The year of jubilee was the fiftieth year, the conclusion of a half century. Thus, according to the book of Leviticus, at the end of every half century there was to be a year called the year of jubilee and also called the acceptable year. The acceptable year signifies the year for the Lord to accept people. In chapter sixty-one of Isaiah there is a prophecy concerning the fulfillment of this jubilee.

It is not likely that before Luke 4 the Jews understood Isaiah's word concerning the acceptable year of the Lord. One day the Lord Jesus entered into the synagogue and read from Isaiah 61 regarding the acceptable year of the Lord. The acceptable year is the jubilee of Jehovah.

The Length of the Fallen Human Life

A half century signifies the length of the fallen human life. Fifty years is the length of the entire life of a fallen person. In Psalm 90:10 Moses said that the days of our years are threescore years and ten, and by reason of

strength they may be fourscore years. According to Moses, the length of human life is seventy years. If someone is strong, he may live to the age of eighty. According to the Bible, in one sense a person's life may be regarded as beginning at the age of thirty, the age at which a priest began to function. Even the Lord Jesus was thirty years old when He began to minister (3:23). Thirty plus fifty equals eighty. Hence, a half century, fifty years, signifies the length of a person's life in the fallen nature. As the fiftieth year, the year of jubilee is the conclusion of our entire fallen life.

What happened to us in our fallen life? We lost our birthright, sold ourselves into captivity, and became slaves. We lost everything, including our birthright and our status.

A person who has not lost anything would not look forward to the year of jubilee. In fact, to such a one, the jubilee might be a suffering. But the one who has lost everything, including his land and himself, would surely look forward to the year of jubilee. When the year of jubilee came, he would rejoice at being released and recovering the right to his portion of the land.

Every Israelite was allotted a portion of the good land. The good land typifies Christ. Therefore, to lose one's right to the good land is to lose the right to enjoy Christ. Every fallen human being has lost the right to enjoy God as the tree of life and the right to enjoy Christ as the good land. Furthermore, every fallen one has sold himself to sin, the world, and Satan. In Romans 7:14 Paul said of himself, "I am fleshly, sold under sin." Even Paul had become a slave to sin.

All fallen people have lost their right to enjoy Christ and have sold themselves to negative things. But the year of jubilee indicates that we can be released from bondage and recover the right to enjoy Christ as our portion.

After the Lord Jesus, the Man-Savior, had been tested, He began to minister. At the start of His ministry He declared the jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord. This indicates that the entire New Testament age is actually a

single year, the year of jubilee, the year for Jehovah to accept fallen human beings.

The Real Gospel

The proclamation of the jubilee is the real gospel, the rich and whole gospel. A partial gospel tells people that they are sinners destined for hell, but Jesus loved them and died on the cross for them, and that if they believe in Him they will have eternal life. This is only a part of the jubilee. The jubilee is a proclamation of release from slavery and of the recovery of our spiritual birthright. This jubilee is the acceptable year of the Lord.

According to chapter four of the Gospel of Luke, the Lord Jesus proclaimed the jubilee on a particular Sabbath day in Galilee. But during the centuries that have followed, the jubilee has been neglected. Therefore, we need a recovery of the New Testament jubilee.

The Recovery of Our Portion

We have been recovered to the enjoyment of the Triune God as the tree of life and of Christ as our land, our portion. The good land is actually more mysterious than the tree of life, for the good land is the fulfillment of the tree of life. Adam did not eat of the fruit of the tree of life, but the children of Israel partook of the riches of the good land. Today we are enjoying the Triune God as the tree of life, and, even the more, we are enjoying Christ as the good land. Praise the Lord that we have an allotment of this good land! According to Colossians 1:12, this allotment is the portion of the saints. This proves that our birthright, which had been lost, has been recovered in the New Testament jubilee.

Released from Bondage

In the jubilee we also have been released from bondage. Once we were captives, but we have been released from slavery and brought back to the freedom of the glory of the children of God. This is a further indication that we are in the New Testament jubilee.

Restored to Our Original Condition

According to Leviticus 25, in the year of jubilee everyone was restored to his original condition. Since the New Testament age is the real year of jubilee, this means that God will restore us to our original condition. In Adam we became lost, and we sold ourselves to sin as slaves. But now Jesus, the Man-Savior, has come, and He has brought in the acceptable year of the Lord. This acceptable year of the Lord is, in the New Testament, the fulfillment of the Old Testament jubilee. In this year we are released, and our lost birthright is recovered, redeemed, and restored.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S FOURFOLD COMMISSION

We have emphasized the fact that the Gospel of Luke presents the Man-Savior in the highest standard of morality. The cases recorded in Luke show different aspects of the highest standard of morality. The narration of the instances in 4:38-41, 5:12-14, and 7:1-10 is according to the order of morality. For this reason the narration is different in Luke from that in Matthew 8:2-16 and Mark 1:29--2:1. The order of Mark's record, showing that Jesus is the Servant of God, is according to history. The order of Matthew's record, proving that Christ is the King of the kingdom of the heavens, is according to doctrine, with certain instances put together to present a doctrine. The order of Luke's record, revealing that Jesus is the proper man to be our Savior, is according to morality.

Teaching

In Luke 4:31-44 the Man-Savior carries out His fourfold commission: teaching, casting out demons, healing, and preaching. Verse 31 says that He came down to Capernaum and was teaching on the Sabbaths. As we have pointed out, His teaching released the word of light to enlighten those in the darkness of death (Matt 4:12-16) so that they might receive the light of life (John 1:4).

Luke 4:32 says that the people "were astounded at His teaching, because His word was with authority." As the One authorized by God, the Lord Jesus taught realities whereas the scribes taught vain knowledge without

authority or power. The Man-Savior had not only spiritual power to subdue people, but divine authority to subject them to the divine ruling.

Casting Out Demons

In 4:33-36 we have an account of the Lord's casting out of a demon. In verse 33 we are told that a man in the synagogue had a spirit of an unclean demon. This kind of spirit is different from a fallen angel. A demon is one of the spirits of the living creatures who lived in the preadamic age and were judged by God when they joined Satan's rebellion (see Life-study of Genesis Message 2). The fallen angels work with Satan in the air (Eph. 2:2; 6:11-12), and these demons, the unclean spirits, move with him on the earth. Both act evilly upon man for the kingdom of Satan. A demon's possession of a person signifies Satan's usurpation of man, whom God created for His purpose. In His ministry the Man-Savior cast out demons from possessed people so that they might be delivered from Satan's bondage (Luke 13:16), out of Satan's authority of darkness (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13), into God's kingdom.

In 4:34 the demon said, "Ah! What do we have to do with You, Jesus, Nazarene? Did You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are, the Holy One of God!" "Ah!" is an interjection of anger or dismay. The Greek word may be translated, "Let us alone." The Greek words rendered, "What do we have to do with You?" literally mean, "What to us and to You?" This is a Hebrew idiom.

Verse 35 says, "And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be quiet and come out from him! And throwing him down in the midst, the demon came out from him without harming him at all." Literally, the Greek word rendered "quiet" means muzzled.

After the Lord cast out the demon, "amazement came upon all, and they spoke to one another, saying, What is this word? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out" (v. 36). Here we see that the Man-Savior has both authority and power to cast out demons. For His ministry He had divine authority not only to teach people but also to cast out demons.

Healing

In 4:38 and 39 we have the record of the Lord's healing of Simon's mother-in-law, who had been seized with a high fever. This fever may signify a person's unbridled temper, abnormal and intemperate.

Luke 4:40 says, "And when the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases, brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He healed them." Sickness is an issue of sin and a sign of man's abnormal condition before God because of sin. Therefore, in His ministry the Man-Savior healed the sick condition of people both physically and spiritually in order to restore them to normal so that they might serve Him.

Preaching

In addition to teaching, casting out demons, and healing the sick, the Lord was also "preaching in the synagogues of Judea" (4:44). The Man-Savior's preaching was to announce God's glad tidings to miserable people in bondage (v. 43). His teaching enlightened the ignorant ones in darkness with the divine light of the truth. His preaching implied teaching, and His teaching implied preaching.

ATTRACTING THE OCCUPIED ONES

In the remainder of this message we shall consider 5:1-11, a case of the Man-Savior's attracting the occupied ones.

Luke 5:1 says, "Now it came about as the crowd pressed upon Him and listened to the word of God, that He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret." "Gennesaret" was a common name for the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:16).

Fallen Man Occupied with Making a Living

The calling of the first four disciples was a calling that

attracted the occupied ones. Human beings do not realize how much they are fallen not only in sin but also in their occupation. Our occupation is our business or means of employment, that is, our means of making a living. Today fallen human beings are occupied by their way of making their living. We may say that fallen human beings are occupied by their occupation.

Of course, it is necessary for us to work. Paul charged the believers to work for a living (2 Thes. 3:10-12). We should not rely on others to provide a living for us. This means that we should not have the kind of faith that requires others to exercise their love and take care of us. We need to have a means of employment. However, the problem is that our occupation occupies us and keeps us from God.

Human beings were created by God for Himself, but they are occupied and kept from Him by the matter of making a living. Nothing takes people away from God as much as their occupation. Consider today's world. Who is not occupied by his job or by the education in preparation for work? Although most people are busy, hardly anyone is busy with God. Instead, virtually everyone is occupied by something in place of God. The first disciples were called and attracted by the Lord not from their sinful life, but from their occupation. In particular, Peter, Andrew, James, and John were occupied with fishing.

Those who are occupied with making a living usually give excuses when invited to hear the gospel or to attend a meeting. If you invite such a one to hear the gospel, he may say that he does not have the time. If you invite an occupied person to attend the meeting of the church, he may say that he is too busy. This was the reason that, immediately after beginning to carry out His fourfold commission, the Man-Savior in 5:1-11 did something to attract certain occupied ones.

Satan's desire is to keep people occupied with making a living. This is illustrated by what Pharaoh did to the children of Israel. When Moses told Pharaoh to let God's people go, Pharaoh did his best to keep them occupied

with their labors. In a similar way, Peter, Andrew, James, and John were busy and occupied. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus came to them, attracted them, and called them.

Miracles Related to Fishing

In 5:2-1Oa we have a record of the Man-Savior's attracting some who were occupied with earning a living. This record is not found either in Matthew 4:18-22 or in Mark 1:16-20. As we read Matthew and Mark, we may wonder why Peter and the others followed the Lord when He told them to come and follow Him. Here in Luke 5 we have an additional record indicating that when the Lord Jesus called Peter, He performed a miracle related to fishing. The Lord performed a similar miracle in John 21, after His resurrection. In Luke 5 the miracle was part of the Lord's attracting the occupied ones. This miracle attracted Peter to the Man-Savior.

A few years later, after the Lord's resurrection, it seemed that Peter had nothing to do, and he announced that he was going fishing (John 21:3). Several others followed him. Because they returned to their former occupation, the Lord Jesus returned, in resurrection, to perform a second miracle related to fishing in order to attract Peter to Himself again. Therefore, twice for Peter's sake the Lord did a miracle related to fishing.

The calling of Peter in Luke 5:1-11 is related to the highest standard of morality. Verse 2 says, "He saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing the nets." The Lord then got into Simon's boat and asked him to put out a little from the land (v. 3). He taught the crowds from the boat, and when He had ceased speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch" (v. 4). Simon answered, "Master, through the whole night we toiled and took nothing; but at Your word I will let down the nets" (v. 5). Before this Simon had been brought to the Lord by his brother Andrew (John 1:40-42).

In verse 5 Simon addressed the Lord as Master. The

Greek word, a different one from that translated Master in 2:29, denotes one who exercises any kind of oversight.

Peter was a professional fisherman, the lake had an abundance of fish, and night was the proper time for fishing. Nevertheless, they did not catch anything. It must have been that the Lord exercised His sovereignty to keep the fish away. This was an exercise not of His human virtues, but of His divine attributes.

The reason the Lord exercised His sovereignty in this way was that His intention was to attract Simon and his brother. Therefore, at the proper time, the Lord commanded the fish to come near. As a result, "they enclosed a great number of fish; and their nets were tearing apart" (v. 6). Both boats were filled to the point of sinking (v. 7). "When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord!" (v. 8). We are told that "amazement had taken possession of him and all who were with him at the catch of the fish which they took" (v. 9).

The point here is that in this miracle we can see both the Lord's human virtues and His divine attributes. The human virtues express the divine attributes. This means that the Man-Savior was living a life full of the human virtues, and these virtues expressed the divine attributes. Because the Man-Savior lived in this way, Peter and the others were attracted to the Lord and followed Him.

Fishers of Men

In 5:10 the Lord Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear; from now on you will be catching men alive." This was the Lord's calling of Peter by a miracle in fishing. The Greek word for "catch" is *zogreo,* compounded of *zoos,* living and *agreuo,* to catch; hence, to catch alive, to take captive alive in war, instead of killing. The common fishermen catch fish unto death. But Peter was called by the Lord to be a fisher of men (Matt. 4:19) to catch men unto life (Acts 2:38; 11:18).

Luke 5:11 says, "And when they had brought the boats to the land, they left all and followed Him." They were

attracted by what the Lord did in His human virtues with His divine attributes.

Luke's intention in 5:1-11 is to show how the Man-Savior acted in His ministry in His human virtues with His divine attributes. This attracts people and gains them. This is the way the Man-Savior carries out His ministry.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTEEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(3)

Scripture Reading: Luke 5:1--6:11

THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF EVERY FALLEN HUMAN BEING

In 5:1--6:11 we have a record of five cases: the attracting of the occupied (5:1-11), the cleansing of the contaminated (5:12-16), the healing of the paralytic (5:17-26), the calling of the despised (5:27-39), and the breaking of the deformed sabbatical regulation for people's satisfaction and liberation (6:1-11). We should not regard these cases merely as records of what happened to different persons. Actually all these cases portray a single person.

After the Lord Jesus performed a miracle related to fishing, Peter said to Him, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord!" (5:8). Immediately following, we have the case of the cleansing of a man full of leprosy, the cleansing of a contaminated one. Peter was not only an occupied person but also a contaminated person. Spiritually speaking, the same is true of us all. Furthermore, in addition to being occupied and contaminated, we are paralyzed, despised, and under the bondage of the deformed regulations.

The cases 5:1--6:11 portray the spiritual condition of every fallen human being. Before we were saved, we were occupied. We were also lepers, sinful people, in need of cleansing. In addition, we were paralytics, those unable to

walk or do anything according to God. Therefore, we were in need of the Lord's healing.

No matter what a person's occupation may be, when he is called by the Lord and released, he immediately realizes that he is sinful. When people are busy with their occupation, they may think that they are very good. But when they are released from their occupation to follow the Lord, they realize that they are sinful. Furthermore, after they are cleansed, they realize that they are paralyzed with respect to God and the things of God. They are not able to walk in God's way. But after they are healed, they come to see that they are "tax collectors," despised persons considered to be of no value. Eventually, they understand that they are under the bondage of certain regulations and are in need of both satisfaction and liberation.

After we are freed from our occupation, cleansed from our leprosy, and healed of our paralysis, we become in the Lord a person of value, for now we have Him as the new clothing to cover us outwardly and as the new wine to fill us inwardly (Luke 5:36-39). Following this, we are released from the binding regulations. As a result, we become persons fully saved by the Man-Savior.

As we read 5:1--6:11, we should not consider these cases as separate from one another. Instead, we need to regard all these cases as describing aspects of the condition of a single person. In particular, these cases are a portrait of the spiritual condition of every fallen human being.

CLEANSING THE CONTAMINATED

Revealing the Lord's Human Virtues

In each of these cases we can see the human virtues of the Man-Savior and also the divine attributes expressed in His human virtues. Consider the case of the cleansing of the leper. Luke 5:12 says, "And it came about that as He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged Him, saying, Lord, if You will, You can cleanse me." The Lord "stretched out His hand and touched him,

saying, I am willing; be cleansed! And immediately the leprosy left him" (v. 13). In this case the Lord acts in the highest standard of morality. Here we see that the Man-Savior sympathized with the leper. According to the Old Testament, a leper was not to be touched by anyone. In order to keep others away from him, a leper was required to cry out, "Unclean, unclean!" Hence, a leper was altogether isolated. But the Man-Savior stretched forth His hand to touch this leper. The Lord's touching the leper reveals His human virtue.

Expressing the Lord's Divine Attributes

His divine attributes were expressed in the cleansing of the leper. It is impossible for any human being to cleanse a leper. Therefore, the One who cleansed this leper must be God.

In the Lord's sympathy we see His human virtue, and in the cleansing of the leper we see His divine attribute. He was the genuine God-man. As man He was filled with the human virtues, and as God He had the divine attributes that enabled Him to cleanse the man's leprosy. In this case the Lord's human virtues express His divine attributes.

According to the scriptural examples, leprosy comes from rebellion and disobedience. Miriam became leprous because of her rebellion against God's deputy authority (Num. 12:1-10). Naaman's leprosy was cleansed because of his obedience (2 Kings 5:1, 9-14). All fallen human beings have become leprous in the sight of God because of their rebellion. But the Man-Savior has come to save men from their rebellion and to cleanse them from their leprosy.

A leper, according to the law, was to be excluded from the people because of his uncleanness. No one could touch him (Lev. 13:45-46). But the Man-Savior touched the one full of leprosy. What mercy and sympathy! By His one touch, "immediately the leprosy left him."

A leper portrays a typical sinner. Leprosy is the most contaminating and damaging disease, isolating its victim both from God and men. To cleanse the leper signifies to recover the sinner to the fellowship with God and with

men. It is significant that the leper was not only healed but cleansed. The one with leprosy not only requires healing as those with other diseases; he also needs cleansing, as from sin (1 John 1:7), because of the filthy and contaminating nature of the disease.

HEALING THE PARALYTIC

In the case of the healing of the paralytic (5:17-26), we also see the Lord's divine attributes expressed in His human virtues. In 5:20 He said to the paralytic, "Man, your sins have been forgiven you!" When the scribes and Pharisees heard this, they began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (v. 21). The Lord Jesus exercised His divine authority to forgive the paralytic's sins and His divine power to heal him. But in this case we also see the exercise of the Lord's kindness, which is a human virtue. Therefore, in this case also the Lord's human virtue expresses His divine attribute.

Luke 5:24 says, "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on the earth to forgive sins--He said to the paralyzed one, To you I say, rise and pick up your cot, and go to your home." The Man-Savior was the very God incarnated, not regarding equality with God a thing to be grasped. He was outwardly in the likeness and fashion of man, but inwardly He was God (Phil. 2:6-7). He was the Man-Savior and the God-Savior as well. Hence, He had not only the ability to save sinners, but also the authority to forgive their sins. In this incident, He forgave the paralytic's sins as God, but asserted that He was the Son of Man. This indicates that He was the true God and a real Man, possessing deity and humanity. In Him, men can see both His divine attributes and His human virtues.

CALLING THE DESPISED

Matthew, a Despised Tax Collector

In 5:27-39 we have the case of the calling of a despised tax collector named Levi or Matthew. Verse 27 says, "And

after these things He went out and beheld a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office, and He said to him, Follow Me." The tax office was a tollhouse, where Matthew collected taxes for the Romans. Matthew was one of the tax collectors (Matt. 10:3), probably in a high position, a man who was condemned, despised, and abhorred by the Jews (Luke 18:11; Matt. 5:46). Yet he was called by the Man-Savior and was later chosen and appointed as one of the twelve apostles. What mercy!

Luke 5:28 says of Matthew, "And leaving all, he rose up and followed Him." It seems that this was the first time the Lord met Matthew. There must have been some attracting power with the Lord, either in His word or appearance, that caused Matthew to follow Him.

We have pointed out that the Jewish people despised the tax collectors because they were collecting taxes for the Roman imperialists. They were considered traitors, and the Jews were disgusted with them and despised them to the uttermost. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus came to one of these tax collectors and called him.

With the calling of Matthew there was no miracle. When the Lord Jesus came to Peter, He attracted him from his occupation by means of a miracle. But He did not perform a miracle when He came to Matthew. His willingness to come to Matthew was a great mercy.

The Jews stayed away from the tax collectors, regarding them as worse than lepers. Therefore, Matthew must have been surprised when the Lord Jesus came to him. Perhaps Matthew said to himself, "Who am I that this One should come to me? I am a tax collector, a despised person. Who would care for me? Yet Jesus comes to me and tells me to follow Him."

In the Lord's calling of Matthew we see the high standard of His human virtue. Perhaps the Lord said to Himself when He was about to call Matthew, "Yes, this one is a tax collector. But he is still a human being, and I will not reject him or give up on him. Rather, I shall come to him, contact him, and call him. I call not only the occupied ones, but also the despised ones."

The Man-Savior's Mercy

Luke 5:29 says, "And Levi made a great reception for Him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining at the table with them." The Lord's calling of Matthew must have touched his heart. Immediately, Matthew held a great feast in His honor.

The money used for this feast might have been gained by Matthew unrighteously. This means that the great reception held for the Lord Jesus in Matthew's house might have been financed with unrighteous money. Some of the Jews could have said, "Why does Jesus attend this feast? Doesn't He know how Matthew got the money to pay for it? Matthew extorted money from us, and now he uses this money to have a feast. This feast is not righteous."

The Lord Jesus is not only righteous; He is also merciful. According to James 2:13, "Mercy triumphs over judgment." We need to exercise mercy to those who are despised and in a pitiful condition. The Lord was merciful toward Matthew, and His mercy must have deeply moved Matthew's heart. Otherwise, he would not have prepared a feast for the Lord. Matthew must have been happy and full of rejoicing. It was an excellent opportunity for him to invite a large crowd of tax collectors and sinners to eat with the Lord Jesus. In His response to the situation, we see the human virtue of the Man-Savior.

Needing a Physician

In 5:30 the Pharisees and the scribes murmured at the Lord's disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?" The Lord Jesus replied, "Those who are healthy have no need of a physician, but those who are ill. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (vv. 31-32). Here we see that the Man-Savior ministered as a physician, not as a judge. The judgment of a judge is according to righteousness, whereas the healing of a physician is according to mercy and

grace. If the Lord had visited these pitiful people as a judge, all would have been condemned and rejected. None would have been qualified, selected, and called. But the Lord came to minister as a physician; that is, He came to heal, recover, enliven, and save.

The Lord's word here implies that the self-righteous Pharisees did not realize their need of Him as a physician. They regarded themselves as strong. Hence, blinded by their self-righteousness, they did not know that they were "ill" and in need of healing.

A New Garment and New Wine

In 5:36-39 the Man-Savior, speaking in parables, goes on to speak of a new garment and new wine. He implies that He is present to cover the despised ones with a new garment and to fill them with new wine. This new garment is Christ as our righteousness to cover us outwardly, and the new wine is Christ as eternal life to fill us inwardly. Only God can cover us with righteousness and fill us with eternal life. These are the deeds of the divine Being. Therefore, in this case also we see the divine attributes expressed in the Man-Savior's human virtues. He ministered in His human virtues with His divine attributes.

BREAKING THE DEFORMED SABBATICAL REGULATIONS

In 6:1-11 we have two cases of the Lord's breaking the deformed sabbatical regulations. He did this for the sake of people's satisfaction and liberation. Sabbath regulations were given in the Old Testament. However, the Jewish religionists misused these regulations and caused them to become deformed. Hence, when the Lord Jesus came as the Man-Savior, He cared for man, not for the deformed regulations. For the sake of man, He purposely broke the deformed sabbatical regulations.

For People's Satisfaction

The first case of breaking these regulations is recorded in 6:1-5. "It came about that on a Sabbath He was going through the grainfields, and His disciples were picking and

eating the ears of grain, rubbing them in their hands" (v. 1). Some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" (v. 2). Profaning the Sabbath was a serious matter in the eyes of the religious Pharisees. To them, it was not lawful for the Lord's disciples to pick ears of grain and eat them on the Sabbath. According to their meager knowledge of the Scriptures, they cared for the ritual of keeping the Sabbath, not for the hunger of the people. The Man-Savior, on the contrary, cared for the satisfaction of His followers.

In 6:5 the Lord said to the Pharisees, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." This indicates the Man-Savior's deity in His humanity. He, the Son of Man, was the very God who ordained the Sabbath, and He had the right to change what He had ordained concerning the Sabbath.

For People's Liberation

A second case of the Lord's breaking the deformed sabbatical regulation is found in 6:6-11. Here the Lord restores a withered hand. He said to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch out your hand! And he did, and his hand was restored" (v. 10). Exercising His compassion, the Man-Savior restored the withered hand. Here His compassion and His power to heal are a merging of His human virtue with His divine attributes. Therefore, once again His divine attributes are expressed in His human virtues. In these two instances the Lord broke the deformed sabbatical regulations for the sake of people's satisfaction and liberation. In 6:1-5 He cared for His disciples' satisfaction. In 6:6-11 He cared for the liberation of the one with the withered hand.

A PICTURE OF OUR EXPERIENCE

In 5:1--6:11 we have a composite picture of fallen human beings. A fallen person is occupied, he is a leper, he is a paralytic, he is despised, and he is under bondage. According to the record in this portion of the Gospel of Luke, such a person is attracted from his occupation by the Lord Jesus, and he is cleansed from his leprosy, healed of his paralysis, uplifted from his despised condition, and

freed from hunger and bondage. This is a picture of what has happened to us. We all can testify that we were such persons. We have been attracted away from our occupations and we have been cleansed, healed, uplifted, satisfied, and freed. This is the Man-Savior's ministry in His human virtues with His divine attributes. This matter is an underlying principle followed by Luke in writing this Gospel.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FOURTEEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(4)

Scripture Reading: Luke 6:12-49

In this message we come to 6:12-49. This portion of the Gospel of Luke covers two matters: the Lord's appointing twelve apostles (vv. 12-16) and His teaching His disciples the highest morality (vv. 17-49).

APPOINTING TWELVE APOSTLES

Luke 6:12 says, "And it came about in these days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God." On the next day, He called His disciples and chose twelve to be His apostles. The Lord Jesus prayed in order to have fellowship with God and seek God's will and pleasure concerning His ministry. The Man-Savior did not carry out His ministry by Himself in a way that was independent of God or according to His own will. Rather, He fulfilled His ministry according to God's will and pleasure by being one with God to fulfill His purpose. In particular, the Lord Jesus did not appoint the twelve by Himself. In this matter He acted as a man who was one with God.

When the Lord Jesus was baptized, He put Himself aside. This indicates that in His ministry He would not do anything by Himself, but would do everything by God and with God. In 6:12 we have the application of the Lord's baptism. In His prayer the Lord rejected Himself and put Himself aside. In the crucial matter of appointing certain ones to be His helpers, to be the apostles sent out to reach

others, the Lord did not act in Himself or by Himself. He did this absolutely in God and with God. The main point in the choosing of the twelve as described in 6:13-16 is that the Lord Jesus set Himself aside and did not act by Himself. In appointing the twelve, He acted in God, by God, and with God.

TEACHING HIS DISCIPLES THE HIGHEST MORALITY

In 6:17-20 we see that the Lord's word in the remainder of this chapter was addressed to His disciples (v. 20) in the presence of a great multitude (v. 17), probably composed largely of unbelievers. Hence, there were two groups with the Lord as He was teaching. The first group was His disciples; the second was the crowd of unbelievers. We need to remember this if we would understand the Lord's teaching here. Sometimes His word refers to the believers, and at other times it refers to the unbelievers.

Much of the Lord's teaching in 6:17-49 is similar to that in chapters five through seven of the Gospel of Matthew. Whatever is decreed in Matthew 5--7, as the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens, constitutes the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. Whatever is cited in Luke 6:20-49, as principles of the character of God's children, governs and measures the behavior of the believers, who have been born of God and possess His life and nature. At the time of speaking, this portion, except verses 24 through 26 and 39, applied to the believing remnant of the Jews.

We have seen that in chapters five through seven of Matthew we have the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens. The teaching in chapter six of Luke is not a constitution, but it is the principles of the character of those who believe in the Lord, of those who have been born of God and possess His life and nature. As those who have been regenerated by God, we, the believers, have God's life and nature. Now we need to see what principles should govern our character, our behavior. How should we conduct ourselves? How should we act and have our being? The principles given in this chapter answer these questions. All the aspects of the Lord's teaching here are

principles that should govern our Christian behavior. If we see this, we shall see the difference between the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens in Matthew 5 through 7 and the principles of Christian behavior in Luke 6.

FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF BLESSED PEOPLE

The first principle in these verses is that we who believe in Christ and who have been born of God should be a people blessed by God. We should be a blessed people, not a cursed people. As a result of the fall, mankind came under the curse. But in the jubilee of grace the Lord Jesus has rescued us from the curse and has brought us into God's blessing. Hence, we should be a people blessed by God. In 6:20-23 there are four characteristics of blessed people.

Poor

In verse 20 the Lord Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." In this verse "poor" has two denotations. First, it denotes poor in material things; second, it denotes poor in spiritual things. Therefore, the word poor here indicates poor in earthly, material things and also poor in heavenly, spiritual things.

It is often difficult for those who are rich in earthly, material things to be poor in heavenly, spiritual things. If someone chosen and called by God becomes rich in material things, it may be very difficult for that one to become poor in spiritual things. It may even be necessary for God to take away that person's material riches in order that he might become poor in relation to spiritual things.

If we would be a blessed people, we need to be poor. Mainly we need to be poor in spiritual things, in heavenly things. Concerning spiritual things, we should sense that we have nothing, that we are poor.

Matthew 5:3 speaks of being poor in spirit. To be poor in spirit is not only to be humble, but also to be emptied in our spirit, in the depths of our being, not holding on to the old things. To be poor in spirit also means to be unloaded to receive new things.

Our human spirit, the deepest part of our being, is the organ for us to contact God and to realize spiritual things. We need to be poor, emptied, unloaded, in this part of our being so that we may realize and possess the kingdom of God. All the time we need to be poor in our spirit, having the sense deep within that we are poor in relation to spiritual things, in relation to the things concerning God. If we are poor in this way and humble, immediately the kingdom of God becomes our blessing.

Hungry Now

The second characteristic of a blessed people is to hunger now: "Blessed are those who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied" (6:21a). This verse speaks of spiritual hunger. First we realize that we are poor in spiritual things, and then we hunger after the things we lack in the spiritual realm.

The Lord says that those who hunger now will be satisfied. When we hunger, we shall be filled. We shall be satisfied with the spiritual riches of Christ.

Weeping Now

In 6:21b the Lord Jesus says, "Blessed are those who weep now, for you shall laugh." This is the third characteristic of those who are blessed by God. In this verse to weep means to repent and to regret. To weep in this sense means that we are not happy about our spiritual situation and condition. Therefore, we regret and repent and desire to have a change in our spiritual condition.

Hated

The fourth characteristic is found in verses 22 and 23: "Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they separate you from them and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same manner their fathers did to the prophets." Here we see that it is a blessing to be hated and reproached for the sake of the Son of Man. We, however, like to be praised by others and to be valued, honored, and

highly regarded by them. We need to realize that believers will be hated and evil spoken of by the world. The reason for this is that the entire world is following Satan, and we are following the Lord to go in the opposite way. Because our way is opposite to that of the world, the worldly people will hate us and speak evil about us.

A WORD TO UNBELIEVERS

In verses 24 through 26 the Lord speaks to the multitude of unbelievers present. In verse 24 He says, "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation." The Greek word for "but" also means however, yet. Verses 24 through 26, at the time of speaking, could apply to the unbelieving Jews, who hardened their hearts to reject the Savior.

In verse 24 the Lord pronounces a woe to those who are rich. He tells them that they have received their consolation. The Greek word for "received" was used in a commercial sense to acknowledge receipt of full payment.

In verses 25 and 26 the Lord went on to say, "Woe to you who are satiated now, for you shall hunger. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same manner their fathers did to the false prophets." Here we see that those who desire to be praised by others and highly regarded by them will be like false prophets.

A FURTHER WORD TO THE DISCIPLES

In 6:27 the Lord turns from the outsiders to His disciples. Verses 27 and 28 say, "But to you who hear I say, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray concerning those who revile you." In verse 27 the ones who hear are those who believe, those who receive the Lord's word.

In verses 27 and 28 we see the highest standard of morality. To love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us is the highest standard of morality. It is also the highest standard of morality to bless those who curse us and to pray concerning those who revile us. Although it is

easy for us to read these verses, it is extremely difficult for us to practice them. Actually, in order to fulfill these words, we need to be a God-man, a person saturated with God and mingled with Him.

In verse 29 the Lord says, "To him who beats you on the cheek, offer also the other; and from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either." To offer the other cheek to the one who beats us proves that we have the power to suffer instead of resisting, and the power to walk neither in the flesh nor in the soul for our own interests, but in the spirit for the kingdom of God.

The "cloak" in verse 29 is an outer garment, and the "tunic" is a garment worn next to the body. Here the Lord says that from him who would take away our outer garment we should not withhold our inner garment. However, to conduct ourselves in this way we need to be saturated with God.

In verse 30 the Lord goes on to say, "To everyone who asks of you, give; and from him who takes away your things, do not require their return." To give to everyone who asks us and not to require the return of our things proves that we do not care for material things and are not possessed by them.

Verse 31 says, "And even as you want men to do to you, you do to them likewise." This indicates that what we want others to do to us we should first do to them.

In 6:32-34 the Lord Jesus says, "And if you love those who love you, what thanks is it to you? For even sinners love those who love them. For if also you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks is it to you? Even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what thanks is it to you? Even sinners lend to sinners that they may get back an equal amount." In these verses "thanks" corresponds to reward, and "what" refers to the quality of the reward. Hence, "what thanks" denotes what kind of reward.

To receive thanks is to receive a reward. If you do something good for a person and he gives you his thanks, that "thank you" is a reward to you. In these verses the Lord is asking what kind of thanks, what kind of reward,

it is to us if what we do to others is the same as what sinners would do. Even sinners love those who love them, do good to those who do good to them, and lend with the hope of receiving back an equal amount, if not more.

SONS OF THE MOST HIGH

In verse 35 the Lord continues, "But love your enemies, and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the unthankful and evil." In this verse we have the secret of living the kind of life described here. The secret is the life of God. If we would fulfill all these principles, we must have the life of God. We must be born of the Most High, born of God, and thereby become sons of the Most High.

As those who have been born of God, we are able to love our enemies. God loved us even when we were His enemies (Rom. 5:8). We need to be impressed with the fact that God loved us while we were yet His enemies. Now His love has been imparted to us. The love with which we love others, therefore, is the love of God our Father.

The Bible tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8). As Spirit is the nature of God's Person, and light is the nature of God's expression, so love is the nature of God's being. Hence, if we have been born of God, we surely have been born of the nature of God's being, which is the divine love. As those born of God, we have His life and nature. Spontaneously we are now able to love our enemies even as God our Father loves them. This is the reason the Lord tells us to love our enemies so that we may be the sons of the Most High, the One who is kind to those who are unthankful and evil.

In 6:36 the Lord says, "Be full of pity, even as your Father is full of pity." Pity surpasses love and mercy. It is possible to show mercy to someone without being full of pity. It is actually easier to love others than it is to be full of pity toward others. The reason for this is that often we love those who are good. Pity, however, goes much farther

than love. We need to exercise our mercy in order to reach those who are in a pitiful condition.

According to our natural understanding, we may think that to be full of pity toward someone is to have mercy on a person who is sick or in poverty. But this is not the meaning of pity according to the context in this chapter. The context indicates that a person who hates us and who reviles us is in a pitiful condition. Therefore, toward such a person we should not only have love, but should also be full of pity. We need to pity the one who is evil and who is altogether not lovable. As those who have been born of God, we should be full of pity even as our Father is full of pity.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTEEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(5)

Scripture Reading: Luke 6:17-49

In this message we shall continue to consider 6:17-49, where the Lord Jesus teaches His disciples the highest morality.

NOT JUDGING BUT FORGIVING

Verse 37 says, "And do not judge, and you will by no means be judged; and do not pass sentence, and sentence will by no means be passed upon you; release, and you will be released." Here to pass sentence is to condemn, and to release is to forgive. If we do not condemn, we shall by no means be condemned. Likewise, if we forgive, we shall be forgiven.

If we live in a humble spirit under the Lord's ruling, we shall always judge ourselves, not others. God's children will be judged with what they judge. If they judge others with righteousness, they will be judged by the Lord with righteousness. If they judge others with mercy, they will be judged by the Lord with mercy. As James 2:13 says, "Mercy triumphs over judgment."

Years ago I heard what C. H. Spurgeon said in a sermon on forgiveness. In that sermon he pointed out that it is difficult for Christians to forgive others. He said that we may think that we have forgiven someone. However, our forgiveness can be compared to burying a dead dog and allowing the tail to show. After forgiving someone, we may

say, "So-and-so offended me, but I have forgiven him." This is to show the "tail" of the "dog."

If we have really forgiven someone, we should also forget the offense. Once we have forgiven someone in a matter, we should not mention it again. Every time we mention an offense which supposedly has been forgiven, we are pulling out the tail of the buried dog to show others that the dog has been buried. If we do this, it indicates that we have not released the one who offended us.

According to the New Testament, to forgive means to forget and to release. We need to forget the offense and release the offender. Once we have done this, we should never speak of the matter again.

GIVING TO OTHERS

In verse 38 the Lord goes on to say, "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will give into your bosom; for with what measure you measure, it will be measured to you in return." M. R. Vincent has pointed out that here "bosom" denotes "the gathered fold of the wide upper garment, bound together with the girdle, and thus forming a pouch." Here the Lord is saying that when we give to others, our Father in heaven will always return to us much more than we give.

I once heard of a saint who was considering giving a particular gift to someone. In this case the gift was a number of fish. First this saint had the thought of giving away ten fish. But the more he thought about it, the more he reduced the number. At a certain point he realized that the thought of giving less was a temptation from the enemy. Becoming angry with the Devil, he said to him, "Satan, if you keep on tempting me, I will give away everything." This illustrates our need for the willingness to give. If we give to others, we shall receive in return. What we measure to others will also be measured to us.

A PROFOUND PARABLE

Verse 39 says, "And He spoke also a parable to them:

Can a blind man guide a blind man? Will not both fall into a pit?" At the time of speaking, this word could have applied to the leaders among the Jews. In Matthew 15:14 the Lord called the self-righteous and arrogant religionists "blind leaders of the blind." They thought they were clear concerning the way to serve God, but they did not realize that their eyes were veiled by their religion with their traditions. Hence, they could not see the reality of God's economy. Their blindness led them to fall into the pit.

The parable in Luke 6:39 is simple, yet it reveals the divine wisdom of the Man-Savior. I doubt that any philosopher has spoken such a parable.

BECOMING AS OUR TEACHER

In 6:40 the Lord continues, "A disciple is not above his teacher; but everyone who has been perfected will be as his teacher." The teacher here is Christ. When we, the disciples, are perfected, we shall be as our teacher, Christ.

TAKING THE LOG OUT OF OUR OWN EYE

In 6:41 and 42 the Lord says, "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but the log in your own eye you do not consider? How can you say to your brother, Brother, allow me to take out the speck in your eye, not seeing the log that is in your own eye? Hypocrite, first take the log out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck in your brother's eye." As children of God living in a humble spirit, we should first take the log out of our own eye whenever we look at the speck in our brother's eye. The speck in our brother's eye should remind us of the log in our own eye. As long as the log remains in our eye, our sight is blurred, and we shall not see clearly.

FURTHER WORDS OF WISDOM

In 6:43 and 44 the Lord says, "For there is no good tree producing rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree producing good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit; for they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a thornbush." This word also is quite simple, but it indicates that the Man-Savior was full of divine wisdom.

The Lord's sayings concerning the blind guiding the blind, the speck in our brother's eye and the log in our own eye, and each tree being known by its own fruit express His wisdom.

In verse 45 the Lord says that the good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of the heart brings forth what is evil. Then the Lord explains that the mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. Following this, the Lord asks, "And why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?" (v. 46).

DOING THE LORD'S WORDS

In 6:47-49 the Lord Jesus says, "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you whom he is like. He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood came, the river broke against that house and was not strong enough to shake it, because it was well built. But he who hears and does not do is like a man building a house upon the earth without a foundation, against which the river broke, and immediately it collapsed; and the crash of that house was great." Here the house refers both to our being and to our work, our conduct. If our being is according to the Lord's word, it will have a proper foundation. Likewise, if our work is based on the Lord's word, it will have a solid foundation. If our being and our work are based upon the Lord's word, they will be able to withstand any kind of test, any "flood" or "river." But if our being and our work are not founded on the Lord's word, the river will carry them away.

The "rock" in 6:48 does not refer to Christ. Instead, it refers to the Lord's wise word, the word that reveals the will of God the Father. Our being and work must be founded on the word of the Man-Savior for the accomplishment of the will of our Father.

The house that is built on the rock and that is not shaken by the river is like the building work of gold, silver, and precious stones, which can stand the testing fire (1

Cor. 3:12-13). But the house built upon the earth without a foundation and that collapses when the river breaks against it is like the building work of wood, hay, and stubble, which will be burned by the testing fire. However, the builder himself will be saved (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

A CLEAR VIEW OF THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY

The Lord's teaching in 6:17-49 gives us a clear view of the highest standard of morality. As one who has studied the writings of Confucius, I can say that the teachings of Confucius do not present such a standard of morality. The topmost teaching on morality is that of the Man-Savior. He Himself as the God-man lived a life that is the highest standard of morality. His life, work, and saving power are all in the highest standard of morality. The Lord conveyed His saving grace in His human virtues with His divine attributes. This is the highest standard of morality, and we all need to pay careful attention to it.

OUR NEED FOR THE DIVINE LIFE

In order to practice the principles described in 6:17-49, we need the divine life. Life is the basic factor for any kind of being, doing, or working. If we do not have a certain kind of life, we cannot have that kind of being; neither can we have a certain behavior or accomplish a certain work. For example, an apple tree has an apple-tree life. In order for a tree to be an apple tree, it must have the life of an apple tree. Likewise, a monkey has a monkey life. In order for an animal to be a monkey, it must have the life of a monkey. Only by having the life of a monkey is it possible for an animal to behave like a monkey. The crucial point here is that if we would have a certain being and behave in a certain way, we must have a certain kind of life. Life is the basic factor of our being, behavior, and work.

The Man-Savior has the kind of life described in chapter six of the Gospel of Luke. Before His death and resurrection, He Himself lived such a life. But through His resurrection He has become the life-giving Spirit, and now

He lives in us. His desire is to live in us the same kind of life He lived on earth.

In Philippians 1:21 Paul speaks of living Christ. When Christ, the God-man, was on earth, He lived a life that was according to the highest standard of morality. Now Christ lives in us so that we may live Him. Actually, Christ Himself is the highest standard of morality, for He is the man created by God in Genesis 1 plus the tree of life mentioned in Genesis 2. This highest standard of morality is now a Person living in us and making it possible for us to live Christ. This is the reason Paul says in Philippians 4:8, "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is well-spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things." This is to live according to the highest standard of morality, a morality which is actually a Person, Christ the God-man.

In 6:17-49 the Lord teaches us the highest standard of morality. I hope that many of us will delve into this teaching. If we pray-read these verses and digest them, this will affect our daily walk.

THE LORD'S TEACHING NOT ISSUING FROM HIMSELF

The teaching in 6:17-49 was given by the God-man after He had prayed throughout the night and after He had appointed twelve to be His apostles. The fact that He prayed all night indicates that He did not initiate this teaching and that He was not its source.

Before teaching His disciples in the presence of a multitude of unbelievers, the Lord Jesus prayed. To pray is to be brought out of ourselves into God. No doubt, after spending the entire night in prayer, the Lord Jesus was absolutely out of Himself and in God the Father. Therefore, it was in the Father, not in Himself, that He appointed the twelve and taught the disciples the highest standard of morality. His teaching, therefore, did not issue from Himself but from God the Father.

We need to have a clear understanding of this background of the Lord's teaching in chapter six.

Otherwise, we shall not be able to get below the surface of this portion of Luke.

TWO BASIC ELEMENTS IN THE LORD'S TEACHING

The Divine Life as the Source

The Lord's teaching in 6:17-49 has two basic elements. These elements are the divine word and the divine life. How do we know that the Lord's teaching here is based on the elements of the divine life and the word? Consider what the Lord says in verses 35 and 36: "Love your enemies, and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Be full of pity, even as your Father is full of pity." These verses describe the living of sons of the Most High. The expression "sons of the Most High" surely implies the divine life. If we did not have the divine life, how could we be sons of the Most High? It would, of course, be impossible. The living that is according to the highest standard of morality issues from the divine life with which we have been born of the Most High. Therefore, these verses definitely refer to the divine life.

Another indication of the divine life is found in verses 43 and 44: "For there is no good tree producing rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree producing good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit; for they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a thornbush." We may say that bearing fruit is the living of a tree. Every kind of fruit tree has its own life, and its life is the source of the fruit produced by the tree. The living comes out of the life. The life is the source, and the living is the issue. Here the Lord is saying that we, His disciples, are the good trees with the divine life. Out from this life will issue a living that is the expression of the Triune God.

It is not possible for us in ourselves to love our enemies. But we do have an enemy-loving life, the divine life, within us. This life is the source of the highest standard of morality. The highest standard of morality, therefore, is the issue and expression of the divine life. Both the sons of the Most High in verse 35 and the good

trees in verse 43 indicate that the source of the highest standard of morality is the divine life. It is of vital importance for us to see this.

Confucius was not able to present the kind of teaching we have in 6:17-49, because he did not have the divine life or know the divine life. But Jesus, the God-man, knew the divine life and possessed it. In a very real sense, He Himself was the divine life, and He imparted Himself to the disciples as the divine life. Hence, His teaching actually expresses what He Himself is. Because He lived according to the highest standard of morality, He teaches this morality to His disciples.

The Word as the Expression

In 6:47 and 48 we have clear mention of the Lord's word: "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you whom he is like. He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood came, the river broke against that house and was not strong enough to shake it, because it was well built." Here we see that if we live and work according to the Lord's word, we shall have a proper foundation. The Lord's word is the foundation of our being, behavior, and work.

The divine word is the expression of the divine life. Life is inward, and the word is the speaking forth outwardly of the life. In the Bible the word is called the word of life (1 John 1:1; Acts 5:20). In the Bible the divine word and the divine life are regarded as one. How do we have the divine life? We have this life through the word. When we receive the word of life, we obtain life. We all need to see that the Man-Savior's teaching concerning the highest standard of morality is altogether based on the divine life with its expression--the divine word.

Life, the Word, and the Spirit

In John 6:63 the Lord Jesus says, "The words which I

have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." Both life and the word depend upon the Spirit. If there were no Spirit, there would be no life and no genuine, real word. The word that is the word of reality is actually the Spirit. Hence, in order to have the divine life and the divine word, we must have the Spirit.

Today the Spirit is the resurrected Christ. In resurrection Christ has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Now that we have this Spirit, we also have life and the word. I wish to emphasize the fact that the Spirit is actually the Christ who has passed through death and has entered into resurrection. Christ in resurrection is the Spirit, and this Spirit is life and the word.

Living the Highest Standard of Morality by the Divine Life and through the Divine Word

In order to understand Luke 6:17-49, the teaching of the God-man concerning the highest standard of morality, we need to have a view of the New Testament as a whole. If we do not have a proper view of the entire New Testament when we read 6:17-49, we shall be misled and understand this portion of Luke in a natural way. Some who talk about these verses speak concerning them in a way that is altogether natural. Such ones have never touched the element of the Lord's teaching here. As we have pointed out, the Man-Savior's teaching concerning the highest standard of morality is dependent on the elements of the divine life, which is the source, and the divine word, which is the expression. How can we have the highest standard of morality? We can have it by the divine life and through the divine word.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTEEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(6)

Scripture Reading: Luke 7:1-35

In 7:1-35 three matters are covered: the Man-Savior curing the dying one with a word (vv. 1-10), the Man-Savior showing pity to the weeping mother by raising up her dead son (vv. 11-17), and the Man-Savior strengthening His forerunner (vv. 18-35). It may not seem that there is any connection between these three instances. Actually, these matters are related.

CURING THE DYING ONE WITH A WORD

Luke 7:1 and 2 say, "After He completed all His words in the hearing of the people, He entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's slave, who was highly valued by him, was ill and about to die." A centurion was an officer over one hundred in the Roman army. This centurion represents the believing Gentiles, who are saved through faith in the Lord's word (v. 7).

Having heard about Jesus, this centurion "sent to Him elders of the Jews, requesting that He might come and bring his slave safely through his illness" (v. 3). When these elders reached Jesus, "they entreated Him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that You should grant this to him. For he loves our nation, and he himself built the synagogue for us" (vv. 4-5).

While the Man-Savior was on His way to the centurion's home, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof; wherefore I did not even count myself worthy to come to You; but say a word,

and let my servant be cured" (vv. 6-7). In verse 8 we have a further word of the centurion conveyed to the Lord Jesus through his friends: "For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers; and I tell this one, Go, and he goes; and another, Come, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does it" (v. 8).

In 7:1-10 we see authority and the word of authority. The centurion seemed to be saying to the Man-Savior, "Lord, I am not worthy to come to see You or for You to come to my house. Yet I know what authority is. I am under the authority of others, and others are under my authority. All I need to do is speak a word to one of the soldiers, and he does what I say. I know, Lord, that You are the authority in this universe."

How did this Roman centurion, a Gentile, come to know the Lord's authority? According to verse 5, he loved the Jewish nation and built a synagogue for the Jews. From this we see that probably he had some knowledge of the Old Testament. Furthermore, he referred to the Man-Savior as Lord. Hence, he realized that the Man-Savior was the One who has the genuine authority.

The centurion also knew the significance of a word of authority. This was the reason he could say to the Man-Savior, "Say a word, and let my servant be cured" (v. 7). He knew authority and the word as the expression of authority. The centurion's slave was in fact healed by the word of the Man-Savior.

In 7:9 the Lord Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith: "And hearing these things, Jesus marveled at him, and turning to the crowd following Him, He said, I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." The Gentile centurion recognized the authority of the Man-Savior and realized that His word was a word with healing authority. Thus, he believed not only in the Man-Savior, but also in His word. He asked the Lord not to come personally, but only to send His word. The Man-Savior marveled at this great faith.

In this case also we see the Lord's human virtues with

His divine attributes. His virtue was expressed in the fact of His going to the home of the centurion. The Lord Jesus is the Lord of the entire universe. Nevertheless, He was willing to go to see an officer in the Roman army. The centurion had only one hundred soldiers under his authority, but the Lord Jesus has the whole universe under His authority. In the Man-Savior's human virtue, His divine attribute of authority was expressed. He spoke a word, and the centurion's slave was healed. Here we see the Lord's divine attribute manifested in His human virtue.

SHOWING PITY TO THE WEEPING MOTHER BY RAISING UP HER DEAD SON

In 7:11-17 we see the Man-Savior showing pity to the weeping mother by raising up her dead son. Verses 11 and 12 say, "And it came about soon afterwards that He went into a city called Nain, and His disciples went with Him and a large crowd. Now as He came near the gate of the city, behold, one who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a considerable crowd from the city was with her." This situation was very sad, and no one could do anything to comfort the grieving widow. First she had lost her husband, and now she had lost her only son.

This case was unique in its misery--the only son of a widow was being carried in the coffin. The Savior's compassion was also unique in His loving sympathy. He volunteered, in His tender mercy, His power of resurrection to raise the widow's son from death, without being asked to do so. This indicates His unique commission, coming to save lost sinners (19:10), and shows the high standard of His morality, as a Man-Savior, in saving sinners.

Luke 7:13-15 says, "And seeing her, the Lord had compassion on her, and said to her, Do not weep. And approaching, He touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. And He said, Young man, I say to you, arise! And the dead man sat up and began to speak; and He gave him to his mother." Here we see the Man-Savior's compassion in speaking to the widow and in touching the

coffin. When He touched the coffin, those who were carrying it stood still. Then the Lord commanded the dead son of the widow to arise. This is the Lord's divine attributes expressed in His human virtues.

In His compassion, the Man-Savior spoke to the widow and touched the coffin. He was not asked to do these things. But seeing the situation, He initiated the action that caused the dead son to be raised up. To the great surprise of those present, the Lord initiated this action according to His human virtue. What caused Him to be moved with compassion? The cause of this was His human virtue. Then in His human virtue His divine attributes were expressed by raising the young man from the dead.

Again we see that the Lord Jesus is full of the human virtues and of the divine attributes. In His raising up the dead son and giving him to his mother, we see the expression of the Man-Savior's divine attributes in His human virtues.

Luke, who wrote his Gospel according to the sequence of morality, put together the two cases of the healing of the centurion's slave and the raising up of the widow's son. In the case of the healing of the centurion's slave we see the Lord's authority, but in the case of the raising up of the widow's son we see His affection. When the Lord touched the coffin, He showed His sympathy, affection, and love. Therefore, the first case is a matter of authority; the second case is a matter of affectionate sympathy. In both cases we see the Man-Savior in His human virtues with His divine attributes.

Actually, in both cases we see the authority of the Man-Savior. Saying a word that the centurion's servant may be healed implies authority. However, the authority expressed here is not as high as that expressed in the raising up of the widow's son. When we put these two cases together, we see that the Man-Savior, the God-man, was full of human virtues with the divine attributes.

STRENGTHENING HIS FORERUNNER

Luke 7:18 says, "And John's disciples reported to him

concerning all these things." John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was in prison. It seemed that the One with authority and sympathy would not do anything for John. Instead, it was as if He had forgotten him. The disciples of John may have been bothered by this, and they reported to him concerning all these things. They may have been troubled by the fact that the Man-Savior, who healed the centurion's slave and raised up the widow's son, was not doing anything for John the Baptist.

Verses 19 and 20 continue, "And John, calling a certain two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, Are You the One who is coming, or should we expect another? And coming up to Him, the men said, John the Baptist sent us to You, saying, Are You the One who is coming, or should we expect another?" John the Baptist's word here does not mean that he was in doubt concerning Christ. He questioned Christ in this way in order to provoke Him to deliver him. He knew that Christ was the coming One, and he had strongly recommended Him to the people (John 1:26-36). After that, he was put into prison and there he waited, expecting that Christ would do something to deliver him. However, the Lord did nothing for him, although He did much to help others. When John heard this, he was in danger of being stumbled (Luke 7:23). Hence, he sent his disciples to the Lord with such a provoking question.

It is right to consider together the three cases in 7:1-35. The Lord did something for the centurion and the widow, who were not related to Him. But He did not do anything for the one who was His forerunner, who had been cast into prison for His sake. Although the Man-Savior did many things for others, He did not do anything for John the Baptist. This was the reason John tried to provoke the Lord Jesus to do something for him.

In 7:22 and 23 we have the Lord's answer to John the Baptist's question: "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind are receiving sight, the lame are walking, the lepers are being cleansed, and the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised, and the good news is

being brought to the poor; and blessed is he who is not stumbled in Me." In verse 22 the Lord first speaks of the blind receiving sight. There was no such miracle in the Old Testament. By this, He gave clear evidence to John that only the Messiah could have done such a miracle (Isa. 35:5).

In spiritual significance, the blind receiving sight is also first. In the Lord's salvation He first opens our eyes (Acts 26:18). Then we can receive Him and walk to follow Him.

The lame signifies those who cannot walk in God's way. After being saved, the lame can walk by new life (John 5:8-9).

The deaf signifies those who cannot hear God. After being saved, they can hear the Lord's voice (John 10:27).

The dead signifies those who are dead in sins (Eph. 2:1, 5), unable to contact God. After being regenerated, they can fellowship with God with their regenerated spirit.

The poor signifies everyone without Christ, without God, who have no hope in the world (Eph. 2:12). Upon receiving the gospel, they are made rich in Christ (2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 3:8).

What would you have said if you had been John and had received the word spoken by the Lord in verse 22? Perhaps you would have said, "I don't want to hear this kind of report. Lord, what will You do about me? You give sight to the blind, You make the lame to walk, You cleanse the lepers, You cause the deaf to hear, You raise the dead, and You bring good news to the poor. I would like to hear some good news concerning my situation. Lord, what will You do for me? I am still in prison. Didn't You declare the jubilee and proclaim release to the captives? Lord, I want You to liberate me."

In verse 23 the Lord said to John, "Blessed is he who is not stumbled in Me." This word implies that John the Baptist was in danger of being stumbled because the Lord did not act on his behalf according to his way. Here the Lord encouraged him to take the way the Lord had ordained for him that he might be blessed.

In verse 23 the Lord seemed to be saying, "John, I have done many things for others, but I shall not do anything for

you. Do not be stumbled in Me. Blessed is the one who is not stumbled in Me."

I believe that the Lord's word in verse 23 strengthened John for his coming martyrdom. John knew that Christ could do anything, but He would not do anything for him. Although the Lord could have done something, it was right for Him not to do anything. John must have been convinced by the Lord's word and strengthened by it.

In 7:24-28 the Lord Jesus spoke to the crowds concerning John the Baptist. In verse 26 the Lord Jesus said that John the Baptist was "much more than a prophet." In verse 27 He went on to say concerning him, "This is he concerning whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You." Malachi 4:5 prophesied that Elijah would come. When John the Baptist was conceived, it was said that he would go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Hence, in a sense, John may be considered "Elijah, who is about to come" (Matt. 11:14). However, the prophecy of Malachi 4:5 will actually be fulfilled in the great tribulation, when the real Elijah, one of the two witnesses, will come to strengthen God's people (Rev. 11:3-12).

In Luke 7:31 and 32 the Lord Jesus went on to say, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like young children sitting in a marketplace and calling to one another, and saying, We played the flute to you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep." The Pharisees and lawyers (v. 30) thought they were experienced and knowledgeable in the law of God. But in verse 32 the Lord likens them to young children.

Christ and John the Baptist "played the flute" to preach the gospel of the kingdom, but the Pharisees and lawyers "did not dance" for the joy of salvation. John and the Lord Jesus also "sang a dirge" to preach repentance, but these ones "did not weep" for the grief of sin. The righteousness of God required them to repent, but they would not obey. The grace of God afforded them salvation, but they would not receive it.

In verse 33 the Lord continues, "For John the Baptist has come neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, He has a demon!" John the Baptist, who came to bring men to repentance and cause them to grieve for sin, had no taste for eating or drinking (1:15-17). Because John the Baptist lived in a strange and peculiar way, not eating and drinking in the regular way, the opposers accused him of being demon-possessed.

In verse 34 the Lord says, "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" Christ is not only the Savior, but also the Friend of sinners, the One who sympathized with their problems and sensed their griefs. He came to bring salvation to sinners and cause them to rejoice in it. Hence, He had the joy of eating and drinking with them.

In 7:31-34 the Lord Jesus was actually rebuking that generation. When He declared the jubilee, that was the playing of the "flute." But the men of that generation did not respond by dancing. Likewise, when He and John the Baptist sang a dirge, the people did not repent. Instead, they said that John had a demon and that the Lord Jesus was a glutton, a wine drinker, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

In verse 35 the Lord concludes, "And wisdom is justified by all her children." This wisdom is Christ (1 Cor. 1:24, 30). Whatever Christ did was done by the wisdom of God, which is Himself. This wisdom is justified by all her children. Those who believe in Christ are the children of wisdom, those who justify Christ and His deeds and follow Him as their wisdom.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTEEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(7)

Scripture Reading: Luke 7:36-50

Luke 7:36--8:21 covers four matters: the Man-Savior forgiving sinners (7:36-50), being ministered to by women (8:1-3), teaching with parables (8:4-18), and identifying His real relatives (8:19-21). First we see that sinners are forgiven not because of their love, but because of their faith in the Lord. Faith, not love, is what causes us to experience the forgiveness of sins. Second, the saved ones, those whose sins have been forgiven, follow the Lord and minister to Him. Third, those who have been forgiven and who now love the Lord, follow Him, and minister to Him should grow in life and shine as lamps. Fourth, eventually such ones become the genuine relatives of the Man-Savior. From this we see that the four matters covered in 7:36--8:21 go together in our spiritual experience. In this message we shall consider 7:36-50, and in the following message we shall cover 8:1-21.

A CASE OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

The Christian life begins with the forgiveness of sins through our faith in the Savior. In 7:36-50 Luke presents in a very effective way a case of the forgiveness of sins. Here we have a vivid description of a sinful woman experiencing the forgiveness of sins. This portion of the Gospel of Luke is an affectionate account of the case of the forgiveness of sins.

A Pharisee and a Sinful Woman

Luke 7:36 says, "Now a certain one of the Pharisees asked Him that He would eat with him. And entering into the Pharisee's house, He reclined at the table." In this verse Luke does not say that the Pharisee prepared a feast and invited the Lord Jesus to eat with him. Instead, Luke tells us that the Pharisee asked the Savior to eat with him. This may indicate the Pharisee asked the Lord in a rather cold manner; that is, he did not give Him a warm invitation full of affection. Nevertheless, the Man-Savior went into the Pharisee's house to eat with him.

For whose sake did the Man-Savior go to the Pharisee's house? Did He do this for the sake of the Pharisee or for the sake of the woman? I believe that He did this for the sake of both the Pharisee and the woman. In His omniscience the Man-Savior knew that the woman would come into the house. We may say that by accepting the Pharisee's request that He eat in his house, the Lord afforded the woman an opportunity to contact Him. Otherwise, this woman who was sinful and who was known for her sinfulness may not have had a way to contact the Savior. By accepting the Pharisee's request to come to his house to eat, the Lord gave an opportunity to this saved sinner to express her love for Him.

In 7:36-50 Luke does not tell us what the host did to the Lord. There is nothing to indicate that the Pharisee was polite and loving toward Him. Actually, Luke does not say very much about the host. However, he has much to say concerning what the woman did to the Lord Jesus.

Verses 37 and 38 say, "And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a sinner, and learning that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster flask of ointment; and she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, and she began to wet His feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet affectionately and anointed them with the ointment." The hair is the glory of the woman (1 Cor. 11:15), the top part of her body. With her top part she

wiped the Savior's feet, the lowest part of His body, loving Him with her glory.

The woman kissed the Lord's feet affectionately, that is, in love, and she anointed them with the ointment (v. 38). This ointment indicates the valuable words and sweetness of the Savior in the appreciation of the woman. Even the Savior's feet were worthy and sweet to her affection.

In verse 39 we see that the Pharisee criticized the woman and despised her: "But when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said within himself, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, because she is a sinner." A considerable crowd in Nain, having witnessed the Man-Savior's power of resurrection, recognized Him as a great prophet (7:16). Yet the Pharisee wondered if He were a prophet. He not only doubted concerning the Savior, but also despised the woman as a sinner.

By His divine attribute of omniscience, the Man-Savior knew what His host was saying in his heart. Because He is God, He knows what is in man's heart. Verse 40 says, "And Jesus answered and said to him, Simon, I have something to say to you. And he says, Teacher, say it."

A Moneylender and Two Debtors

In verses 41 and 42 the Man-Savior said to the Pharisee, "A certain moneylender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. But having nothing to repay, he graciously forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him more?" The Lord's word here indicates that both Simon and the woman were sinners. Simon considered the woman a sinner, but did not consider himself a sinner, and he doubted that the Savior knew that she was a sinner. But the Savior's parable indicated that both Simon and the woman were sinners, debtors to Him.

According to verse 42, when the two debtors had nothing to repay the moneylender, he graciously forgave them both. This indicates that all sinners have nothing to repay their debt to God their Savior. The Lord's word here

also indicates that the Savior had already forgiven them both.

In verse 42 the Lord Jesus asked Simon which of the debtors would love the moneylender more as a result of having been forgiven by him. This indicates that love to the Savior is the issue, not the cause, of His forgiveness.

In verses 44 through 46 the Lord went on to say to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house; you did not give Me water for My feet, but this woman has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You did not give Me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing My feet affectionately. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with ointment." The Savior's word in these verses indicates that Simon should take the woman as an example and learn of her.

In verse 47 the Lord said, "For this reason I say to you, her sins which are many have been forgiven, because she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, he loves little." The great love of the woman was a proof that her many sins had been forgiven. Simon's little love testified that he had experienced forgiveness only a little.

The Incarnation of the Forgiving God

In verse 48 the Man-Savior said to the woman, "Your sins have been forgiven." Both this case and the case of the widow's son in Nain (7:11-17) are found only in this Gospel. This shows the Savior's tender care for the dead and sinful, and it conveys the principle of morality as the unique characteristic of this Gospel.

Verse 49 says, "And those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say among themselves, Who is this who even forgives sins?" Simon did not realize that this Man-Savior was the very God, the One who has authority to forgive man's sin. The Man-Savior was the incarnation of the forgiving God.

In verse 50 we have the conclusion of this incident: "But He said to the woman, Your faith has saved you; go in peace." The forgiven woman had not only love toward

the Lord but faith in Him, a faith that operated through love (Gal. 5:6) and issued in peace. The faith which saved her brought her to the Savior in love and resulted in her going forward in peace.

FAITH, LOVE, AND PEACE

Faith, love, and peace are three crucial virtues in experiencing and enjoying the Savior's salvation. Faith is brought forth by knowing the Savior in His saving power and virtue. Love comes out of this faith and issues in peace to follow the Savior.

Do you know Luke's purpose in presenting such a picture of the forgiveness of sins? His purpose was to portray the Man-Savior with His highest standard of morality. As we have pointed out, this should be regarded as the underlying principle in the writing of the Gospel of Luke. Especially in this case we can see this governing principle. Here we have a portrait of the Savior's highest standard of morality.

Faith Coming before Forgiveness

In this case we need to pay attention to the three matters of faith, love, and peace. When as a young Christian I read this chapter, I thought that the woman's love for the Savior was the cause of the forgiveness of her sins. I thought that He forgave her because she loved Him. This understanding is not correct.

In verse 50 the Lord said to the woman that her faith, not her love, had saved her. Furthermore, regarding the two debtors who were forgiven by the moneylender, the Lord asked, "Which of them therefore will love him more?" (v. 42). This indicates clearly that love is the issue of forgiveness. Concerning this, we need to pay attention to the word "therefore" in verse 42. This word proves that love comes after forgiveness instead of preceding it.

What, then, is the cause of the forgiveness of sins? From verse 50 we see that the cause is faith. It was the woman's faith that saved her. Her sins were forgiven not

because of her love but because of her faith. Therefore, faith comes before forgiveness, and love follows faith.

Love Coming Out of Faith

It is very important for us to see that forgiveness comes before love. We should not think that our love is the cause of the forgiveness of our sins. On the contrary, love is the issue, the outcome, of our faith. When we believe in the Lord, our faith becomes the cause of the Lord's forgiveness of our sins. Then as a result of having our sins forgiven, we begin to love the Lord. Hence, love comes out of faith.

Love Issuing in Peace

Love issues in peace. First we believe in the Lord Jesus, having faith in Him. Then we are forgiven of all our sins, and this brings in love for the Lord. As we love Him, this love issues in peace. We, then, may walk in peace. To walk in peace means to live in peace, to have a life of peace. When we walk in peace, we have our being in peace and live a peaceful life. This means that when we believe in the Lord, we love Him and live a life in peace. This is the Christian life.

In 7:36-50 we see faith, love, and peace. We have faith in the Lord, we have love toward Him, and we have peace in following Him. Because we have believed in Him, we have been forgiven of our sins, and now we love Him. This love issues in a life of peace. As those who love the Lord, we live, walk, and have our being in peace.

AN ATMOSPHERE OF AFFECTION

The atmosphere in 7:36-50 is an atmosphere of affection. There is affection both on the side of the Man-Savior and on the side of the sinful woman. The Lord's affection is an aspect of His human virtues. Once again in His human virtues we can see His divine attributes. In particular, we see the attribute of divine authority to forgive a person's sins. According to verse 49, those who were reclining at the table with the Lord said among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" This One

is the very God, for He alone has the authority to forgive sins.

The Man-Savior's divine attributes are also shown in His giving peace to the forgiven sinner. Only God can give peace to a forgiven sinner. Are you able to give peace to others? It is not in our hand to give others peace. Peace is in the almighty hand of God. Only He can forgive sins and give peace. Therefore, the forgiving of sins and the giving of peace are two attributes of God. Here these attributes are expressed in the Savior's human virtues.

In 7:36-50 we see once again that the Man-Savior saves people in the highest standard of morality. According to the emphasis in the Gospel of Luke, the highest standard of morality is a matter of the human virtues of the Man-Savior expressing His divine attributes.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE EIGHTEEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(8)

Scripture Reading: Luke 8:1-21

In 7:36-50 we have an account of the Man-Savior forgiving sinners. Then in 8:1-21 three matters are covered: the Man-Savior being ministered to by women (vv. 1-3), the Man-Savior teaching with parables (vv. 4-18), and the Man-Savior identifying His real relatives (vv. 19-21). If we consider 7:36--8:21 as a unit, we shall see that as those who have had their sins forgiven, we should follow the Lord, minister to Him, grow in life, and shine as lamps. Eventually, as such ones, we become the genuine relatives of the Man-Savior. We covered 7:36-50 in the foregoing message. In this message we shall go on to consider 8:1-21.

MINISTERED TO BY WOMEN

Luke 8:1 says, "And it came about soon afterwards that He journeyed from city to city and village to village, proclaiming and bringing good news of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him." The Greek word translated "proclaiming" means proclaiming as a herald. The Greek word rendered "bringing good news" is *euaggelizo,* which means evangelize, to announce good news, to declare glad tidings, to preach the gospel. Therefore, to bring good news of the kingdom of God is to preach the kingdom of God as the good news, as the gospel.

In verses 2 and 3 Luke goes on to say, "And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna. the wife of Chuza,

Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who were ministering to them out of their possessions." In 8:1-3 we see that the twelve called ones were following the Savior and that the healed women were ministering to the Savior and His followers out of their own possessions. What a beautiful picture!

The women named in 8:2 and 3 ministered to the Lord and to the twelve out of their possessions. It may have been that, under the Lord's sovereignty, the husbands of these women were wealthy. We may say that this wealth was the result of the Lord's exercise of His divine attributes. Then the women exercised their human virtues to use their possessions to minister to the Lord and His disciples.

According to 8:1-3, there were two groups of people around the Lord Jesus. The first group was composed of His followers; the second was composed of the women. The disciples simply followed the Lord without doing anything. The women, however, ministered both to the Lord and to the disciples in a practical way. In the church life sometimes the sisters are more practical than the brothers are. Whereas the brothers may find it easy to speak, the sisters will often serve, minister, in a practical way.

It is significant that 8:1-3 follows immediately after 7:36-50. The sequence indicates that after we have experienced the forgiveness of sins and have begun to love the Lord and live in peace, we should follow the Lord and minister to Him.

TEACHING WITH PARABLES

In 8:4-18 we have the Man-Savior's teaching with parables. Here the Lord gives two parables, the first in verses 4 through 15 on the growth in life and the second in verses 16 through 18 on the shining of the lamp. In brief, these two parables are concerned with the sower and the lamp.

The Parable of the Sower

The record of the parable of the sower in 8:4-15 is

somewhat different from the record in Matthew 13. Matthew's purpose in recording this parable is to point out how it reveals the kingdom life. However, Luke's purpose is to show us that as those who are living in peace, following the Lord, and ministering to Him, we should grow in life.

In 8:5-8 the Lord Jesus tells the parable of the sower; in verses 9 through 16 He explains this parable to His disciples. Luke 8:5a says, "The sower went out to sow his seed." The sower is the Lord Himself, and the seed is the word with the Lord in it as life. In verses 5 through 8 four kinds of soil are mentioned. As we shall see, these kinds of soil signify four conditions of the human heart.

When the disciples questioned the Lord concerning this parable (v. 9), He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, in order that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand" (v. 10). This verse indicates that God's economy concerning His kingdom was a hidden mystery, a mystery which has been unveiled to the Man-Savior's disciples. Because the nature and character of the kingdom of God are wholly divine and because the elements through which it is brought forth are the divine life and divine light, the kingdom of God, especially in its reality as the genuine church in this age (Rom. 14:17), is still all a mystery to the natural man.

Four Kinds of Hearts

In Luke 8:11-15 we see four kinds of hearts into which the seed is sown. The first kind of heart is likened to the soil "beside the road" (v. 5). Concerning this, the Lord says in verse 12, "Those beside the road are those who heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved." The earth beside the road is the earth on the wayside. This earth has been hardened by a great deal of traffic. As a result, wheat cannot grow in that kind of soil.

A heart that is like the wayside, like the soil beside the road, is a heart in which there is too much traffic of worldly business. If our heart is occupied with making a

living, there will be too much traffic in our heart. The result will be that our heart will not be the proper soil for the growing of Christ, for it will be a heart hardened by worldly traffic.

A second kind of heart is likened to rocky ground (8:6, 13). This kind of ground has soil on the surface, but underneath it is full of rocks. It is not possible for Christ to grow in this kind of heart. A person with such a heart may receive Christ and be saved; however, it will be difficult for him to grow in life. Because of the rocks, it is difficult for Christ to grow in the heart signified by the rocky ground. Matthew 13:5 describes this kind of heart as rocky places, which do not have much earth. This signifies the heart that is shallow in receiving the Lord's word. Such a heart is shallow because deep within are "rocks"--hidden sins, personal desires, self-seeking, and self-pity--which frustrate the seed from gaining root in the depths of the heart.

Luke 8:7 says. "And other seed fell in the midst of the thorns, and the thorns sprouted up with it and choked it." Concerning this, verse 14 explains: "And that which fell into the thorns, these are those who heard, and they are choked by the ongoing anxieties and riches and pleasures of life, and do not bring any fruit to maturity." Here we see clearly that the "thorns" signify anxieties riches (in particular, the deceitfulness of riches--Matt. 13:22), and the pleasures of life. These things choke the word and prevent it from growing in the heart and becoming fruitful.

The fourth kind of heart is that signified by the good earth: "And other seed fell into the good earth, and having sprouted up, it produced fruit a hundredfold" (v. 8). In verse 15 the Lord explains, "But that in the good earth, these are those who in a noble and good heart hear the word. and hold it fast, and bear fruit with endurance." This good earth signifies the good heart, a heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that does not have hidden sins. and that is without the anxiety of the age, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life. Such a heart gives all the ground to receiving the word so that the word may grow, bear fruit, and produce even a hundredfold.

A heart without worldly traffic, rocks, and thorns is a purified heart. This kind of heart is good for growing Christ.

After we have been forgiven and have begun to live a life in peace, we should follow the Lord and minister to Him. Then according to 8:4-15, we need to deal with our hearts.

In dealing with our hearts, we should keep our hearts away from worldly traffic. This means that our hearts should not be occupied with the business of making a living. Instead, we should live a simple life. However, many are slaves to earning a living. The more they increase their living expenses, the more they need to labor. The more they uplift their standard of living, the more they need to work. Some even work two jobs in order to maintain a high standard of living. We, on the contrary, should simplify our living. If we simplify our life, our hearts will be kept away from worldly traffic.

We also need to deal with all the rocks, the obstacles hidden within us. These hidden things may include hidden sins or hidden desires. As an example of a hidden desire, we may mention the desire common among young people to have a good car. The desire for a certain kind of new car may become a "rock" in our hearts, a rock that makes it difficult for Christ to grow within us.

In addition to dealing with worldly traffic and the hidden rocks, we also need to deal with the "thorns" of anxieties, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life. Some, after graduating from college, worry about getting married or about saving money to buy a house. Parents may worry about taking care of their children. These anxieties are related to the cares of this life. If our hearts are filled with anxieties, how can Christ grow in us? In order for Him to grow within us, our hearts need to be free from anxiety, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life.

The sequence in 7:36--8:15 shows that after we have been forgiven, we live a life of peace. As we follow the Lord and minister to Him, we need to grow in life. For the

growth in life we need to have a good heart for the Lord to grow within us. A good heart is a heart that is kept away from the worldly traffic, that has all rocks cleared away, and that does not have the thorns of anxiety, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life.

Delivered From the Trend of This Age

In today's world we face many perils--perils of immorality, perils of anxiety, and perils of pleasure. The more you desire to have pleasure, the more anxiety you will have, and the more you will suffer. But if you are willing to have a simple life, you will not have as many pleasures nor as many anxieties.

We should not follow the trend of today's world. This trend includes worldly traffic, pleasure, and anxiety. Because of this trend, it is difficult for many to live a long life. As the result of following the trend of the world, many are exhausted. They are busy with the worldly traffic and with earning money to have more pleasures. The result is more anxiety, more disease, and more death. We Christians should be delivered from the trend of this age and take another way. If we do not take the way of the world with its traffic. pleasures, and anxiety, our hearts will be released and available for Christ. Then our hearts will be occupied by Christ.

As an elderly person, I can testify that the secret to good health is taking Christ as everything. Because I take Christ as my everything I am released from the trend of this world, and my heart is free for the Lord. This makes it possible for Christ to grow within me.

The Parable of the Lamp

In 8:16 and 17 we have the parable of the lamp: "Now no one having lit a lamp covers it with a vessel or puts it underneath a couch; but he places it on a lampstand, in order that those who come in may see the light. For nothing is hidden that shall not become manifest, nor concealed that shall not by all means be known and become manifest." According to the parable of the sower,

we need to grow. According to the parable of the lamp, we need to shine. We should shine brightly as a lamp without any covering. We should be lamps in an open place shining so that others may be enlightened. Therefore, we need to grow, and we need to shine.

The lamp which shines light indicates that the Man-Savior's ministry not only sows life into His people, but also brings light to them. Hence, such a divine ministry issues in the believers as luminaries (Phil. 2:15) and the churches as lampstands (Rev. 1:20), shining in this dark age as His testimony, and consummating in the New Jerusalem with the outstanding characteristics of life and light (Rev. 22:1-2; 21:11, 23-24).

In Luke 8:18 the Lord says, "Take heed therefore how you hear; for whoever has, it shall be given to him; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have shall be taken away from him." This verse is concerned with how we hear the word of the Lord. Luke 8:18 is similar to Matthew 13:10-13 and Mark 4:25.

IDENTIFYING HIS REAL RELATIVES

Luke 8:19 says, "And His mother and His brothers came up to Him, and they were not able to get to Him because of the crowd." When it was reported to the Lord Jesus that His mother and brothers were standing outside wanting to see Him. He answered? "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it" (vv. 20-21). The Lord's answer indicates that we can become the real relatives of the Man-Savior. We may become those who are truly related to Him. Through His ministry the Man-Savior was making the believing sinners His spiritual relatives who became His many brothers (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:11) in the house of God (Heb. 3:5-6) and His many members for the building up of His mystical Body (Eph. 5:30; 1 Cor. 12:12) to do the will of God.

The most important matter in the parable of the sower is the word (Luke 8:11). We need to take care of the Lord's word in a proper way. If we care for the word, we shall become the real relatives of the Man-Savior, and He will

recognize us as such. Because we correspond to His word and make ourselves one with Him, He will identify Himself with us. This is the reason He says in 8:21 that His relatives are those that hear the word of God and do it. The Lord lived a life according to the word of God, and now we also are living a life according to His word. Therefore, we and He correspond, and there is an identification between us.

In 7:36-50 we see that we were sinners who have been forgiven through our faith in the Savior. Because our sins have been forgiven, we love the Lord. The forgiveness of sins through faith and our love for the Lord issue in a life of peace. As we live a life of peace, we follow the Lord and minister to Him. As those who serve Him, we need to grow in life so that the Lord may grow in us. We also need to shine. The result is that we become the Man-Savior's real relatives. In Paul's words, we become His members. The Lord's relatives are His members. He is the Head, and we are His members, the members of His Body. This means that we are the same as He is in life and nature. He lived the life of a God-man, and now we may live the same kind of life today.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE NINETEEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(9)

Scripture Reading: Luke 8:22-56

In this message we come to 8:22-56. This portion of the Gospel of Luke covers three matters: the quelling of the storm (8:22-25), the casting out of a legion of demons (vv. 26-39), and the healing of a woman with a flow of blood and the raising up of a dead girl (vv. 40-56).

THE JOURNEY ORDAINED BY THE LORD

These three matters are put together not only in Luke but also in Mark and Matthew. In Mark they are put together in order to show the authority of the kingdom of God. By the authority of the kingdom, the storm is calmed, the demons are defeated, the sick are healed, and the dead are raised. In Matthew the same three matters are put together in order to show a dispensational change. But in Luke these things are put together in order to show the journey we must make as those who believe in the Lord Jesus and follow Him.

We have seen from 7:36--8:21 that the Christian life begins with the forgiveness of sins and continues with living in peace, following the Lord, ministering to His need, and growing in life so that we may shine. Eventually, we become the Lord's real relatives, His members. Then in 8:22-56 Luke goes on to show that those who believe in the Lord are on a journey with Him. This journey is not chosen by us; rather, it is ordained by the Savior.

Luke 8:22 indicates that the journey of which we are

speaking is ordained by the Lord: "And it came about on one of the days that He got into a boat, and His disciples; and He said to them, Let us go over to the other side of the lake; and they launched out." Here we see that the Lord told the disciples to go over to the other side of the lake. This indicates that the journey was not initiated by the disciples, but was ordained by the Lord. This indicates further that after we become the Lord's relatives, the members of His Body, we do not have the right to chose our own way. Instead, we must take the way chosen by Him, the way ordained by Him. The disciples, therefore, launched out at the Lord's word. He said, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake," and they took His word and launched out.

The Lord Rebuking the Wind and the Raging of the Water

Verses 23 and 24 tell us what happened on the journey: "And as they sailed, He fell asleep. And a whirlwind came down upon the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. And they came to Him and woke Him, saying, Master, Master, we are perishing! And He, being awakened, rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm." Here we see that while the Lord was asleep, a whirlwind came down upon the lake, and the boat was being filled with water. The disciples were frightened and called on the Lord. The Lord awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water.

Why did the Lord rebuke the wind and the raging of the water? Why would He rebuke something that is without life? He rebuked the wind and the water because behind them were evil spirits and demons. The evil spirits are in the air, and the demons are in the water. Both the evil spirits and the demons follow Satan and trouble us in our journey as we follow the Lord. This means that the evil spirits and the demons will cause a "storm" to frustrate us in our journey.

Verse 25 says. "And He said to them, Where is your faith? And they were afraid and marveled, saying to one another, Who then is this, that He commands even the

winds and the water, and they obey Him?" Here we see that after quelling the storm, the Lord rebuked the disciples, asking them, "Where is your faith?"

Faith Based on the Word of the Lord

According to the New Testament, faith is always based on the word of the Lord. If we did not have a word from the Lord, we would not have any basis for our faith. The Lord's word produces faith. Faith, therefore, is based on the word of the Lord. What was the word given to the disciples by the Lord in this instance? It was the word, recorded in verse 22: "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." Since the Lord had spoken this word, certainly He would fulfill it.

In 8:22-25 the disciples had not only the Lord's word but the Lord Himself. He was with the disciples in the boat. In that situation the disciples had the word of the Lord and the Lord Himself.

Since the disciples had both the Lord's word and His presence, they should have been at peace, not caring about the storm. The Lord had told them to go to the other side of the lake, and the Lord was with them in the boat. They should not have been frightened by the storm.

Our trouble as today's followers of the Lord is that when a storm comes we often forget the Lord's word. Furthermore, instead of looking at the Lord, we may look at the storm. We all need to learn that whenever we are on a journey following the Lord and a storm arises, we should look at the sleeping Lord and not at the storm. We should not care for the storm--we should care for the Lord's word. The Lord has said, "Let us go over to the other side," and whatever He says will come to pass. Once the Lord speaks concerning a certain thing, it is settled. The Lord always fulfills His word. Hence, when He tells us to go over to the other side, we may be sure that we shall reach the other side, no matter what kind of storms may come.

Resting with the Lord

We need to believe in the Lord and not look at our

environment or circumstances. Instead of looking at the storm, let us look at the resting Lord. Which will you follow--the storm or the resting Lord? We may even want to say to the Lord, "Lord, since You are resting, I shall rest with you. Let the wind blow. Because You are resting, I can rest with You." However, it is easy to say this, but it is difficult to practice it. As one who has been practicing for more than fifty years to look at the Lord and not at circumstances, I must confess that I am still learning this lesson.

Often in our journey with the Lord we shall encounter a storm or a whirlwind. Then we may become distracted and forget the Lord's word and the fact that He is with us and is at rest. Are you able to say, "Lord, since You are resting, I shall rest also"? Let us all learn to practice this.

Luke's account in 8:22-25 does not show a dispensational change; neither does it present the authority of the kingdom of God. Here Luke portrays the Christian journey. According to the portrait in Luke, while we are taking the way ordained by the Lord, the Lord will be at rest, and the enemy will be busy. The evil spirits and the demons will be active to cause storms to frustrate us on our journey. We need to remember that actually this is not our journey; it is the Lord's journey, and we are journeying with Him. We are taking His way, and He is on the way with us. In fact, He is even in the boat with us. We may say that the boat here signifies the church. For the Lord to be with us in the boat means that He is with us in the church. Although the "boat" of the church may be in the midst of a whirlwind and raging waters, we should not be troubled. Instead of being troubled, we should have peace in the resting Lord.

CASTING OUT A LEGION OF DEMONS

Eventually the Lord and His disciples reached their destination, "the country of the Gerasenes, which is across from Galilee" (8:26). Immediately they met a certain man who had demons (v. 27), a man possessed by a legion of demons (v. 30). The Lord cast out all these demons, giving them permission to enter into the many hogs that were feeding nearby (v. 32). "And the demons, coming out from

the man, entered into the hogs; and the herd rushed down the steep slope into the lake and were drowned" (v. 33). The picture in 8:22-39 corresponds to our spiritual experience. When we take the Lord's way, journeying with Him, there will be storms. Nevertheless, we eventually reach our destination on "the other side of the lake." Then we shall see that in such a place the Lord casts out a legion of demons and clears up the unclean business of hog raising. In the Life-study of Mark we pointed out that the business of raising hogs signifies the unclean industry of today's world. In the world there are legions of demons, and everywhere there is unclean business. But wherever the followers of the Lord Jesus go with Him, the result will be that the demons are cast out and the business of hog raising is cleared up.

As indicated by the request of the multitude in the country of the Gerasenes that the Lord depart from them, the worldly people are offended when the demons are cast out and the business of hog raising is cleared up. It certainly is a good thing to cast out demons and to clear away the filthy business of hog raising, but this is not pleasing to worldly people. Although we are doing what is best for society, the people of the world do not appreciate us. Do not expect to be welcomed by worldly people. Because our journey will cause damage to their unclean business, we shall not be welcomed by them.

We have pointed out that demons dwell in the water. We may say that today's society is a huge lake of dirty water and that this water is full of demons. Wherever we go on our journey with the Lord, we shall meet legions of demons, and the demons will be cast out, and the unclean business will be removed. However, this is offensive to today's society. As a result, just as the Gerasenes begged the Lord to depart from them, the worldly people will ask us to go away from them.

HEALING A WOMAN WITH A FLOW OF BLOOD AND RAISING UP A DEAD GIRL

In 8:40-56 we have an account of the Lord's healing a woman with a flow of blood and His raising up a dead girl. In 8:41-42 Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue asked the Lord Jesus to heal his daughter, who was "about twelve years old, and she was dying." While the Lord was on the way to heal the girl, "a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, who could not be healed by anyone, approached Him from behind and touched the fringe of His garment; and instantly her flow of blood stopped" (vv. 43-44). Since this woman's case is merged with the case of the ruler's daughter, and since the twelve years of her sickness are the age of the girl, and they are both females, these cases may be considered a complete case of one person. In this view, the girl was born, so to speak, in the woman's death sickness and died of it. When the woman's death-sickness was healed by the Man-Savior, the dead girl rose up from death. This signifies that every fallen person is born in the death sickness of sin and is dead in it (Eph. 2:1). When his death sickness of sin is dealt with by the Savior's redeeming death (1 Pet. 2:24), he rises up out of death into life (John 5:24-25).

The flow of blood in the case of the woman signifies the leaking out of life. To lose blood means to lose life. This also is an aspect of the condition of today's society. According to the picture presented in Luke, fallen man's society is filled with demons and with the unclean business of hog raising, and it is characterized by the leaking out of life, which brings people into death

WHAT WE EXPERIENCE IN OUR JOURNEY WITH THE LORD

In order to understand the record of the Gospel of Luke, we need to see the significance of all the cases included in this Gospel. The man with the legion of demons signifies the situation of human society. Human society is filled with possessing demons. The business of hog raising signifies the unclean business among the fallen

human race. Now we see that the woman with the flow of blood signifies that fallen people in society are leaking out life and the result of the loss of life is death.

On their journey the Lord Jesus and His disciples met a legion of demons, those working in the unclean business of fog raising, one with a flow of blood, and another one who had died. This indicates that in our journey to follow the Lord we shall come in contact with four things: demons, the business of hog raising, the leaking out of life, and death. In our journey we may follow the Lord to a certain place. and there we shall meet legions of demons and unclean industry. Then we may go with Him to another place and there meet the leaking out of life and death.

In 7:36-50 we are represented by the sinful woman who had her sins forgiven and then began to love the Lord and live a life of peace. As those who have experienced the forgiveness of sins, we love the Lord and live a life of peace. Then, according to chapter eight, we follow Him, minister to His need, grow in life, shine as lamps, and become real relatives of the Lord. Hence, in 7:36--8:21 we see a picture of our Christian experience starting with the forgiveness of sins and ending with becoming the Lord's relatives, the members of His Body.

According to the record in 8:22-56, we should not stop with becoming relatives of the Lord. Rather, we must go on to take the way the Lord has ordained for us. This means that we should take the journey that He has ordained. We make this journey at the Lord's word and with Him in the boat.

We should not think that if we take the journey ordained by the Lord everything will be easy. On the contrary, we should be prepared to face storms. Because we are journeying at the Lord's word and with the Lord Himself in our boat, we should not be frightened by the storms. The Lord is resting in the boat, and we should learn to rest with Him. However, this is not easy for us to do. When a storm arises, we may call on the Lord and tell Him that we are perishing. From experience we know that we are more likely

to call on the Lord in a storm than when we are safe and at peace.

On our journey with the Lord, at a certain place we shall meet demons and the business of hog raising. In other places we shall meet the leaking out of life; we shall also meet death. But as followers of the Lord Jesus taking the way He has ordained for our journey, we shall always become a blessing to society. When we come to a place like that of the Gerasenes, a place filled with demons, the demons will be cast out, and the unclean industry will be cleared away. Even if others reject us, we shall still be a blessing to them. Then we may be led to another place and become a blessing to those who are suffering from the leaking out of life. As a result of our being in that place, some may be healed and others may be raised from the dead.

Wherever we journey in following the Lord, demons will be cast out, the business of hog raising will be cleared up, those suffering from the leaking out of life will be healed and the dead will be raised.

We have seen that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the same three instances we have been considering in this message. We have pointed out that Matthew's purpose is to show a dispensational change, and Mark's intention is to show the authority of the kingdom of God. But in Luke these events are recorded in order to show us the journey that has been ordained for us by the Man-Savior. Through reading the account in Luke we see the way we should take as followers of the Lord Jesus. Because we take this journey at the Lord's word, we shall reach our destination no matter how many storms there may be. Then at our destination we shall meet demons, unclean industry, the leaking out of life, and death. However, we shall always bring a blessing to these negative situations. The demons will he cast out, the unclean business will be cleared up, the disease of the leaking out of life will be healed, and the dead will be raised.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(10)

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:1-26

We have seen that in 7:36--8:21 the Christian life begins with the forgiveness of sins and then reaches a point where we become the relatives of Christ, the members of His Body. As His relatives, we are ready to journey on the way He has ordained and to travel and visit different places with Him.

THE SPREADING OF THE JUBILEE

By the time we come to 9:1, the Lord's disciples had been perfected to a certain extent. Now we need to see that their being perfected was for the spreading of the jubilee.

After the Man-Savior was fully prepared, He was baptized, tested, and anointed. Being fully qualified and perfected, He began His ministry. According to chapter four, His ministry opened with the proclamation of the jubilee.

When the Lord proclaimed the jubilee, He alone was carrying out the God-given ministry. After He made the proclamation concerning the jubilee, He called certain ones to Himself. In 6:13 we see that He called His disciples, and "He chose from them twelve, whom He also named apostles." We may say that in chapters six through eight the twelve apostles were "apprentices" following the Lord to learn how to carry out His ministry. As indicated by the record in 7:36--8:56, their sins were forgiven and they began to love the Lord and live a life of peace. They also began to grow in life, shine as lamps, and become the relatives of Christ. In chapter eight they journeyed with the

Lord at His word. In one place they encountered demons and saw how the Lord cleared up the business of hog raising. Elsewhere, they encountered a woman with a life-leaking condition and a girl who was raised from the dead. Therefore, at the end of chapter eight these followers of the Lord had been perfected to a certain extent.

Chapter nine begins another section of the Gospel of Luke, a section concerned with the spreading of the jubilee. What is the jubilee? The jubilee is actually the gospel of the New Testament. As we have seen, this gospel is the proclamation of the release of the captives and of the recovery of the lost birthright. Now in chapter nine we have the start of the spreading of this jubilee. Prior to this time, the ministry was carried out only by the Lord Himself. But in 9:1 we have the spreading through twelve others. Therefore, beginning with 9:1 we see the spreading of the ministry, the spreading of the jubilee, through the twelve apostles.

The thought of the spreading of the jubilee underlies the record in 9:1-26. Certain of the cases in 9:1-26 are found also in Matthew and Mark. In Matthew these cases are used as evidence to prove the doctrine of the kingdom of the heavens, and in Mark they are used to present the Lord Jesus as the faithful Slave of God carrying out God's ordained ministry. In Luke however, these cases are used to point out the spreading of the jubilee. The jubilee had already been proclaimed by the Man-Savior, and this proclamation continued until the end of chapter eight. Now in Luke 9 the spreading of the jubilee begins. No longer is there just one person proclaiming the jubilee. Now twelve others are sent out to spread the jubilee. Of course, in 9:1-26 the words "jubilee" or "acceptable year of the Lord" are not mentioned. Nevertheless, the underlying thought is very much related to the matter of jubilee.

SPREADING THE MINISTRY THROUGH THE TWELVE APOSTLES

In 9:1-6 we have the spreading of the ministry through

the twelve apostles. This spreading of the ministry is actually the spreading of the jubilee.

Giving Them Power and Authority over Demons and to Heal Diseases

Luke 9:1 says, "And having called together the twelve, He gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases." The power and authority over demons and to heal diseases is for the release of the captives. As a result of the fall, man was captured by Satan, sin, and disease, which is the issue of sin. Every fallen human being is a captive both of demons and of diseases. Therefore, the Man-Savior gave the twelve power and authority over demons and diseases. This is the negative aspect of the jubilee, the aspect of the release of the captives.

The authority in 9:1 over demons and disease is a foretaste of the power of the coming age (Heb. 6:5), that is, of the millennium, in which all demons will be cast out and all diseases will be healed (Isa. 35:5-6).

Demons are the spirits of the living creatures who lived in the preadamic age and were judged by God when they joined Satan's rebellion (see Life-Study of Genesis Message 2). The fallen angels work with Satan in the air (Eph. 2:2; 6:11-12), and the demons move with him on the earth. Both act evilly upon man for the kingdom of Satan. The possession of people by demons signifies Satan's usurpation of man, whom God created for His purpose. The demons need to be cast out from possessed people so that they may be delivered from Satan's bondage (Luke 13:16), out of Satan's authority of darkness (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13), into God's kingdom.

Sending Them to Proclaim the Kingdom of God

Luke 9:2 says, "And He sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to cure the sick." Here we have the proclaiming of the kingdom of God as the positive aspect of the jubilee. The kingdom of God involves the recovery of the right to enjoy God in Christ.

Let us review what we have said in an earlier message concerning the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the Savior (17:21) as the seed of life, sown into His believers, God's chosen people (Mark 4:3, 26), and developing into a realm which God may rule as His kingdom in His divine life. Its entrance is regeneration (John 3:5), and its development is the believers' growth in the divine life (2 Pet. 1:3-11). It is the church life today, in which the faithful believers live (Rom. 14:17), and it will develop into the coming kingdom as an inheritance reward (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5) to the overcoming saints in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6). Eventually, it will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God, an eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God's eternal life for all God's redeemed to enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (Rev. 21:1-4; 22:1-5). Such a kingdom, the kingdom of God, is what the Savior preached as the gospel, the good news (4:43).

According to 9:2, the Lord sent out the twelve to proclaim the kingdom of God. To proclaim the kingdom of God is to proclaim the jubilee. In particular, it is to proclaim the positive aspect of the jubilee--the recovery of our lost right to the enjoyment of God. Therefore, in sending out the twelve, the Man-Savior was spreading the jubilee through them to the surrounding country.

Charging the Twelve to Take Nothing for Their Journey

In 9:3 and 4 the Lord said to the twelve, "Take nothing for the journey, neither a staff, nor a bag, nor bread, nor money, nor have two tunics apiece. And into whatever house you enter, remain there, and from there go out." Why did the Man-Savior tell the sent ones not to take anything for their journey? The reason He told them to take nothing was that in the jubilee things are common under God's ordination. Therefore, there was no need for the twelve to take anything for themselves. The picture here indicates that when the jubilee comes there will not be any selfishness. Instead, everything will be both for us and for others.

The Apostles Going Out to Proclaim the Good News

Luke 9:6 says, "And going out, they passed through from village to village, bringing the good news and healing everywhere." What was this good news? It was the kingdom of God. The good news ordained by the Man-Savior was the preaching of the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:6 tells us that the apostles went out "healing everywhere." This indicates that they went out to apply the jubilee. The jubilee was declared in chapter four by the Man-Savior, but in chapter nine it was applied to those in Judea by the twelve.

Herod Being Utterly Perplexed

Luke 9:7-9 says, "And Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was utterly perplexed, because it was said by some that John was raised from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had risen. And Herod said, John I beheaded, but who is this concerning whom I hear such things? And he was seeking to see Him." According to Mark 6:14-29, Herod had John the Baptist beheaded. That was an indication of Satan's hatred for the faithful forerunner of the Man-Savior. This hatred was expressed in the darkness and injustice of the worldly people in power. In chapter nine of Luke we see that when Herod heard what was happening, he was utterly perplexed.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

The Lord Withdrawing Privately

In 9:10 and 11 Luke goes on to say, "And when the apostles returned, they related to Him whatever they had done. And taking them along, He withdrew privately into a city called Bethsaida. But the crowds, knowing it, followed Him; and He welcomed them and spoke to them concerning the kingdom of God, and those who had need of healing He cured." Here we see that, because of Herod's opposition, the Man-Savior withdrew privately into the city of Bethsaida. In that place He spoke to the crowds

who followed Him concerning the kingdom of God. He also cured the sick. Once again we have the application of the jubilee, which had been proclaimed in chapter four. The Lord's speaking concerning the kingdom of God was the positive aspect of the jubilee--the recovery of the right to enjoy God--and His curing the sick was the negative aspect of the jubilee--the release of the captives. Even in His withdrawal due to Herod's opposition, the Lord continued to apply the jubilee.

Feeding the Crowd with Five Loaves and Two Fishes

In 9:12-17 we have Luke's account of the feeding of the five thousand. In the Gospel of John this case is used to prove that the Lord Jesus is the life-supplying bread, the living bread, the bread of God, that came down from heaven to give life to the world. But in the Gospel of Luke this case is used to prove something else. In other words, in recording the feeding of the five thousand, Luke has a view different from that in John 6. Once again we see that Luke's view is related to the jubilee. Luke 9:12-17 indicates that in the jubilee no one will be in want; no one will lack, and there will not be any poverty.

According to verse 13, the multitude numbered about five thousand men. If we add in the women and the children, the number would probably be more than ten thousand. All these people were without food. There certainly was a great lack. Considering the matter from the point of view of their natural understanding, the twelve came to the Lord and said, "Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and farms to lodge and find provisions, because we are in a desolate place here" (v. 12). The disciples' suggestion that the Lord dismiss the crowd was an expression of the natural man.

The Lord responded to the disciples by saying, "You give them something to eat" (v. 13). Here the Lord seems to be saying, "To those who are poor and have nothing to eat, you should give food without cost, without charge." In the jubilee all are fed without cost.

The New Testament age should be a time of jubilee.

However, sadly, because of the degraded situation among Christians, the jubilee has been lost. But I believe that the Lord is now recovering this jubilee. In the Lord's recovery of the jubilee there should not be any shortage. On the contrary, there should always be something left over, just as there were twelve baskets full of broken pieces left over in 9:17. This means that there should always be an expression of the abundance of riches.

When the Lord told the disciples to give the crowd something to eat, they answered, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish among us, unless we go and buy food for all this people" (v. 13). Then the Lord told the disciples to have the people "recline in groups of about fifty each" (v. 14). "Taking the five loaves and the two fish, looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And they ate and were all satisfied; and they took up that which was left over to them of broken pieces, twelve baskets" (vv. 16-17). Here we see that everyone was satisfied and that the amount left over was more than what was at hand originally. As we read this we may say, "This is a miracle." Yes, it is a miracle. Nevertheless, we need to see the crucial point that Luke recorded this miracle in his Gospel from the point of view of the jubilee. The record of the feeding of the five thousand indicates that in the jubilee there is no lack. In the jubilee everyone is satisfied.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-ONE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(11)

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:1-26

A PICTURE OF THE JUBILEE

We have seen that the Lord Jesus began His ministry in chapter four by proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord, by proclaiming the jubilee. After making that proclamation, He called certain ones to be His disciples, and of these He chose twelve to be His apostles. Then in 9:1-6 the Lord sent out the twelve to spread the jubilee. In this portion of the Gospel of Luke we have the spreading of the Man-Savior's ministry through the twelve apostles.

The apostles went out to proclaim the kingdom of God. To proclaim the kingdom of God is to announce the jubilee. The feeding of the five thousand in 9:10-17 is also related to the jubilee. Luke's account here indicates that in the jubilee there is no lack, no shortage. In the jubilee everyone is satisfied.

We need to be impressed with the fact that Luke wrote his Gospel from the viewpoint of the jubilee. The ministry of the Man-Savior began in chapter four with the proclamation of the jubilee. We need to keep this in mind as we read the following chapters of Luke. However, when many readers of this Gospel come to chapter nine, they may forget about the jubilee that was announced in chapter four. We should not make this mistake, but should keep the jubilee in mind as we read through chapters five through twenty-four. The concept of the jubilee announced in chapter four governs all the following chapters. Therefore, we should regard what is

recorded in these chapters as part of the jubilee declared in Luke 4.

If we have this view as we read 9:10-17, we shall want to see how the Man-Savior handles the situation with the hungry multitude. In verse 13 we see that "there were about five thousand men." If the women and children are counted, the number must have exceeded ten thousand. Suppose the Lord had dismissed the crowd without feeding them, allowing them to remain hungry. In that case there would not have been the jubilee. Some might have complained and said, "I have been here all day long, and now I am hungry. Why have we been dismissed? Where shall we go, and how shall we find food?" If this had taken place, there would have been famine instead of jubilee. But as a result of the Lord's feeding the crowd, there was a real application of the jubilee. Everyone was satisfied, and there was an abundance of food left over.

In 9:12 the apostles said to the Lord, "Send the crowd away, that they may go into the surrounding villages and farms to lodge and find provisions." But the Lord said to them, "You give them something to eat" (v. 13). The disciples asked the Lord to send the crowds away so that they could obtain food for themselves, but the Lord told the disciples to give the crowd something to eat. Their concept was to ask people to do something; this is the principle of the law. But the Lord's concept is to give people something to enjoy; this is the principle of grace.

When the Lord told the twelve that they should give the crowd something to eat, they replied, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish among us" (v. 13). John 6:9 tells us that these five loaves are barley loaves. In figure, barley typifies the resurrected Christ (Lev. 23:10). Thus, the barley loaves signify Christ in resurrection as food to us. While the loaves are of the vegetable life, signifying the generating aspect of Christ's life, the fish are of the animal life, signifying the redeeming aspect of Christ's life. To satisfy our spiritual hunger we need Christ's generating life as well as His redeeming life. Both

aspects of His life are symbolized by small items--loaves and fishes. This indicates that the Man-Savior has come to be small pieces of food to feed His followers.

Luke 9:16 says, "And taking the five loaves and the two fish, looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd." The loaves were from the disciples, and they brought them to the Lord. After being blessed and broken by the Lord, they were given back to the disciples for distribution to the crowd, to whom the loaves became a great satisfaction. This indicates that the disciples were not the source of blessing; they were only the channels used by the Lord, who is the source of people's satisfaction.

Luke 9:17 says, "And they ate and were all satisfied; and they took up that which was left over to them of broken pieces, twelve baskets." This not only displayed the Man-Savior's power of deity as the Creator, as the One who calls the things not being as being (Rom. 4:17), but also signified the bountiful and inexhaustible supply of His divine life (Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:19). Furthermore, the twelve baskets of broken pieces indicate that the resurrected Christ is unlimited and inexhaustible, and also that the Lord's provision for us is abundant, more than sufficient to meet all our need.

The ministry of the Man-Savior was a ministry of jubilee. Through the twelve He had begun to spread this ministry of jubilee. In the jubilee no one is poor; instead, everyone is filled and satisfied. In the jubilee there are no captives; on the contrary, all captives are released and brought back to the enjoyment of God. In the application of the jubilee in 9:12-17, the people might have been beside themselves with joy. Some of the disciples might have said, "This is the jubilee proclaimed by the Lord. Now no one is poor, but everyone is satisfied. Look, there are even twelve baskets left over!" What a picture of jubilee!

RECOGNIZED AS CHRIST AND UNVEILING HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION THE FIRST TIME

Immediately after the account of the feeding of the five

thousand, we are told that the Lord was praying and then asked the disciples a question: "And it came about that as He was praying alone the disciples were with Him; and He questioned them, saying, Who do the crowds say that I am?" (v. 18). The disciples answered, "John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and others that one of the ancient prophets has risen" (v. 19). Here we see that most people can realize only that Christ is a prophet. Apart from heavenly revelation, no one can know that He is the Christ.

In verse 20 the Lord went on to say, "But you, who do you say that I am?" At this point Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

The Christ and the Jubilee

The realization that Jesus is the Christ is also related to the jubilee. There could not be a jubilee without Christ, without the One appointed and anointed by God. In order for the jubilee to be carried out, there is the need of the Christ.

In the Old Testament we have the matter of the jubilee. In the Old Testament we also have words concerning the coming Messiah, the coming anointed One of God. The real jubilee cannot come apart from God's anointed One. When this One came, He brought the jubilee with Him. Actually His coming is itself the jubilee.

Have you ever thought that the events recorded in 9:1-26 are related to the jubilee? Although I have been studying the Gospels for many years, I never heard of anyone pointing out that the feeding of the five thousand in Luke 9 is related to the jubilee that was proclaimed by the Lord Jesus in Luke 4. Now I see that the feeding of the five thousand is an application of the jubilee. The declaration of the jubilee in chapter four should cover all that takes place in the following chapters. This means that whatever takes place in chapters five through twenty-four should be considered part of the jubilee.

Luke 9:1 and 2 say, "And having called together the twelve, He gave them power and authority over all the

demons, and to heal diseases. And He sent them to proclaim the kingdom of God and to cure the sick." Here we see that when the Man-Savior sent out the twelve to spread His ministry, He gave them power and authority over demons and disease. He also sent them to preach, to announce, the kingdom of God. Can there be poverty or hunger in the kingdom of God? To be sure there is neither poverty nor hunger in God's kingdom. What, then, do we have in the kingdom of God? In God's kingdom we have the jubilee, and in the jubilee there is satisfaction but no hunger, fullness but no lack. In the jubilee everyone is satisfied, and there is an abundance of food left over. This is portrayed by the account of the feeding of the five thousand.

After the Lord fed the five thousand, the disciples might have been excited. The Lord, however, was calm. Verse 18 tells us that He was praying alone. Often when people are excited, the Lord Jesus will calmly remove Himself and pray. In His praying the Lord questioned the disciples, asking them who the crowds said that He was. They told Him of the various nonsensical answers. Then Peter took the lead to say, "You are the Christ."

The record here is somewhat different from that in Matthew 16. The record concerning the recognizing of Christ in Matthew 16 involves the establishment of the kingdom and the building up of the church. Here in 9:18-26 Luke has a different point of view. Luke's view is not that of the establishment of the kingdom and the building up of the church. Rather, Luke's view is that of the jubilee. Therefore, Luke's intention is to show us that for the jubilee there is the need of the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed One. This is the reason Luke emphasizes that Jesus is the Christ and does not include the details. We need to be impressed with the fact that Luke's purpose is to point out that for the application of the jubilee, we need Christ, the anointed One of God.

The Need for Death and Resurrection

Immediately after the Lord was recognized as the

Christ, He spoke to His disciples concerning His death and resurrection. In verse 22 He said. "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

For years I did not understand the meaning of the sequence in chapter nine. Why after the feeding of the five thousand did the Lord question the disciples concerning Himself? Then why, immediately after they recognized Him as the Christ, did He tell them that He was about to be crucified and resurrected? The answer to these questions is that there cannot be a jubilee without Christ and without His death and resurrection. We have already pointed out that we cannot have the jubilee without Christ. Now we need to see that we cannot have the jubilee without Christ's death and resurrection. Apart from the death of Christ, there would be no way for sinners to be released. Apart from the resurrection of Christ, there could not be the recovery of the lost right to enjoy God.

Christ's death has released us from sin and from Satan. According to Hebrews 2:14, Christ destroyed Satan through His death. If He had not destroyed Satan, how could He release us from Satan's usurping hand? If the Lord had not destroyed Satan through death, He could not have released us from him. Our release from bondage is absolutely due to the all-inclusive death of Christ, a death that has released us from sin and Satan.

It is only through the resurrection of Christ that our right to the enjoyment of God is recovered. When we believe in the all-inclusive, victorious death of Christ, we are released from sin, Satan, and ourselves. When we remain and live in the resurrection of Christ, we have the recovery of the right to enjoy God. This is the jubilee. Christ with His death and resurrection has brought in the jubilee.

IDENTIFYING OURSELVES WITH CHRIST'S DEATH

Based upon His word concerning His death! the Lord went on in 9:23-26 to teach the disciples to take up their

cross and follow Him by denying their soul life. It is necessary for us to do this in order to participate in the jubilee. The jubilee has been carried out by the death of Christ. Now for us to participate in this jubilee we must be identified with His death. He died to accomplish the jubilee, and now we die with Him to participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee. On the one hand, there was the need of Christ's death to carry out the jubilee. On the other hand, there is the need for us to identify ourselves with His death so that we may enjoy the jubilee.

Bearing the Cross and Denying the Soul Life

To identify ourselves with Christ's death is to bear the cross, and to bear the cross is to deny our soul life. As we shall see in a later message, the disciples were still quite natural. In order to participate in the jubilee accomplished by Christ's death, it was necessary for them to bear the cross and deny the soul life.

In 9:23 the Lord says, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." The cross here is not merely a suffering; it is also a killing. It kills and terminates the criminal. Christ first bore the cross and then was crucified. We, His believers, have first been crucified with Him and then bear the cross today. To us, bearing the cross is to remain under the killing of the death of Christ for the terminating of our self, our natural life, and our old man. In so doing we deny our self that we may follow the Lord.

Before the Lord's crucifixion, the disciples followed Him in an outward way. But after His resurrection, we follow Him in an inward way. Because in resurrection He has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) dwelling in our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22), we follow Him in our spirit (Gal. 5:16-25).

Losing Our Soul Life

In Luke 9:24 the Lord goes on to say, "For whoever wants to save his soul life will lose it, but whoever loses his soul life for My sake, this one shall save it." To save

the soul life is to allow the soul to have its enjoyment and not to suffer. To lose the soul life is to cause the soul to suffer the loss of its enjoyment. If the followers of the Man-Savior allow their soul to have its enjoyment in this age, they will cause their soul to suffer the 1088 of its enjoyment in the coming kingdom age. If they allow their soul to suffer the loss of its enjoyment in this age for the sake of the Man-Savior, they will cause their soul to have its enjoyment in the coming kingdom age. They will share the Lord's joy in ruling over the earth (Matt. 25:21, 23).

In Luke 9:26 the Lord continues, "For what is a man profited, having gained the whole world, but having lost or forfeited himself?" Matthew 16:26 speaks of forfeiting the soul life, but Luke 9:25, of forfeiting "himself." This indicates that our soul life is our self.

In Luke 9:1-25 we see that in order to spread the jubilee, the Man-Savior sent out the twelve to proclaim the kingdom of God, to cast out demons, and to heal diseases. Then the Man-Savior performed a miracle to indicate that to all the needy ones He applies the jubilee. He may have applied the jubilee to more than ten thousand people. We have also seen that for the jubilee there is the need of the Christ. Christ is the One who carries out the jubilee. Furthermore, it was necessary for Christ to die and be resurrected. Then in order to participate in the jubilee and enjoy it, we, the followers of the Man-Savior, need to identify ourselves with His all-inclusive death and live in His resurrection.

RELEASED FROM CAPTIVITY INTO THE ENJOYMENT OF THE JUBILEE

The actual experience and enjoyment of the jubilee by the believers is found not in the Gospels but in the Acts and the Epistles. In the book of Acts and in the Epistles we see that the real jubilee was enjoyed by the early disciples. In particular Paul was in the enjoyment of the jubilee. Paul was once a captive, but he was released from sin, Satan. the world, and the Jewish religion and was brought into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ as the

embodiment of God. Through Christ with His death and resurrection Paul was released from his captivity into the enjoyment of the jubilee. His fourteen Epistles, therefore, are a complete description, definition, and explanation of his enjoyment of the jubilee through death and in resurrection.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-TWO

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES IN GALILEE

(12)

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:27-50

THE NEED FOR TRANSFIGURATION

In this message we come to 9:27-50. This portion of the Gospel of Luke also is related to the jubilee. Here we see that it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to be transfigured. According to the entire revelation of the New Testament, we need transfiguration in order to enjoy the jubilee.

The Greek word rendered "transfigured" in Matthew 17:2 is the same as that translated "transformed" in Mark 9:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Romans 12:2. The same Greek word is used also in Philippians 3:21. The point here is that for the enjoyment of the jubilee we need transfiguration, transformation.

The Man-Savior in the flesh needed transfiguration because He was in the likeness of the flesh of sin, the likeness of the flesh of fallen man (Rom. 8:3). Just as the brass serpent on the pole had the form of a serpent but not the poisonous nature of a serpent (Num. 21:8-9), so the Lord Jesus in the flesh had the likeness of the flesh of sin but not the nature of the flesh of sin (John 3:14). When He became flesh, He took on the form of the old man. Man had already become fallen when the Lord Jesus became flesh. He became flesh long after man's fall, coming in the likeness of the flesh of sin. John 1:1 and 14 indicate that the Word, which was God, became flesh. In Paul's words in 1 Timothy 3:16, this was a matter of God manifested in the flesh. Because the Lord Jesus, God incarnate, came in the flesh, even He was in need of transfiguration.

RESURRECTION, TRANSFIGURATION, AND THE FULL APPLICATION OF THE JUBILEE

The New Testament age is the age of the jubilee. However, this is not yet the time of the full application of the jubilee. The full application of the jubilee involves transfiguration. Do you know when the Savior was transfigured in full? He was fully transfigured in His resurrection. The transfiguration on the mountain was on a small scale. But when the Lord was resurrected from among the dead, He was fully transfigured. He now remains in this state of transfiguration. According to Philippians 3:21, when He comes back, we all shall be transfigured.

Presently our transformation, or transfiguration, is taking place in our soul. Our spirit has been regenerated, and our soul is being transformed. A matured believer is one who has been fully transformed in his soul, that is, transformed in his mind, will, and emotion. Such a believer only needs his physical body to be transfigured at the coming of the transfigured Savior. This transfiguration of the body is called the redemption of the body by Paul in Romans 8:23. The redemption of the body is also the entering into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Paul's word in Romans 8 indicates that although we are in the jubilee today, we are not yet in the jubilee in a full way. When our body has been fully redeemed, fully transfigured and transformed, then we shall be brought into the freedom of the glory of the children of God, and that will be the jubilee in full.

A BASIC PRINCIPLE

Here we need to see a basic principle: When we are in our old man, we cannot participate in the jubilee. Even though we are in the year of jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord, which is actually the entire New Testament age,

if we remain in the old creation we have nothing to do with participating in the enjoyment of the jubilee. This is the reason the situation among Christians today is pitiful. Many believers know only that their sins have been forgiven, but they do not know that their spirit has been regenerated. However, a forgiven person who does not know that he has been regenerated still remains in the old creation and cannot participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee.

TRANSFORMATION FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF THE JUBILEE

In order that we may enjoy the jubilee, our spirit has been regenerated. God has regenerated our spirit as the beginning of our participation in the enjoyment of the jubilee. This means that we began to enter into the enjoyment of the jubilee when our spirit was regenerated. When we called on the name of the Lord for salvation and experienced the forgiveness of sins, our spirit was regenerated. Even though we did not have the knowledge of what had taken place, within us there was rejoicing. The joy within us was a sign of the beginning of our participation in the enjoyment of the jubilee. A proper conversion and experience of salvation always bring in such an enjoyment.

Many believers, after being regenerated, have been misled into caring for doctrine merely in a mental way. As a result, they have lost their enjoyment of the jubilee. However, we in the Lord's recovery have been brought back from theology and from mere doctrinal, mental understanding to our regenerated spirit. The more the Lord spreads from our spirit into our soul, saturating our mind, will, and emotion, the more we participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee. As we experience 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Romans 12:2, that is, as we are being transformed in our soul, we enjoy the jubilee.

Have you seen what the jubilee is? The jubilee is a release from bondage and the entering into the enjoyment of the Triune God. We began to experience this jubilee

when we were regenerated. Through regeneration we were released from bondage and entered into the enjoyment of the Triune God. But soon after we were regenerated, many of us were misled by blind teachers, and we lost the enjoyment of the jubilee. Now in the Lord's recovery we have come back to our regenerated spirit, and we have begun to experience transformation in our soul.

According to Paul's word in 2 Corinthians 3:18, we are being transformed into the same image, the image of the Lord, from one degree of glory to another. As we go on from one degree of glory to another degree, we are excited because as we progress we participate more in the release from bondage and enter more fully into the enjoyment of the Triune God. This is transformation for the enjoyment of the jubilee. This transformation is depicted by the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus on Mount Hermon.

In 9:23 and 24 the Lord says, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his soul life will lose it, but whoever loses his soul life for My sake, this one shall save it." To bear our cross to follow the Lord and to deny our soul life is to identify ourselves with His death. The Lord's death crosses off the natural life and the old creation so that we may enter into the new creation, into a transfigured condition. Here, in a transfigured state, we participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee. Hence, for the enjoyment of the jubilee there is the need of transfiguration.

TRANSFIGURATION AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

After speaking to His disciples about being identified with His death, the Lord went on to say, "But I tell you truly, there are some of those standing here who shall by no means taste death until they see the kingdom of God" (9:27). This was fulfilled by the Lord's transfiguration on the mountain. This means that His transfiguration was the coming of the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:28 and 29 say, "And about eight days after these words, it came about that He took with Him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray. And it came about that as He prayed the appearance of

His face became different, and His garment dazzling white." Literally, the Greek words rendered "dazzling white" mean flashing like lightning. Unlike Matthew 17 and Mark 9, these verses do not use the word "transfigured." Nevertheless, in these verses we certainly can see the Lord's transfiguration. His transfiguration was the coming, the appearing, of the kingdom of God.

We have emphasized the fact that the kingdom of God is the Savior (17:21) as the seed of life, sown into His believers, God's chosen people (Mark 4:3,26), and developing into a realm which God may rule as His kingdom in His divine life. The Man-Savior's transfiguration actually was the appearing of this kingdom. When Peter, John, and James were in the atmosphere of the Lord's transfiguration, they were in the kingdom of God. This was the reason Peter said to the Lord, "Master, it is good for us to be here" (Luke 9:33). At that juncture, Peter, John, and James certainly participated in the enjoyment of the jubilee. They were released and were in the enjoyment of the Triune God.

SEEING TRANSFIGURATION AS RELATED TO THE JUBILEE

Not many Christians have seen that the transfiguration of the Lord Jesus was the appearing of the kingdom of God and was also the jubilee. It is very important for us to see this.

The Lord Jesus Christ now lives in us. We may say that He has again become incarnated, this time in us. Therefore, in a sense. as the One who lives in us, He is once again in the flesh, in our flesh. We are all the flesh in which the Lord Jesus lives. Therefore, there is the need of another transfiguration.

Most Christians know something about the Lord's transfiguration. But they know this merely in a doctrinal way. If we have a bird's-eye view of the entire Gospel of Luke and view it according to the principle of the jubilee declared in chapter four, we shall see that the transfiguration in chapter nine is related to the jubilee.

Who in 9:27-36 had the full enjoyment of the jubilee?

Only three of the disciples had this full enjoyment--Peter, John, and James. However, although these three participated in the jubilee and enjoyed it, they were still very natural. The Lord Jesus was transfigured, but Peter, John, and James were not transfigured. Thus, although they were in the jubilee, they did not actually know anything about it, because they had not yet been transfigured.

We need to be impressed that the transfiguration of the Man-Savior is related to the jubilee and is also the appearing of the kingdom of God. Because Peter, John, and James had not yet been transformed, they could participate in the jubilee without having the proper realization concerning it. These three disciples were still in the old creation, still in the natural life.

THE LORD CASTING A DEMON OUT OF A MAN'S SON

While the transfiguration was taking place on the mountaintop, down in the valley the disciples were trying to cast out a demon. Although they did what they could to cast out the demon, they were not able to cast it out. Only three of the disciples--Peter, John, and James--were on the mountain with the Lord to participate in the jubilee. The others remained in the valley. This was the situation the Savior faced when He came down from the mountaintop.

Luke 9:37 says that when the Lord and the three disciples came down from the mountain, a great crowd met Him. Then "a man from the crowd called out, saying, Teacher, I beg You to look upon my son, for he is my only child; and behold, a spirit takes him, and suddenly he cries out, and it convulses him with foaming; and crushing him, with difficulty it departs from him. And I begged Your disciples that they would cast it out, and they could not" (vv. 38-40). Here we see that the disciples did not have the ability to cast out the demon. This was true not only of the nine who remained in the valley, but also of Peter, John, and James who were with the Lord on the mountaintop. The fact that John and James took the lead to argue who was greater indicates that they themselves were occupied by the Devil and thus were unable to cast out the demon.

The jubilee was present with the Lord Jesus. However, because the disciples were still in the old creation, still in the natural life, they could not participate in the jubilee. This indicates that as long as we remain in the natural life and live in the old creation, we cannot share in the jubilee. The jubilee has nothing to do with the natural life.

According to 9:41 the Lord Jesus said, "O unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." Then He rebuked the unclean spirit, cured the boy, and gave him back to his father (v. 42). Concerning this, verse 43 says, "And all were astounded at the majesty of God."

UNVEILING HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION THE SECOND TIME

While "all were marveling at all the things which He did. He said to His disciples, Put these words into your ears; for the Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men" (v. 43b, 44). Here the Lord unveils His death the second time. However, the disciples "did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him concerning this saying" (v. 45). Immediately afterward, we are told that "a reasoning came in among them as to which of them would be greater" (v. 46). This certainly indicates that the disciples did not know where they were. They certainly were not in the jubilee, for they were still very natural.

The Lord Jesus had indicated that He was about to die. He also indicated that it was necessary for the disciples to die with Him. Here the Lord seemed to be saying, "I must die in order to accomplish the jubilee, and you need to die in order to participate in the jubilee. Without My death there will not be a jubilee, and without your death with Me you cannot participate in the jubilee."

THE DISCIPLES UNABLE TO HEAR THE LORD'S WORD

Although the Lord had told the disciples to "put these words" into their ears, they did not have the ability to hear what He was saying. They could not understand His word;

they could not perceive it. Their inability to understand what the Lord was saying is indicated by the fact that they were reasoning among themselves concerning which of them would be greater (v. 46).

Luke 9:47-48 says, "And Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their heart, took hold of a little child and stood it beside Himself, and said to them, Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for he who is littler among you all, this one is great." As soon as the Lord spoke these words. John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us" (v. 49). John's word indicates that the disciples could not receive the Lord's word. We may say that they could not appreciate the "music" He was playing. The reason they could not take in the Lord's word was that they were natural and still in the old creation. With them there was no jubilee. They were not yet qualified to participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee.

The jubilee can be carried out only through Christ's death and resurrection. Furthermore, only through our identification with Christ in His death can we share in the enjoyment of the jubilee. For the jubilee and the experience of the jubilee, it was necessary for the Lord to die and for us to die with Him. He died for the accomplishment of the jubilee, and we died with Him in order to participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee.

In reading the Gospel of Luke, we need to have the view that the jubilee declared in chapter four is the key to interpreting the entire book. In the past I saw the matter of jubilee in this Gospel; however, I did not see that the jubilee in chapter four was the key to interpreting all the following chapters.

DYING WITH CHRIST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ENJOYMENT OF THE JUBILEE

At the time of 9:50 the Lord's ministry in Galilee was completed. As we shall see, beginning in 9:51, He left Galilee for Jerusalem. Do you think that when the Lord

completed the section of His ministry in Galilee, Peter John James, and the other disciples were in the enjoyment of the jubilee? They were not at all in this enjoyment. They could not understand the Lord's word concerning His death. It was necessary for the Lord to go with them to Jerusalem where He would die to accomplish the jubilee and where the disciples would die with Him in order to participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee.

In chapter nine we have seen that although the disciples were in the jubilee, they did not have any participation in the enjoyment of the jubilee. Actually, the jubilee had not yet been accomplished, for it could only be accomplished by the death of Christ and in His resurrection. Therefore, eventually the Lord decided to go from Galilee to Jerusalem with His disciples. He went to Jerusalem to die, but He did not go there to die alone. Rather, He brought His disciples with Him so that they would realize that it was necessary for Him to die for the accomplishment of the jubilee and also necessary for them to die to participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-THREE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:1--10:24

According to the Gospel of Luke, the Man-Savior's ministry on earth was in two sections. The first section was accomplished in Galilee (4:14--9:50). This section concludes with the Lord's unveiling His death the second time and with a word that exposes the naturalness of His disciples. The second section of the Man-Savior's ministry takes place on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51--19:27). The first section of His ministry covered twenty six matters. As we shall see, thirty-seven matters are covered in the second section. The first matter in this section is the Man-Savior's being rejected by the Samaritans (9:51-56).

REJECTED BY THE SAMARITANS

Luke 9:51 says, "And it came about, when the days were being fulfilled for His being taken up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." The Man-Savior had been ministering for over three years in the despised region of Galilee, far from the holy temple and the holy city, the place where He must die for the accomplishment of God's eternal plan. As the Lamb of God (John 1:29), it was necessary for the Lord to be offered to God at Mount Moriah, which is Mount Zion, where Abraham offered Isaac and enjoyed God's provision of a ram as a substitute for his son (Gen. 22:2, 9-14) and where the temple was built in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 3:1). It must be there that He would be delivered, according to the counsel determined by the Trinity of the Godhead (Acts 2:23), to the Jewish leaders (Mark 9:31;

10:33), and there be rejected by them as the builders of God's building (Acts 4:11). It should also be there that He would be crucified according to the Roman style of punishment (John 18:31-32; 19:6, 14-15) to fulfill the type concerning the kind of death He would die (Num. 21:8-9; John 3:14). Moreover, that very year was the year that Messiah (Christ) should be cut off (killed) according to Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-26). Furthermore, as the Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7) He must be killed in the month of the Passover (Exo. 12:1-11). Hence, He must go to Jerusalem (Mark 10:33; 11:1, 11, 15, 27; John 12:12) before the Passover (John 12:1; Mark 14:1), so that He might die there on the day of the Passover (Mark 14:12-17; John 18:28) at both the place and the time foreordained by God.

We have pointed out that, according to Luke 9:51, the Lord "steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." Verses 52 and 53 say, "And He sent messengers before His face. And having gone, they entered into a village of the Samaritans to prepare for Him. And they did not receive Him, because He was going with His face toward Jerusalem." Here we see that the Man-Savior was rejected by the Samaritans.

There was no way the Lord Jesus could go from Galilee to Jerusalem without passing through Samaria. The Samaritans were part Gentile and part Jewish. The Jews absolutely rejected them and refused to consider them part of the holy people. The Samaritans were offended by this and did not think well regarding the Jews. Realizing the situation, the Lord knew that it was difficult for Him and those with Him to pass through Samaria. More than seventy others were journeying with Him. This is proved by the fact that in 10:1 He "appointed seventy others, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to come" (10:1).

Since the Lord sent out these seventy, it may have been that even more were following Him on the way through Samaria to Jerusalem.

In 9:52 the Lord sent messengers before Him. These messengers entered into a village of the Samaritans to

prepare for the Lord. However, the Samaritans would not receive Him. Because the Lord was rejected by the Samaritans, there was no way for Him and His followers to stay in that village. It was necessary for them to go to some other village.

Seeing that the Samaritans had rejected the Man-Savior, "the disciples, James and John, said, Lord, do You want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (v. 54). Some manuscripts add to this verse the words "as also Elijah did." The Lord turned to these disciples and rebuked them. It seems that the Lord might have been telling them, "Don't you know that we are proclaiming the jubilee? The jubilee is not a matter of calling down fire to consume people. Instead of telling fire to come down from heaven, we are bringing peace to others."

In Mark 3:17 the Lord gave to John and James "the name, Boanerges, which is, sons of thunder." "Boanerges" comes from Aramaic. This name was added to James and John because of their impetuosity. Their impetuous word in Luke 9:54 was contrary to the virtue and morality of the Savior whom they accompanied.

John, one of the sons of thunder, also spoke an impetuous word in Luke 9:49: "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us." This impetuous action on the part of John was also contrary to the virtue of the Man-Savior. John's attitude was like that of Joshua in Numbers 11:28.

Luke 9:55 says, "But He turned and rebuked them." The following doubtful reading appears in a few manuscripts: "and said, You do not know what kind of spirit you are of." This word, which shows the high morality of the Man-Savior, is found only in Luke.

Luke 9:56 says simply, "And they went into another village." A few manuscripts add this doubtful reading at the end of verse 56: "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

INSTRUCTING PEOPLE HOW TO FOLLOW HIM

In 9:57-62 the Man-Savior instructs people how to follow Him. Verse 57 says, "And as they went along the road, someone said to Him, I will follow You wherever you go." The Lord Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven have roosting places, but the Son of Man has nowhere that He may lay His head." The one in verse 57 was one of the scribes (Matt 8:19), who used to live comfortably. He saw crowds being attracted to the Savior (Matt. 8:18) and wanted to follow Him out of curiosity, without counting the cost. This was the reason the Man-Savior answered him in such a way as to cause him to consider the cost. The Savior cautioned him by pointing out that, although crowds were attracted to Him He had nowhere to rest. This indicates that it would cost considerable suffering to the one in verse 57 to follow the Lord.

In 9:58 the Lord pointed out specifically that He had nowhere to lay His head. Here we see that the Savior's human life was a life of suffering. At His birth there was no room in the inn for Him to lie down (2:7). In His marvelous ministry there was likewise no place for Him to rest. Suffering, therefore, is a sign of His human life (2:12).

In 9:57 and 58 we see that those who want to follow the Lord Jesus out of curiosity do not know the cost of following Him. To be sure, the scribe in verse 57 did not know what it would cost him to follow the Lord. Hence the Savior warned this one that following Him would cost him much suffering.

In 9:59 the Man-Savior said to another one, "Follow Me. But he said, Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." This one was called by the Savior to follow Him, but he considered his duty to his dead father and would not follow Him immediately. Hence, the Savior encouraged him to pay the price that he might become a follower in His great commission to publish the kingdom of God (v. 60).

The answer of the one who asked to first go and bury his father indicates that he overly considered the cost of following the Man-Savior. This was the reason the Lord

answered him in the way of encouraging him to follow Him and set aside his considerations of the cost and to leave the burial of his father to others.

In 9:60 the Lord went on to say to the one addressed in the previous verse, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and publish the kingdom of God." This word indicates that the burying one was spiritually dead (John 5:25; Eph. 2:1) and the one to be buried was physically dead. To engage in such a burial was to do a dead work. However, to publish the kingdom of God is a living deed, a deed that makes the dead alive to enter into the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:61 says, "And another also said, I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-by to those in my home." The Greek words rendered "say good-by" may also be rendered "take leave of." In verse 62 the Lord said to this one, "No one putting his hand on a plow and looking at the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God." The third one volunteered to follow the Savior, but he would not do it before bidding farewell to his family. Hence, the Man-Savior warned this one not to let anything hold him back from the kingdom of God.

In verse 62 the Lord speaks of not putting one's hand on the plow and looking back. Plowing requires one to concentrate all his attention on the line plowed. Just a little distraction, to say nothing of looking back, may lead the plower off the straight line. To follow the Savior requires us to forget everything else and to press straight forward for the kingdom of God.

Why does Luke insert an account of three cases of following the Lord Jesus in 9:57-62? The reason is that the Lord had been rejected by the Samaritans. Although the Samaritans had rejected the Man-Savior, certain people still were willing to follow Him. Therefore, at this juncture the Lord dealt with three different kinds of cases of those who would follow Him.

We may say that the entire world today is like the region of Samaria in that the world utterly rejects the Man-Savior. Nevertheless, in the midst of the world's

rejection of the Lord, some are willing to follow Him. In the first case, narrated in 9:57 and 58, we see that following the Lord is not an easy matter. Rather, if we would follow Him, we must be ready for the cost. In the second case, described in 9:59-60, we see that following the Lord requires us to sacrifice our dead father in order that we may proclaim the kingdom of God, that is, proclaim the jubilee. Then in the last case, seen in 9:61 and 62, we realize that we cannot look backward or be held back by anything if we are to follow the Lord. Following Him requires that we go straight ahead.

APPOINTING SEVENTY DISCIPLES TO SPREAD HIS MINISTRY

In 10:1-24 we see that the Lord appointed seventy disciples to spread His ministry. The three cases in 9:57-62 were actually a preparation for this. After this preparation, the Lord appointed the seventy to spread the jubilee.

We have seen that in 9:1-9 the Lord spread His ministry through the twelve apostles. That was in Galilee. But now, on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem and through Samaria, the need was much greater. Therefore, the Lord appointed seventy and sent them to spread the jubilee. Concerning this, 10:1 says, "Now after these things, the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to come." The Savior appointed seventy disciples to share His ministry, even as Moses appointed seventy elders to share his burden as God charged him (Num. 11:16-17; Exo. 24:1, 9). The fact that He sent them out two by two indicates that they were sent out as witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:16; Matt. 18:16).

Luke 10:2 says, "And He said to them, The harvest indeed is vast, but the workers are few; therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest that He would thrust out workers into His harvest." In His economy God has a plan to accomplish. But this plan still requires His people to beseech, that is, to pray about it. In answering their

prayer, the Lord will accomplish what they have prayed concerning His plan. In particular, here the Lord tells the disciples to beseech the Lord of the harvest. The word "harvest" indicates that the kingdom of God is established with things of life that can grow and multiply. Furthermore, the title "the Lord of the harvest" indicates that the Lord is the One who owns the crop.

The way the Lord sent out the seventy in 10:1-24 is very similar to the way He sent out the twelve in 9:1-9. The Lord considered the time of this sending to be the time of jubilee, and in the jubilee no one will be short of anything. This was the reason the Lord charged the seventy not to carry anything for their need. Rather, they were to stay where they were received and eat whatever was set before them (vv. 7-8).

In 10:5 and 6 we have an important word concerning peace: "And into whatever house you enter, first say, Peace to this house. And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon it; but if not, it shall return upon you." In these verses the word "peace" is crucial. The Lord even uses the expression "son of peace." The main thing in the jubilee is peace. We should greet others in peace, and they should greet us with peace. If the one we greet is a son of peace, our peace will remain with him. But if he is not a son of peace, our peace will return upon us.

In 10:10-16 we see the seriousness of rejecting the one sent by the Man-Savior. Regarding a city that rejects the Lord's sent ones, He says, "I say to you that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in that day than for that city." This indicates that the punishment of God's judgment is in varying degrees. To reject the Lord's sent ones will cause more punishment than the sin of Sodom.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-FOUR

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(2)

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:51--10:24

In the foregoing message we began to consider the second section of the earthly ministry of the Man-Savior, the section from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51--19:27). We have seen that the Lord was rejected by the Samaritans (9:51-56). After this rejection, He instructed certain ones how to follow Him (9:57-62). This instruction was a preparation for the appointing of seventy disciples to spread His ministry, as recorded in 10:1-24.

THE SEVENTY RETURNING WITH JOY

Luke 10:17 says, "And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." The Lord Jesus replied, "I was beholding Satan when he fell like lightning out of heaven." At the time of his rebellion against God before the creation of man, Satan was judged and sentenced to be cast into Sheol (Hades), to the recesses, the deepest part of the pit (Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 28:17). Then God began to execute His sentence on him on different occasions in different degrees, such as through the seventy disciples in Luke 10, through Christ on the cross (Heb. 2:14; John 12:31), through the manchild and Michael before the great tribulation when he was cast down to the earth (Rev. 12:5, 7-10, 13), and through the angel before the millennium when he was cast into the abyss, the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-2), until finally he will be cast into the lake of fire after the millennium (Rev. 20:10) for eternity.

In 10:19 the Lord went on to say to the seventy, "Behold, I have given you the authority to tread upon

serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." What the Lord gave to the disciples was authority; what the enemy had was power. Authority subdues power. The serpents in verse 19 may signify Satan and his angels (Eph. 2:2; 6:11-12); the scorpions may signify demons (Luke 10:17, 20). The disciples subdued the evil power by the authority of the Lord.

After telling the disciples that He was beholding Satan when he fell like lightning out of heaven and after saying that He had given them authority over all the power of the enemy, the Lord said, "However, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are inscribed in the heavens" (v. 20). Certainly being saved, having our names inscribed in the heavens, is more crucial than casting out demons. Nevertheless, it is easy for believers, especially young ones, to be more excited about the casting out of demons than about having their names inscribed in the heavens. After listening to the report of the seventy, the Lord Jesus was not excited about the subduing of the demons. The Lord told the disciples that they should rejoice, exult, not that the spirits are subject to them, but that their names have been inscribed in the heavens.

When we first hear about the jubilee, we may be very excited. I noticed that after a recent message on the jubilee the saints were extremely excited. But they were not excited when I pointed out in a later message that we must be identified with Christ's death in order to participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee. Christ had to die in order to accomplish the jubilee, and we need to die in order to participate in the jubilee. Apart from death, the jubilee cannot be our experience. We, however, do not find this kind of word very exciting.

After the Lord Jesus made the matter of the jubilee clear to the disciples, He spoke to them concerning His death. He unveiled His death the first time in Luke 9:22, and the second time in 9:44. Before unveiling His death the second time, the Lord told the disciples to "put these words" into their ears. Nevertheless, they did not

understand what He was talking about. Like those disciples, we may be excited about the jubilee, but not about the Lord's word concerning our need to die with Him in order to participate in the enjoyment of the jubilee. In 10:20 the Lord told the disciples not to rejoice over the subduing of the demons, over the fact that the spirits are subject to them. He told them to rejoice instead that their names are inscribed in the heavens.

THE MAN-SAVIOR EXULTING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Luke 10:21 and 22 say, "In the same hour He exulted in the Holy Spirit and said, I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." The Lord's prayer here involves the Trinity economically. In the Holy Spirit the Son praised the Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. Economically, all things have been delivered to the Son by the Father. Now no one knows who the Son is except the Father and who the Father is except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal the Father. The emphasis here is not on the essential Trinity but on the economical Trinity.

In His exulting in the Holy Spirit, the Savior praised the Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. "Father" refers to the Father's relationship with Him, the Son. "Lord of heaven and earth" refers to God's relationship with the universe. When God's people were defeated by His enemy, He was called the God of heaven (Ezra 5:11-12; Dan. 2:18, 37). But when there was a man standing for God on the earth, He was called the possessor of heaven and earth (Gen. 14:19, 22). Here in Luke 10:21 the Man-Savior, as the Son of Man, also called the Father the Lord of heaven and earth. This indicates that He was standing on the earth for God's interest.

The Son in 10:21 praised the Father that He has "hid these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to babes." The "wise and intelligent" may refer in particular to the people of the three cities mentioned in verses 13 and 15, people who were wise and intelligent in their own eyes. The Father's will was to hide the knowledge of the Son and the Father from such people. The "babes" in verse 21 refer to the disciples, who were children of wisdom. The Father was pleased to reveal both the Son and the Father to them.

We should not regard ourselves as wise and intelligent. If we have such a view of ourselves, we shall not receive the revelation of the Son and the Father. Instead of considering ourselves wise and intelligent, we should regard ourselves as babes, as those who are not knowledgeable. It is well-pleasing in the Father's sight to reveal the knowledge of the Son and the Father to babes, but to hide it from the wise and intelligent.

In verse 22 the Lord says that no one knows who the Son is except the Father and who the Father is except the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. The word "knows" here denotes full knowledge, not mere objective acquaintance. Concerning the Son, only the Father has such knowledge, and concerning the Father, only the Son has such knowledge. Hence, to know the Son requires the Father's revelation (Matt. 16:17), and to know the Father requires the Son's revelation (John 17:6, 26). The word "wills" in 10:22 means to deliberately exercise the will to counsel.

THE THINGS INVOLVED IN THE INSCRIBING OF OUR NAMES IN THE HEAVENS

Luke 10:23 and 24 say, "And turning to the disciples, He said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to observe the things that you see, and did not observe them, and to hear the things that you hear, and did not hear them." In these two verses the Man-Savior speaks of "the things" three times. What are the

things that the disciples saw, the things that many prophets and kings wanted to observe? What are the things that the disciples heard, things that many prophets and kings wanted to hear? Concerning this we should notice that in verse 21 the Lord speaks of "these things," and in verse 22, of "all things." First the Lord exulted in the Holy Spirit that the Father has hid these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to babes. Then the Lord said that all things have been delivered to Him by the Father. Following this, He privately told the disciples that their eyes were blessed for seeing the things that they see. What are "these things," "all things," and "the things"? As we shall see, these all refer to the same things.

We have seen that the seventy returned with joy, rejoicing that the demons were subject to them in the Lord's name. However, the Lord told them not to rejoice that the spirits were subject to them, but to rejoice that their names are inscribed in the heavens. In the same hour He exulted in the Holy Spirit and praised the Father for hiding these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealing them to babes. Then He told the disciples that all things had been delivered to Him by the Father. Finally, He told them that they were blessed for seeing and hearing the things that they were able to see and hear. "These things" in verse 21, "all things" in verse 22, and "the things" in verses 23 and 24 are all related to the things involved in the inscribing of our names in the heavens.

The inscribing of our names in the heavens involves a great deal. Actually, the fourteen Epistles of Paul are needed to describe what is involved in the inscribing of our names in the heavens. We should not expect to find a full explanation of this in the Gospel of Luke. This involves God's mystery, in particular the mystery of God, which is Christ, and the mystery of Christ, which is the church.

The word about these things, all things, and the things in Luke 10 may remind us of Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 2:9: "But even as it is written, Things which eye has not

seen and ear has not heard, and which have not come up in man's heart, how much God has prepared for those who love Him." The things here are the things in God's New Testament economy. The sphere of what the eye can see is narrow: the sphere of what the ear can hear is broader; and the sphere of what the heart can realize is without limitation. God in His wisdom has ordained and prepared for us many deep and hidden things. such as justification sanctification. and glorification. All these the human eye has never seen, the human ear has never heard, and the human heart has never realized.

I wish to emphasize the fact that the explanation of these things, all things, and the things is not found in the Gospel of Luke. For this explanation we must come to the Epistles of Paul. In these Epistles we have the New Testament economy of God and the mysteries in this economy. How marvelous and profound are these mysteries! What is revealed in the Epistles of Paul concerning God's New Testament economy involves the divine Trinity, God's eternal plan, Christ as the embodiment of God, the church as the Body of Christ, and God's intention to be expressed through His divine Trinity in the church.

Luke 10:21-24 is very similar to Matthew 11:25-27. However, the word in Matthew is not as clear or as thorough as that in Luke. In reading Matthew 11 we may not sense the need for the fourteen Epistles of Paul in order to have the proper understanding of the things hidden from the wise and intelligent and revealed to babes. But as we read Luke 10, with the emphasis on these things, all things, and especially on the things, we realize the need for Paul's Epistles, where we have a full definition and explanation of all these things.

In chapter ten of the Gospel of Luke the Lord Jesus goes quite far in touching the mysterious things that are unveiled in Paul's Epistles. In this chapter the Lord indicates that the reality of the jubilee is in all these things. This means that the reality of the jubilee is not merely in the casting out of demons, in the subduing of the spirits. Rather. the reality of the jubilee is that we are

brought into what was ordained for us by God before the foundation of the world. God chose us and predestinated us to enjoy His eternal plan, a plan that is carried out in His New Testament economy. He has also predestinated us to enjoy all the things related to His economy, the things that are fully unveiled in the Epistles of Paul.

I believe that the inscribing of our names in the heavens involves God's choosing us and His predestination concerning us. Before the foundation of the world, God chose us and then He predestinated us. That was the inscribing of our names in the heavens.

When Paul was about to speak in Ephesians concerning the mystery of Christ, which is the Body of Christ, he begins by telling us about the Father's choosing and predestination before the foundation of the world. This is our basis for saying that the explanation of these things, all things, and the things in Luke 10 is found in the fourteen Epistles of Paul. The inscribing of our names in the heavens, therefore, points to all the mysteries revealed in Paul's Epistles. This is the reason I say that in chapter ten of Luke the Lord goes quite far with respect to God's New Testament economy. If we want a thorough understanding of these things, all things, and the things, we need to go to the Epistles of Paul.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-FIVE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(3)

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:25-37

In 10:25-42 we have two matters: the Man-Savior portraying Himself as the good Samaritan with the highest morality (vv. 25-37) and His being received by Martha at Bethany (vv. 38-42). It is significant that Luke put these two matters together. Apparently they are not related; actually, in our Christian experience, the Lord as the good Samaritan is related to His being received by Martha. In this message we shall consider the portrait of the Lord as the good Samaritan with the highest morality, and in the following message we shall consider His being received by Martha at Bethany.

THE MAN-SAVIOR PORTRAYING HIMSELF AS A SAMARITAN

We have seen that in 9:51-56 it was necessary for the Lord Jesus and His followers to pass through Samaria. The Samaritans, however, did not receive Him (9:53). Now in 10:25-37 the Lord portrays Himself as a Samaritan.

In the parable of the good Samaritan many things are covered. This parable refers to Judaism, the Old Testament, the law, the priests, the Levites, Christ, the Spirit, the divine life, the church, the way to bring people to the church, the blessing the Lord gives to the church, the Lord's coming back, and the Lord's reward to the church.

Samaria was the leading region of the northern kingdom of Israel and the place where its capital was (1 Kings 16:24,29). Before 700 B. C. the Assyrians captured

Samaria and brought people from Babylon and other heathen countries to the cities of Samaria (2 Kings 17:6, 24). From that time, the Samaritans became people of mixed blood--heathen with Jew. History tells us that they had the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) and worshipped God according to that part of the Old Testament. But they were never recognized by the Jews as part of the Jewish people.

In John 8:48 certain Jews said to the Lord, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" Here in Luke 10 the Lord refers to Himself in a positive way as a Samaritan. The Lord seems to be saying, "I am a Samaritan, one despised by you."

INHERITING ETERNAL LIFE

Luke 10:25 says that "a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test." A lawyer was an expert in the Mosaic law. Such a lawyer was a scribe among the Pharisees. This lawyer, one very knowledgeable in the law, was also proud. Being one who justified himself, he stood up to test the Man-Savior.

In testing the Man-Savior, this lawyer said to Him, "Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" To inherit eternal life is to be rewarded in the coming age (Luke 18:29-30) with the enjoyment of the divine life in the manifestation of the kingdom.

To inherit eternal life is also "to enter into life" (Matt. 19:17). To enter into life is to enter into the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 19:23). The kingdom of the heavens is a realm of God's eternal life. Hence, when we enter into it, we enter into God's life. This differs from being saved. To be saved is to have God's life enter into us, whereas to enter into the kingdom of the heavens is to enter into God's life. The former is to be redeemed and regenerated with God's life: the latter is to live and walk by God's life. The one is a matter of birth; the other is a matter of living.

According to the New Testament. to receive eternal life is one thing, and to inherit eternal life is another thing. To receive eternal life is for our salvation in this age, but to

inherit eternal life is a reward in the coming age, that is, in the coming kingdom. It is important, therefore, that we differentiate these matters concerning our experience of eternal life. Now, in this present age, we may receive eternal life and experience it. This is a matter of salvation. But inheriting eternal life will be a blessing given to us as a reward in the coming age of the kingdom. Thus, inheriting eternal life is not a matter of salvation; instead, it is a matter related to the kingdom reward.

When the scribe asked the Man-Savior about what he should do to inherit eternal life, the Lord said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" (v. 26). The lawyer answered, "You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole strength, and with your whole mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (v. 27). To this the Lord replied, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you shall live" (v. 28).

THE PARABLE OF THE SAMARITAN

Luke 10:29 goes on to say, "But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbor?" The one who asked this question must have been one of the self-justified Pharisees (16:14-15; 18:9-10). As a display of his pride, he asked the Lord who his neighbor was. He seemed to be telling the Lord, "Who is my neighbor that I may love him?" In the parable that follows, the Lord answered the lawyer by showing him that he did not need a neighbor to love. Instead, he needed a neighbor to love him. Because he is not able to love, he needs someone to love him. As we shall see, this neighbor is the good Samaritan.

The parable of the Samaritan is one of the unique parables narrated only by Luke. This parable conveys the principle of high morality in the Savior's full salvation. The "certain man" in verse 30, in the Savior's intention, signified the self-justified lawyer as a sinner fallen from the foundation of peace (Jerusalem) to the condition of curse (Jericho).

From Jerusalem to Jericho

Luke 10:30 says, "Taking up this question, Jesus said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who having both stripped him and beat him, went away, leaving him half dead." Jerusalem means foundation of peace (see Heb. 7:2), and Jericho was a city of curse (Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34). The words "going down" indicate falling from the city of the foundation of peace to the city of curse. Therefore, the certain man in this parable was falling from the foundation of peace to a place of curse. The way he was taking was the way of such a fall.

Falling among Robbers

The man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. These robbers signify the legalistic teachers of the Judaic law (John 10:1), who used the law (1 Cor. 15:56) to rob the lawkeepers like the self-justified lawyer. The word "stripped" signifies the stripping by the law misused by the Judaizers. The Greek word translated "beat" literally means "laid blows upon." This beating signifies the killing by the law (Rom. 7:9-10). Furthermore, the robbers leaving the man half dead signifies the Judaizers' leaving the lawkeeper in a dead condition (Rom. 7:11, 13).

All the Pharisees, legalistic teachers of Judaism, are here likened to robbers. The lawyer is likened to the one going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who fell among these robbers and was stripped and beaten by them. The legalistic teachers of the Jewish religion stripped people and beat them and then left them half dead. This was the situation of the lawyer, although he did not realize that he was in such a condition.

A Priest and a Levite

In verse 31 the Lord continues. "And by coincidence a certain priest was going down on that road, and observing

him, he passed by on the opposite side." The priest was one who should care for God's people by teaching them the law of God (Deut. 33:10; 2 Chron. 15:3). In the parable, a priest was going down in the same way, but he was unable to render any help to the beaten one.

Verse 32 says, "And likewise also a Levite, coming down to the place and observing him, passed by on the opposite side." "A Levite was one who helped God's people in their worship to God (Num. 1:50; 3:6-7; 8:19). This Levite came to the same place, but he also was unable to render any help to the dying one.

The Actions of a Certain Samaritan

Verses 33 and 34 describe the actions of a certain Samaritan who came to the man who fell among robbers: "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came down to him, and observing him, was moved with compassion; and coming to him, he bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine. And placing him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn and took care of him." This Samaritan signifies the Man-Savior, who was apparently a layman of low estate, despised and slandered as a low and mean Samaritan (John 8:48; 4:9) by the self-exalted and self-justified Pharisees, including the one to whom the Lord was talking in Luke 10:25 and 29. Such a Man-Savior, in His lost-one-seeking and sinner-saving ministry journey (19:10), came down to the place where the wounded victim of the Judaizing robbers was in his miserable and dying condition. When He saw him, He was moved with compassion in His humanity with His divinity, and rendered him tender healing and saving care, fully meeting His urgent need (vv. 34-35).

In 10:34 and 35 all the points of the good Samaritan's care for the dying one portray, in His humanity with His divinity, the Man-Savior's merciful, tender, and bountiful care for a sinner condemned under law. This shows to the uttermost His high standard of morality in His saving grace.

The Samaritan came to the man and bound up his

wounds, pouring on them oil and wine. The binding up of the wounds indicates that He healed him. Pouring on the man's wounds oil and wine signified giving Him the Holy Spirit and the divine life. When the Man-Savior came to us, He poured on our wounds His Spirit and His divine life.

The Samaritan then placed the man on his own beast, on a donkey. This indicates that the Samaritan carried him by lowly means in a lowly way. Many of us can testify that we were brought into the church in such a lowly way, carried on a "donkey." We did not come into the church in a way that was splendid and glorious. On the contrary, we were brought into the church in a lowly way and by lowly means.

The Samaritan brought the man to an inn and took care of him. This indicates that He brought him to the church and took care of him through the church.

Verse 35 says, "And on the next morning, taking out two denarii, he gave them to the innkeeper and said to him, Take care of him; and whatever you spend in addition, when I return, I will repay you." Here we see that the Samaritan paid the inn for the man. This means that He blessed the church for him. Furthermore, His promise to pay the innkeeper whatever he spent in addition points to whatever the church spends for him in this age being repaid at the Savior's coming back.

The Self-justified One Needing a Loving Neighbor

In verse 36 the Man-Savior went on to ask the lawyer, "Which of these three, does it seem to you, has become a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?" The self-justified lawyer thought that he could love another as his neighbor (v. 29). Under the blindness of self-justification he did not know that he himself needed a neighbor, the Man-Savior. to love him.

In verse 37 the lawyer answered, "The one who showed mercy to him." Then Jesus said to him, "You go and do likewise." The Greek words rendered, "the one who showed mercy to him" may also be translated, "the one who dealt mercifully with him." The self-justified one was helped to

know that he needed a loving neighbor (like the good Samaritan, who was a figure of the Man-Savior) to love him, not a neighbor to be loved by him. The Savior intended to unveil to him through this story that he was condemned to death under the law, unable to take care of himself, needless to say love others, and that the Man-Savior was the one who would love him and render him full salvation.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S DIVINE ATTRIBUTES AND HUMAN VIRTUES

In this parable we can see the Man-Savior's divine attributes and human virtues. Concerning the divine attributes, we see the Spirit, the eternal life, the blessing, and the repayment. The giving of the Spirit, divine life, the blessing, and the repayment of the church are all related to the divine attributes.

The Lord's human virtues revealed here include His compassion, love, sympathy, and care. Once again in this case, the Man-Savior's human virtues are mingled with His divine attributes. It is difficult to clearly distinguish them by categories, because they are mingled to produce the highest standard of morality.

In the parable of the good Samaritan we see that the morality of the Man-Savior was a morality of the highest standard. When the priest saw the man who had fallen among robbers, he did not do anything to help him. It seemed that this priest did not have any morality at all. The situation with the Levite was the same. But when the Man-Savior saw the man in his pitiful condition, He was moved with compassion. Then He fully exercised His morality to care for the needy one. The Man-Savior's high standard of morality was a product of a mingled life, a life in which the divine attributes are mingled with the human virtues. In this parable we clearly see that the Man-Savior carried out His ministry in His human virtues with His divine attributes.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-SIX

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(4)

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:38-42

SERVING THE LORD ACCORDING TO HIS DESIRE AND PREFERENCE

Immediately after the parable of the good Samaritan Luke puts the record of the Man-Savior being received by Martha at Bethany (10:38-42). What is the connection between these two cases? The connection is that after we have been saved through realizing the Savior's compassion and love, we should serve Him. In other words, saved ones should be serving ones. In order to be saved we need to realize the Savior's compassion and love. In order to serve Him, we need to know His desire and preference. We should not serve the Lord according to our opinion, concept, or understanding. Instead, we should serve Him according to His desire and preference.

Luke 10:38 and 39 say, "Now as they were going, He entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received Him as a guest into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who also was seated at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word." The village here is Bethany (John. 12:1; Mark 11:1; Matt. 21:17). The name Bethany means the house of affliction.

According to the record of the Gospels, in the Lord's last visit to Jerusalem, He remained in the city only during the day for His ministry. Every evening He departed to lodge in Bethany, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (Mark 11:19; Luke 21:37), where the

house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus and the house of Simon were (John 11:1; Matt. 26:6). In Jerusalem He was rejected by the leaders of Judaism, but in Bethany He was welcomed by those who loved Him.

Luke 10:38 and 39 mention Martha and Mary. The name Martha probably comes from Chaldean and means "she was rebellious." The Greek word Mary is Maria, for the Hebrew Miriam and means "their rebellion" (Num. 12:1, 10-15).

The meaning of the names of Martha and Mary conveys the thought of rebellion. This may indicate their natural life. The Lord's salvation can transform the rebellious into the submissive, as portrayed in this story. One like the rebellious Miriam in the Old Testament becomes one like the submissive Mary in the New Testament.

Mary was listening to the Lord's word, but "Martha was distracted with much serving" (v. 40). The Greek word translated "distracted" means to be drawn about in different directions.

Standing over the Lord, Martha said, "Lord, does it not matter to You that my sister has left me to serve alone?" (v. 40). The Lord answered. "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is necessary; for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Here we see that the Lord prefers His saved ones who love Him to listen to Him (v. 39) that they may know His desire, rather than do things for Him without knowing His will (see 1 Sam. 15:22; Ecc. 5:1).

It is quite significant that this story of Martha and Mary follows immediately after the parable of the good Samaritan. The first shows the compassion and love of the Savior, who is a Man as the sinner's neighbor. The second unveils the desire and preference of the Lord, who is God as the believers' Master. The Savior's compassion and love are for our salvation by Him; the Lord's desire and preference are for our service to Him. After receiving

salvation from the Savior, we should render service to the Lord. For our salvation we need to realize the Savior's compassion and love; for our service we need to know the Lord's desire and preference.

LISTENING TO THE LORD'S WORD AND KNOWING HIS DESIRE

When the Lord came to Bethany, Martha received Him and served Him. However, Martha served the Savior according to her own concept and understanding. She thought that after making a long journey the Lord wanted to be served with material things. Therefore, she was busy in doing many things for the Man-Savior.

Do you think that when the Lord came into Martha's home in Bethany His desire was to be served with material things? To be sure, it was not His desire to be served with food. On the contrary, His desire was that His saved ones would listen to Him in order to know what was on His heart. The Lord did not care about eating; He wanted those who loved Him to be silent, to sit with Him, to listen to Him, and to concentrate on His speaking. In this way they would know His desire and preference.

In 10:39 Mary sat at the Lord's feet listening to His word. Later, she prepared ointment to anoint Him before His death. How did Mary know to do this? I believe she came to know this through listening to the Savior's speaking. By sitting at the Savior's feet and listening to His word, she came to know His desire and preference.

Today many are busy trying to get saved. They think that salvation depends on what they do. But there is no need for us to do anything to be saved. In order for a person to be saved, he needs to realize that he is incapable of saving himself, for he, like the man in the parable of the good Samaritan, is one who has been stripped, beaten, and left half dead. This indicates that we all need a Savior, One who is full of compassion and love. When we realize the Savior's compassion and love, we shall enjoy His saving grace, which is full of human virtues and divine attributes. This is what it means to be saved.

Although there is no need for us to do anything to be saved, fallen man thinks that he must do many things for his salvation. Therefore, we would emphasize the fact that there is no need for us to do anything to be saved.

Once we have been convinced by the Savior's compassion and love and are saved, we may try to do many things for the Lord. We may think that now that we love Him we should be busy doing things for Him. I have never met a saved person who does not have the thought of doing things for the Lord. Every saved person I know has the concept of working for the Lord.

In recent months certain ones told me that since the Lord is blessing His recovery, we should be busy doing various things. Some proposed that we set up schools, and others, that we establish hospitals. Others suggested that we be busy with different kinds of activities. When I heard these proposals, I said to myself, "I do not have any burden for these things. I am not burdened to set up schools or hospitals. When I hear such proposals, my desire is simply to rest with the Lord. I don't believe the Lord wants us to be busy in this way."

In 10:38-42 Martha was very busy in many directions, and she was trying to make the Lord busy. She saw the situation involving the Lord and her sister, Mary. Mary was not doing anything. She was simply sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to His word, and the Lord seemed to appreciate Mary's silence. This bothered Martha and she even gave the Lord a command: "Tell her that she should do her part with me." Here Martha seemed to be saying, "Lord, don't You realize that I'm very busy? Why, then, don't You tell my sister to do something to help me?"

Today most of the Lord's saved ones are busy trying to serve Him. They may also be trying to make the Savior busy. But those who know the Lord and who know His desire and preference would say, "Don't be so busy. The Lord wants to rest. The most precious thing to Him is not that you work for Him or try to do things for Him. What is most precious to Him is that you sit with Him and silently

listen to His word. If you sit with the Lord and listen to His word, you will know His desire and preference."

THE LORD'S HEART SET ON HIS DEATH

Do you know what was on the Lord's heart while He sat in Martha's home in Bethany? The Lord's heart was set on His death. He knew that He was going to Jerusalem to die. He wanted His followers to set aside their works, their doings, and go with Him to be crucified.

While the disciples were on the way to Jerusalem with the Lord, they were busy in such matters as arguing who was greater and in forbidding others to do things for the Lord. In particular, the brothers were busy with their ambition. The sisters, on the contrary, were busy in serving, in ministering. But among the sisters there was one--Mary--who was not busy. She was calm and sat in silence listening to the Man-Savior's word. As a result, she came to know what was on the Lord's heart.

Mary realized that He was going to Jerusalem to die. Twice the Lord unveiled His death to His disciples, but they did not have an ear to hear the Lord's word. Mary however, heard the Lord's word concerning His death, and she took this word. Having heard and received the Lord's word concerning His death, she looked for the opportunity to anoint Him before He died (Matt. 26:12).

In 10:38-42 the Lord may have been speaking to Mary about His death. At that juncture, what was on the heart of the Savior was His approaching death.

Luke 9:51, the beginning of the section in this Gospel on the Lord's ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem, says "And it came about, when the days were being fulfilled for His being taken up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." The phrase "being taken up" refers to the Lord's death. Here we see that the days were being fulfilled for the Lord to go to Jerusalem that He might die there. Hence, from this time onward, the Lord's one consideration was His going to Jerusalem to die. He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. Therefore, the unique matter on His heart as He was on the way to Jerusalem was His death.

When He was close to Jerusalem, in Bethany, He was received into the house of Martha. While there, He was speaking the word, and Mary was listening. As we have pointed out, He may have been talking concerning His death. The brothers did not have a heart for this, and neither did Martha, who was busy serving. The only one who had a heart for the Lord's word concerning His death and who sat quietly listening to His word was Mary. She sat at His feet and listened to the Savior's word, a word that expressed His desire and preference.

RECEIVING THE LORD'S SALVATION AND SERVING HIM

The two cases in 10:25-42, the Lord's portraying Himself as the good Samaritan and His being received by Martha, are related. The first shows the Savior's compassion and love for our salvation, and the second reveals His desire and preference for our service to Him. We need to know the Lord in these two aspects. We need to know His compassion and love in salvation and His desire and preference for our service.

Before doing anything for the Lord, we must first know His compassion and love related to our salvation and His desire and preference related to our service. This implies that we leave our natural man on the cross. There is no need for us to do anything for our salvation, and we should not do anything in ourselves in the Lord's service. With respect to both salvation and service we should remain on the cross. Then we shall know the Man-Savior's compassion and love for our salvation and His desire and preference for our service.

We have seen that the name Martha probably comes from Chaldean and means "she was rebellious" and that Mary comes from Maria, Greek for Hebrew Miriam, meaning "their rebellion." These words come from the same root, a root that means rebellious or rebellion. However, it is possible for a rebellious one to become a submissive one. In nature Mary was rebellious, but she became submissive not only to the Lord's compassion and love but also to His desire and preference. Therefore, in

the New Testament Mary was the unique one who touched the Lord's desire to the uttermost. For this reason she is set forth as an example for the followers of the Lord. We all should be like Mary in following the Lord and in serving Him.

In taking Mary as an example, we need to remember that originally she was rebellious. By the Man-Savior's compassion and mercy she was made a submissive one, one who loved the Lord and served Him not according to her opinion or by her effort, but according to His desire and preference. Here we see the way for us to be saved and the proper way for us to serve Him.

The Gospel of Luke is a book full of the Man-Savior's human virtues and divine attributes. His ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem was carried out in His human virtues with His divine attributes. In composing his Gospel, Luke put the Lord's portraying Himself as the good Samaritan together with His being received by Martha at Bethany. Luke's purpose in doing this was to show how to receive the Lord's salvation and how to serve Him after we have been saved.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(5)

Scripture Reading: Luke 11:1-54

A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE GOSPEL OF LURE

The record in the Gospel of Luke has a particular characteristic. This characteristic is that Luke always shows us in the Man-Savior the mingling of the divine attributes with the human virtues to produce the highest standard of morality for the New Testament jubilee. Here we have three matters. First, in Luke's composition the basic and intrinsic elements are the humanity and divinity of the Man-Savior. The Gospel of Luke is based upon the fact that the Lord has two essences--the divine essence and the human essence. Second, Luke's Gospel presents the highest standard of morality, a morality that is the result of the mingling of the divine attributes with the human virtues. Third, this Gospel proclaims the New Testament jubilee. The proclamation of the jubilee is clearly made in chapter four. We need to keep these three matters in mind in reading the Gospel of Luke, for they will help us understand this Gospel. In the Gospel of Luke we have the divine essence mingled with the human essence and the divine attributes mingled with the human virtues to produce the highest standard of morality, and this is for the New Testament jubilee.

The Divine Essence Mingled with the Human Essence

We need to have a full realization of these basic and

intrinsic elements of Luke's writing. By now we should have seen that in his Gospel, Luke reveals the Man-Savior as the One who is a composition of the divine essence mingled with the human essence. As such a One, He is the God-man because He is both the complete God and a perfect man. In Him we see God and man. In Him we have the complete God and a perfect man. This means that in Him we have a composition of the mingling of God with man. In this mingling, however, the Man-Savior loses neither the divine nature, the nature of God, nor the human nature, the nature of man. Rather, in the mingling these natures remain distinguishable, and there is no producing of a third nature. This is the first main point we should keep in mind for our understanding of Luke.

The Highest Standard of Morality

The Gospel of Luke also reveals that in the Man-Savior we have the mingling of the divine attributes with the human virtues to produce the highest standard of morality. Throughout this Gospel we see in the Man-Savior, who is also the God-man, the complete God and a perfect man, the mingling of the divine attributes with the human virtues. As the complete God, He has the divine nature with the divine attributes, and as a perfect man, He has the human nature with the human virtues. Therefore. in His Person we see the divine nature with its attributes and the human nature with its virtues for the living of a life in the highest standard of morality.

The New Testament Jubilee

The mingling of the divine nature with its attributes and the human nature with its virtues to produce the highest standard of morality are for the New Testament jubilee. In this jubilee we are freed from all bondages--the bondage of sin, the bondage of Satan, the bondage of the world, and even the bondage of the self--and we are also freed into the full enjoyment of our lost birthright, the right to enjoy the Triune God in Christ.

What we have been covering in this message is a definition and interpretation of the Gospel of Luke. In this

definition we see the intrinsic elements of this Gospel. If we read Luke in a superficial way, we shall be concerned mainly with the stories in this Gospel. But if we get into the depths of this book, we shall see its intrinsic elements.

If we have a proper description, definition, and interpretation of the Gospel of Luke, we shall see that his Gospel is composed with certain intrinsic elements. These elements include the Lord's divine nature with its divine attributes and His human nature with its human virtues. The Man-Savior, therefore, is the composition of the mingling of God and man. As such a One, the Lord lived a life in the highest standard of morality. Such a life is for the New Testament jubilee, because it is a life that frees us from all bondage and that brings us into the enjoyment of the Triune God in Christ. This is a summary of the Gospel of Luke.

We need to have an understanding of this summary of Luke when we come to chapter eleven. Otherwise, this chapter may bother us. After the parable of the good Samaritan and after the case of Martha receiving the Lord Jesus into her home, Luke inserts a chapter that covers four matters: the Man-Savior's teaching about prayer (11:1-13), the Man-Savior rejected by the evil generation (vv. 14-32), His warning not to be in darkness (vv. 33-36), and His rebuking of the Pharisees and lawyers (vv. 37-54). Why are these four things put together? If we read Luke 11 superficially, we shall not understand why this chapter includes the Lord's teaching on prayer, the rejection of Him by the evil generation, His warning not to be in darkness, and His rebuking the Pharisees and lawyers. However, if we get into the depths of these four sections of chapter eleven, we shall see that here the Man-Savior is dealing with the highest standard of morality. We have emphasized the fact that based upon His divine nature with His divine attributes mingled with His human nature with His human virtues to produce the highest standard of morality, the Man-Savior proclaimed the New Testament jubilee. Now we must go on to see that apart from chapter eleven it would be difficult for us to experience the jubilee.

PRAYING OURSELVES INTO GOD

In 11:1-13 we have the Man-Savior's teaching on prayer. If we read this section carefully again and again, we shall see that prayer means that we pray ourselves into God. When some hear this, they may say, "We cannot find such a point in the pattern of prayer set up by the Lord Jesus in His teaching. How can you say that to pray is to pray ourselves into God?" Apparently, this matter is not found in 11:1-13. Actually, in these verses we see that to pray is to pray ourselves into God.

Luke 11:1 says, "And it came about that when He was praying in a certain place, as He ceased, a certain one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." We do not know what the Lord was praying for. When the disciples saw Him praying, they wanted Him to teach them to pray. Then the Lord went on to say, "When you pray, say, Father, Your name be sanctified; Your kingdom come. Give us each day our bread for the day; and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us into trial" (vv. 2-4). I have spent much time considering this brief word. My conclusion is that if we would pray this way again and again, the result will be that we shall pray ourselves into God. In other words, the issue of this prayer is that we find ourselves in God.

If we pray according to the Lord's teaching in these verses, we shall be persons in God. I encourage you to pray, "Father, Your name be sanctified; Your kingdom come." If you pray this a number of times, you will find that you are in God. This is both my understanding and my experience. From experience I can testify that to pray according to the Lord's instruction is to pray ourselves into God.

Once we have prayed ourselves into God, what shall we do now that we are in God? We shall simply receive Him with His riches into us. As fallen human beings, we were altogether outside of God and had nothing to do with His riches. Hence, we could not enjoy the riches of God. We need to pray ourselves into God and then, as those in Him, receive Him and His riches.

When some hear about the need to pray ourselves into God in order to receive Him and His riches, they may say, "Before we were saved, we were not in God. But now we are children of God." Yes, as believers, we are children of God. Nevertheless, we must recognize the fact that often in our experience we are not in God. We do not stay in God, we do not remain in Him. For example, before going to bed, a brother loses his temper with his wife. When he rises up the next morning, he rises up outside of God. What should he do? He should pray himself into God.

However, suppose the brother prays something like this: "Father, You are just and fair. You know that my wife is wrong. I ask You to vindicate me." The more the brother prays like this, the farther he will be away from God in his experience. He needs to pray, "O Father, sanctify Your name. Your kingdom come. Father, give me bread for this day, and forgive me even as I forgive my wife. Father, do not bring me into that trial again." The more the brother prays like this, the more he will find himself in God. This illustrates the point that to pray is to pray ourselves into God.

Often we are distracted from God. We may be distracted from Him simply by an advertisement in the newspaper. Because we are easily distracted from God, we should spend time every morning with Him, praying ourselves into Him. There is no need to pray in detail concerning our shortcomings. It is sufficient to say, "Father, forgive me." There is no need to go through the details. The prayer, "Father forgive me as I forgive others," is inclusive. The more you pray like this, the more you will realize that you pray yourself into God. Then in God you will receive the life supply.

RECEIVING THE LIFE SUPPLY

Perhaps you are wondering where in 11:1-13 we can see the matter of receiving the life supply from the Father. The life supply is indicated in verses 11 through 13: "But what father among you, whose son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish hand him a snake? Or if also he asks for

an egg, will hand him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall the Father who is from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" Here the life supply is indicated by the fish, the egg, and the Holy Spirit. In verse 5 it is indicated by the loaves. If we include the loaves, we have four items of the life supply. When we pray ourselves into God, we receive His riches as our supply.

In verse 13 the Lord says that if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more shall the Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? This implies that the one gift that is truly good is the Holy Spirit. Before His death the Lord told the disciples to ask for the Holy Spirit. After His death and resurrection He told them to receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). Regarding the commandments in the Scriptures for which the requirements have not been fulfilled, we need to ask. But regarding the commandments for which the requirements have been fulfilled, we need to receive.

PRAYING PERSISTENTLY

After giving His disciples a brief word of instruction concerning prayer, the Lord went on to give an illustration of praying persistently. He said to them, "Who among you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves, since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and that one, from inside, shall answer and say, Do not trouble me; the door has already been shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise up and give you anything?" (vv. 5-7). The Greek words rendered, "Do not trouble me" may also be translated, "Do not cause me trouble." Regarding the children with the man in bed, Thomson in *The Land and The Book* says, "A whole family--parents, children, and servants--sleep in the same room."

In verse 8 the Lord continues the illustration, "I tell you, even though he will not rise up and give him anything because he is his friend, surely because of his persistence, he will rise and give him as much as he needs."

Eventually, the one in need receives the three loaves. These loaves, of course, are for feeding and nourishing.

In verses 9 and 10 the Lord continues, "And I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened." In these verses we have asking, seeking, and knocking. To ask is to pray in a common way, to seek is to supplicate in a specific way, and to knock is to reach the door in the closest way.

In verses 11 through 13 the Lord goes on to say that a father will not give his son a snake instead of a fish, or a scorpion instead of an egg. Furthermore, the Lord says that the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. In figure, a snake signifies Satan and his angels, and a scorpion signifies Satan's demons.

The Lord's word in 11:11-13 indicates that our intention in prayer should be to seek the life supply, to seek loaves, fish, and eggs. Loaves represent the riches of the land; fish, the riches of the sea; and eggs the riches of something both in the air and on the earth. Therefore, loaves, fish, and eggs represent the riches of the land, the water, and the air; that is, these represent different kinds of riches. In verse 13 we see that the Holy Spirit is the totality of these riches. The Holy Spirit is the totality of the loaves, the fish, and the egg.

STAYING IN GOD TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

In this message we have seen that to pray is to pray ourselves into God. After we have prayed ourselves into God, then, as those in God, we receive the life supply as indicated by the loaves, the fish, and the egg. The totality of these riches--the riches of the earth, the water, and the air--is the Holy Spirit. This means that the Holy Spirit is the life supply. When we pray ourselves into God, we should remain in God to receive the Holy Spirit as our life supply.

Have you ever heard before that to pray is to pray ourselves into God so that we may remain in Him continually to receive the Holy Spirit as our life supply? This life supply, signified by the loaves, the fish, and the egg, nourishes not only ourselves but also those under our

care. Some may think that in this message I have been allegorizing the Scriptures too much. Actually, I am not allegorizing; instead, I am seeking to open the Word and interpret it properly so that we may see what, according to 11:1-13, it means to pray.

We have strongly emphasized the fact that to pray is to pray ourselves into God. Whenever our prayer does not bring us into God, it is wrong. We should not continue to pray in that way. The governing principle of our prayer should be that prayer always brings us into God.

Do not pray if your prayer does not bring you into God. This does not mean that you should not ask the Lord to heal you if you are sick. The point is that when you pray for healing you should observe the governing principle of prayer and pray yourself into God. If your way of praying distracts you from the Lord and does not bring you into Him, you should change your way of praying. Seek to pray in such a way that you are brought into God. The prayer that brings us into God is the right kind of prayer.

We know from our experience with the Lord that often we have prayed properly and have prayed ourselves into God. As we remain in Him, we receive His riches, the riches that are embodied in His Spirit. When we receive the Holy Spirit as our life supply signified by the loaves, the fish, and the egg, we can feed ourselves, and we can also feed all those under our care.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(6)

Scripture Reading: Luke 11:1-54

Luke 11:1-54 covers four matters: the Man-Savior's teaching about prayer (vv. 1-13), His being rejected by the evil generation (vv. 14-32), His warning not to be in darkness (vv. 33-36), and His rebuking the Pharisees and lawyers (vv. 37-54). We considered the first section in the foregoing message. In this message we shall cover the other three sections in this chapter.

REJECTED BY THE EVIL GENERATION

In 11:14-32 we see that the Man-Savior was rejected by the evil generation. This section begins with the account of the casting out of a demon: "And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; and it occurred that when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds marveled." Dumbness by demon possession signifies the inability to speak for God (Isa. 56:10) and praise God (Isa. 35:6) due to the worship of dumb idols (1 Cor. 12:2). The speaking of the mute man here signifies the recovery of the speaking and praising ability by being filled with the Lord in the spirit (Eph. 5:18-19).

According to Luke 11:15, some said, "He casts out the demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." The name "Beelzebub" means the lord of the flies, the name of the god of the Ekronites (2 Kings 1:2). It was changed in contempt by the Jews to Baalzebel, which means lord of the dunghill, and used for the ruler of the demons (Matt.

12:24, 27; Mark 3:22). Those in Luke 11:15 reviled the Man-Savior by saying that He cast out demons by the ruler of the demons. This most blasphemous name expressed their strongest objection and rejection.

CASTING OUT DEMONS BY THE FINGER OF GOD

In verses 17 and 18 the Lord went on to say to those who accused Him of casting out demons by Beelzebub, "Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and a house divided against a house falls. And if also Satan is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebub." The Lord's word indicates that Satan has a kingdom. Satan is the ruler of this world (John 12:31) and the ruler of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). He has his authority (Acts 26:18) and his angels (Matt. 25:41), who are his subordinates as principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6:12). Hence, he has his kingdom, the authority of darkness (Col. 1:13).

Luke 11:19 and 20 say, "But if I by Beelzebub cast out the demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." The "finger of God" is a Hebraistic expression. The finger (v. 46) is smaller than the hand and the arm. To cast out the demons does not need the hand of God (John 10:28, 29) nor the arm of God (Isa. 53:1); just the finger of God is powerful enough to do this. Yet it is still done by the Spirit of God (Matt. 12:28).

In verses 21 and 22 the Lord continues, "When the strong man fully armed guards his own house, his possessions are in peace; but when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes away his whole armor on which he had relied, and distributes his spoil." The strong man here is Satan, the evil one, and the house signifies the kingdom of Satan. But Christ, the Son of God, is much stronger than Satan, the strong man.

The first section of Luke 11, verses 1 through 13, is wonderful. Here we see the matter of praying ourselves into

God and remaining in Him to receive the life supply, the riches of the Holy Spirit. Now in the second section we have demons, the ruler of the demons, and the strong man. This indicates that as we are in God receiving His riches, we need to remember that demons are around us wherever we may be, and there are evil spirits in the air. Hence, a war is raging all the time. Therefore, the Man-Savior teaches us not only to pray ourselves into God and remain in Him to receive His Spirit as the riches of the life supply, but He also reveals that He is working to cast out demons.

If we get into the depths of Luke 11, we shall see that when we enjoy the riches of God by remaining in Him, we shall realize that we are in a situation that is full of demons. Therefore, we should never expect that today there can be heaven on earth. No, there are many demons, many obstacles and hindrances to the New Testament jubilee. In the jubilee people are set free from the possession and oppression of the demons. Nevertheless, the demons are still present, and many people cooperate with them. Those who cooperate with the demons are used by Satan to damage the New Testament jubilee. But the Man-Savior is here to cast out the demons.

We have seen that the Devil is likened to a strong man. But the Man-Savior is stronger than this strong man. The Lord is so strong that in order to cast out demons it is not necessary for Him to use His arm or even His hand. It is sufficient for Him to use only His finger. Simply by using His finger, the Man-Savior is able to cast out demons.

If we are those who pray ourselves into God and remain in Him to receive the life supply, we shall be one with the Man-Savior. Since He is stronger than the strong man and since we are one with Him, we also shall be stronger than the strong man and able to deal with the unclean spirits and cast them out.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT AND WITH LIGHT

In 11:24 to 26 the Lord says, "When the unclean spirit goes out from the man, he passes through waterless places

seeking rest; and not finding any, he says, I will return to my house, from which I came out; and when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes along other spirits more evil than himself, seven of them, and he enters and makes his home there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first." We need to understand the spiritual significance of this word. The significance here is that after we have been cleansed from the possession of the demons, we may still be empty, not filled with the life supply of the Spirit. In other words, inwardly we are not occupied by God and with God.

If we consider these verses in the context of the entire chapter, we shall see that we need to be those who are always praying to be brought into God and who then remain in Him to receive the riches of the Holy Spirit. When we are filled with these riches, there will be no room in us for anything else to come in. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, who brings us the riches of the Triune God, there will be no space in us for anything else to enter in and occupy us.

Furthermore, if we pray ourselves into God and remain in Him to be filled with the riches of the Holy Spirit, we shall be those who are altogether in the light (11:33-36). We shall be persons full of light. We shall have light within us and around us.

This is the understanding of these verses that is according to our spiritual experience. Apart from this understanding, we shall not know why the various sections in chapter eleven are put together. From our experience we know that when we remain in God to receive the riches of the Spirit's supply, we leave no room in us for demons or for darkness. We are fully in the light. Therefore, we are filled with the riches of the Spirit and with light.

Luke 11:33 says, "No one having lit a lamp puts it in a secret place, nor under the bushel, but on the lampstand, in order that those who are entering in may see the light." In His ministry the Man-Savior brings light to us. Hence, such a ministry issues in the believers as luminaries (Phil.

2:15) and the churches as lampstands (Rev. 1:20), shining in this dark age as His testimony, and consummating in the New Jerusalem with the outstanding characteristics of life and light (Rev. 22:1-2; 21:11, 23, 24).

A "bushel" is a grain measure. A lighted lamp placed under the bushel cannot shine out its light. The believers as a lighted lamp should not be covered by the bushel, an item pertaining to eating, which causes anxiety (Matt. 6:25).

In 11:34-36 the Lord continues, "The lamp of the body is your eye. When your eye is single, your whole body is illuminated; but when it is evil, your body also is dark. Watch out therefore, that the light which is in you be not darkness. If therefore your whole body is illuminated, not having any part dark, the whole shall be illuminated as when the lamp with its bright shining illuminates you." The Greek rendered "illuminated" in verse 34 may also be translated "full of light" or "bright." Here the Lord is saying that when our eye is single, our whole body will be full of light.

Our eyes can focus on only one thing at a time. If we try to see two things at once, our sight will be blurred. If we focus our eyes on one thing, our sight will be single, and our whole body will be illuminated.

In verse 35 the Lord speaks about "the light which is in you." The light in us, which the eye illuminates (v. 34), is the light in our heart, which should be kept pure for God (Matt. 5:8).

REBUKING THE PHARISEES AND LAWYERS

In 11:37-54 we have a record of the Man-Savior rebuking the Pharisees and the lawyers. Verse 37 says, "Now as He spoke, a Pharisee asked Him if He would have a meal with him; and He went in and reclined at the table." The word for "meal" here is primarily the first meal, taken early in the morning. Verse 38 says, "But the Pharisee marveled, observing that He had not first washed before the meal." Literally, the Greek word for "washed" means "baptized," a ceremonial washing. The Pharisee's,

reaction gave the Lord an opportunity to unveil something to the hypocritical Pharisees and lawyers.

In verse 39 the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter, but your inside is full of robbery and wickedness. Senseless ones! Did not He who made the outside also make the inside?" Here the Lord seems to be saying, "You wash your hands, but what about your hearts? Your hands may be clean, but your hearts are not clean. Your hearts are filled with robbery and covetousness. You need to cleanse the inside as well as the outside."

In verse 41 the Lord goes on to say, "But give the things which are within as alms, and behold, all things are clean to you." The word "within" here refers to the contents of the cup and the platter (v. 39), signifying what is in the hearts of the Pharisees. They have covetousness within their hearts; hence, their inside is full of robbery and wickedness. Therefore, the Lord commands them to give as alms what they are coveting in their hearts so that all things may be clean to them.

In verse 42 the Lord continues, "But woe to you, Pharisees! Because you tithe the mint and the rue and every herb, and pass by the judgment and the love of God. But these things you ought to do, and not leave those undone." Judgment refers to justice, and the love of God refers to man's love toward God.

In the following verses the Lord continues rebuking the Pharisees and also includes the lawyers in His rebuke. He tells the Pharisees that they are like unseen tombs, and He rebukes the lawyers for burdening men with burdens hard to bear and not touching these burdens with one of their fingers.

TODAY'S JONAH AND SOLOMON

If we put together the four sections of Luke 11, we see a portrait of the Man-Savior with the highest standard of morality. We see a Person who prays Himself into God and remains in God to receive the Holy Spirit as His life supply. Because He is full of the Triune God, there is no room in Him for anything of the enemy. Moreover, He is

filled with light, and He is genuine and clean both inwardly and outwardly. Eventually, this One is today's Jonah, the One who passed through death and entered into resurrection, and today's Solomon, the One who speaks the wisdom of God. This wisdom includes the mysteries of the hidden things of God.

In 11:29-32 the Lord refers to Himself as the One who is greater than Solomon and Jonah: "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks for a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it except the sign of Jonah. For even as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall be raised in the judgment with the men of this generation and shall condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, more than Solomon is here. Men, Ninevites, shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, more than Jonah is here." Christ as the prophet sent by God to His people (Deut. 18:5, 18) is greater than Jonah the prophet. Jonah was the prophet who turned from Israel to the Gentiles and was put into the belly of the great fish. Remaining there for three days, he came out of it to become a sign to that generation for repentance (Jonah 1:2, 17; 3:2-10). This was a type of Christ, who would be buried in the heart of the earth for three days and then be resurrected, becoming a sign to this generation for salvation.

Christ, as the Son of David to be the King, is also greater than Solomon the king. Solomon, to whom the Gentile queen came (1 Kings 6:2; 10:1-8), built the temple of God and spoke the word of wisdom. This also is a type of Christ, who is building the church to be the temple of God and is speaking the word of wisdom.

We may say that the "wisdom of Solomon" in Luke 11:31 indicates the mysteries revealed in the fourteen Epistles of Paul. As the One greater than Jonah, the Lord passed through death and entered into resurrection. As

the One greater than Solomon, He speaks the wisdom of God. Today the resurrected Christ through the Spirit speaks the wisdom of God. As we have pointed out, this wisdom is revealed in the Epistles of Paul. The contents of God's wisdom are the hidden things of God, the mysteries hidden in God and revealed to us through Paul. In particular, this is the wisdom concerning God's New Testament economy, the wisdom concerning Christ with the church.

Chapter eleven of the Gospel of Luke includes a number of matters related to the Man-Savior's highest standard of morality. From this chapter we need to realize that Christ, through death and in resurrection, is now carrying out God's New Testament economy, which is the real jubilee.

In this message and in the foregoing message, I have given you some hints concerning the proper understanding of this chapter. Here we see the Savior's divine essence mingled with His human essence and His divine nature with His divine attributes mingled with His human nature with His human virtues to produce the highest standard of morality. This is for us to enter into Him, the resurrected One, and to listen to His wisdom so that we may participate in God's New Testament economy, which is the real jubilee. In order to understand Luke 11 we need the proper understanding of the intrinsic elements of the Gospel of Luke. These elements include the mingling of the divine attributes with the human virtues in the Man-Savior, the highest standard of morality, and the proclamation of the New Testament jubilee.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE TWENTY-NINE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(7)

Scripture Reading: Luke 12:1-48

In the messages on chapter eleven we saw that when we pray ourselves into God and receive His rich supply, which is the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit, we are filled with this supply and occupied by it so that there is no room in us for demons, evil spirits. Because we are filled with the riches of the divine supply, we are full of light and we can illumine others. This light then brings us into Christ as the One who passed through death and entered into resurrection. Now we can experience Him as the real Jonah and the real Solomon. In Him as the real Solomon we know the wisdom of God, the eternal purpose of God, and the economy of God. In this economy we enjoy the mystery of God. This mystery is Christ as the expression of God and the church as the expression of Christ. This is the real jubilee.

By praying ourselves into God to enjoy the riches of His supply, we experience the divinity and humanity of Christ. We enjoy His divine attributes and human virtues. Then we live a life which is of the highest standard of morality, and this standard of morality enables us to enjoy the New Testament jubilee.

Chapters eleven, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen of Luke are difficult to understand. As we consider these chapters, we need to realize that our natural understanding of the holy Word is altogether not reliable. In order to understand any book of the Bible, we need to know the principles and elements according to which that book was

written. We need to discover the governing principles and the basic elements of the writing of a particular book. Many readers of the New Testament have not seen the governing principles and the basic and intrinsic elements according to which the Gospel of Luke was written. We thank the Lord that, in His mercy, He has shown us these things. Based upon what we have seen of the governing principles and the basic elements of the Gospel of Luke, we have the proper perspective to see the meaning and significance of chapters eleven through fourteen.

It is difficult to enter into the depths of chapter eleven and see its significance. It is even more difficult to enter into the depths of chapter twelve and grasp the significance of this chapter.

Luke 12:1-48 contains three warnings: the warning concerning religious hypocrisy (vv. 1-12), the warning concerning covetousness (vv. 13-34), and the warning to be watchful and faithful (vv. 35-48). We need to receive these three warnings, warnings that are actually a continuation of the Lord's word in chapter eleven. In this message we shall seek to understand the significance of the warnings given here by the Man-Savior.

According to chapter eleven, we need to pray ourselves into God so that we may remain in Him and be filled with His riches, filled with the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, that we may live a life in the highest standard of morality for the enjoyment and participation in the New Testament jubilee. We need to remember that the Lord's words recorded in chapter eleven were spoken as He was approaching Jerusalem. This means that while He was teaching the disciples concerning spiritual things, He was approaching Jerusalem.

A CENTER OF RELIGION AND CULTURE

At that time, Jerusalem was a center of the Jewish religion and of a high culture with material possessions. Those living in Jerusalem cared for religion and for earthly possessions in order to enjoy a better life. Therefore, as the

capital of Judea, Jerusalem was characterized by religion and culture with its enjoyment of material things.

In chapters eleven through fourteen the Lord Jesus was training His followers to live a life of the highest standard of morality so that they might be brought into the full participation of the New Testament jubilee. We have seen that this teaching was given on the way to Jerusalem.

As the Lord and His disciples were on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, His heart was set on one thing, and the heart of His disciples was set on another thing. The Lord's heart was set on His death. He was going to Jerusalem to die to the religion and culture found there. He was not going to Jerusalem to participate in those things. In Jerusalem the Lord would die to religion and culture; He would die to this present life and all earthly possessions. The Lord's disciples had something very different on their heart. Their concept was that their Master was going to Jerusalem to receive the kingdom. This enables us to understand why John and James, the sons of thunder, asked the Lord that they might sit with Him on His right and on His left in His kingdom (Mark 10:35-45). Their hearts were full of the thought of the kingdom. Their Master had been a great success in Galilee and now, they thought, was the time for Him to go to the capital, to Jerusalem, to take the throne and receive the kingdom.

But in the Lord's heart was the thought of going to Jerusalem to die. The Lord did not appreciate either religion or culture with its earthly possessions. Therefore, in chapter twelve Luke puts together certain instances in order to show that the Lord had no heart for religion or for the earthly possessions in Jerusalem.

THE WARNING CONCERNING RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY

In 12:1 the Lord gave a warning concerning religious hypocrisy: "At that time, when a crowd of many thousands were gathered together so that they trampled on one

another, He began to say to His disciples first, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." In particular, the Lord tells us to beware of the hypocrisy of the Jewish religion, for He speaks of "the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Actually, all religions lead to hypocrisy. Nowhere is hypocrisy more prevailing than in religion. Religion is a field, a realm, for hypocrisy to prevail. Consider the hypocrisy in the Jewish religion when the Lord Jesus was on earth. What hypocrisy there was among the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers! In Matthew 23 the Lord pronounced woes upon them for their hypocrisy. Here in 12:1 the Lord exposes the hypocrisy of the Jewish religion.

In 12:1 we see that the religious hypocrisy of the Pharisees was equal to leaven. In the New Testament leaven signifies the element of corruption. Here the Lord warns us to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. The Pharisees were false and practiced falsehood to the uttermost. Their falsehood became a hypocrisy that was the leaven, the element of corruption, in the Jewish religion.

All of the Lord's disciples were Jews. Since they all came out of a Jewish source, they had a deep appreciation of the Jewish religion and a high regard for the Pharisees. They thought that the Pharisees were those with a high morality. But as the Man-Savior was approaching Jerusalem, the center of hypocritical religion, He began to expose the hypocrisy of that religion to His followers. Therefore, He said to the disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

In 12:2-12 the Lord went on to tell His disciples that the hypocrisy of religion would eventually lead to the persecution of His sincere and honest followers. Religious hypocrisy always becomes a source of persecution to the genuine followers of Jesus. As those who would be in the New Testament jubilee today, we need to beware of the hypocrisy in religion, for this hypocrisy will become a source of persecution. As the genuine followers of the Lord are enjoying the jubilee, they will be opposed by the

hypocritical ones in the hypocritical religion. This opposition will develop into persecution, a persecution of the genuine followers of the Lord Jesus who are experiencing the New Testament jubilee.

THE WARNING CONCERNING COVETOUSNESS

In 12:13-34 the Lord gives His disciples another kind of warning, the warning concerning covetousness. Luke places these two warnings together in a significant continuation. In Jerusalem there was not only the peril of religious hypocrisy, but also the peril of the covetousness of material possessions.

Luke 12:13 says, "And someone out of the crowd said to Him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." The Lord took this as an opportunity to warn the disciples about covetousness. First the Lord said to the one who requested that He tell the brother to divide the inheritance with him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or a divider over you?" (v. 14). Then He went on to say to His disciples, "Take heed and guard yourself from all covetousness; for no one's life is in the abundance of his possessions" (v. 15). Then the Lord told them the parable recorded in verses 16 through 21.

If we are in the jubilee, participating in the New Testament inheritance of the Triune God, we need to beware of coveting earthly possessions. Our life in God does not depend upon such possessions. It may be better for us to dispose of our material possessions. In verse 33 the Lord says, "Sell your possessions and give alms; make for yourselves purses which do not become old, an unfailing treasure in the heavens, where a thief does not come near nor even a moth corrupts." The point here is that as we are participating in the New Testament jubilee, we should not hold on to material possessions as an earthly treasure. We need to lay up treasures for ourselves in the heavens.

In 12:1-34 the Lord warned the disciples concerning religion and earthly possessions. While He was approaching Jerusalem, He spoke to them concerning these things. Hypocrisy and covetousness are great problems related to

the enjoyment of the New Testament jubilee by the genuine followers of Jesus.

A WORD CONCERNING ANXIETY

Beginning in verse 22, the Lord charged the disciples not to be anxious concerning their life. "And He said to His disciples, Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you should eat; nor for your body, what you should put on; for the life is more than food, and the body than clothing." Since our Father in heaven takes care of us, there is no need for us to be anxious about food or clothing.

In verse 24 the Lord says, "Consider the ravens, that they neither sow nor reap, for which there is neither storehouse nor barn; and God nourishes them. How much more valuable are you than the birds!" He also uses the illustration of lilies: "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they do not toil nor even spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass in the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, you of little faith!" (vv. 27-28). Instead of being anxious, we should have faith in our heavenly Father.

In 12:31 the Lord says, "However, seek His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you." We should seek God's kingdom, which is actually the New Testament jubilee. If we are seeking the jubilee, the Father will give us food and clothing. He will add these things to us. The Lord says that our Father delights to give us the kingdom (v. 32). Certainly He will never forget our need. The Lord clearly says, "Your Father knows that you need these things" (v. 30). We are here for the jubilee, the kingdom, and since the Father delights to give us the kingdom, certainly He will take care of our material needs. Therefore, we do not need to worry or have anxiety.

More than fifty years ago, the Lord charged me to give up my job and serve Him full time. When I was called by

the Lord, I exercised my natural way of figuring concerning my living. I said, "Lord, I am willing to eat the leaves of the trees and drink water from the springs on the mountains. I am satisfied to live like this, but You must take care of my wife and children." Of course, the Lord did not allow me to live this way. He took care of my needs and the needs of my family. The point here is that although we may not have faith in our Father, He is faithful.

Some of you may have the thought of serving the Lord full time. If you have the inclination deep within to serve the Lord full time, I encourage you to do it. Get out of the "boat" of your job, jump into the water, and see if you will "drown." My experience was that after I left the boat, the Lord did not let me drown. At first, I told the Lord that I was in a good boat. I said that I trusted in Him but still needed a boat. However, the Lord told me to jump out of the boat. Then I told Him that I didn't have that much faith. But it is not a matter of our faith; it is a matter of His faithfulness.

We all need to be rescued from the anxiety of life. There is no need for us to be anxious about food and clothing. The meeting of these needs depends on God's faithfulness. He is faithful, and we should look to Him for what we need.

THE WARNING CONCERNING WATCHFULNESS AND FAITHFULNESS

If we would live a life of the highest standard of morality to participate in the New Testament jubilee and enjoy God to the uttermost, we need to be warned concerning hypocrisy, covetousness, and anxiety. We also need another warning--the warning concerning watchfulness and faithfulness. We should not be captured by religion or distracted by anxiety. Instead, we should learn to be watchful and faithful, that is, to serve our Lord, who is coming back, with watchfulness and faithfulness.

We need to pay careful attention to the third warning, for it concerns our participation in the jubilee in the coming age. In the New Testament the jubilee is of two ages: the present age, the age of grace, and the coming age, the age of the kingdom or the millennium. The jubilee

in the age of grace is a foretaste of the jubilee in the age of the kingdom. However, not even the jubilee in the millennium will be the full taste of the jubilee. The fullness of the jubilee will be in the new heaven and the new earth. From this we see there are three stages of the New Testament jubilee: the first stage in the age of grace, the second stage in the age of the kingdom, and the third stage in the new heaven and new earth, when we shall participate in the eternal jubilee in the New Jerusalem.

The Lord Jesus was bringing Peter, John, James, and the other disciples into the reality of the jubilee in the age of grace. In the warnings recorded in chapter twelve there is an indication that there will be a further jubilee in the coming age. Hence, the jubilee is not only in this age of grace, but will also be in the coming age of the kingdom. The Lord seemed to be warning the disciples, "You are following Me now, and you may participate in the jubilee in this age. But you will miss the jubilee in the coming age if you are not watchful and faithful while I am absent."

In chapter eleven we did not see anything of the jubilee in the next age. But in 12:35-48 the Lord refers to the jubilee in the coming age of the kingdom. Many believers will miss the jubilee in the next age. We may be in the jubilee in this age, but if we are not faithful in its enjoyment, we will miss the jubilee in the coming age. For this reason, in verses 35 through 38 we have a warning regarding the loss of the jubilee in the coming age.

In the jubilee we have the recovery of our inheritance. But after our inheritance, our right to enjoy the Triune God, has been recovered, we need to be watchful and faithful. Otherwise, we may lose this right again, not eternally but dispensationally in the coming kingdom. This means that in the coming age instead of enjoying our birthright in the jubilee, we shall suffer some kind of discipline, as indicated in the words "lashes" and "stripes" in verses 47 and 48.

Let us now put together the three warnings in chapter twelve--the warning of the hypocrisy of religion, the warning of covetousness and anxiety over earthly possessions, and the warning about being watchful and

faithful. If we do not beware of the hypocrisy in today's religion and covetousness and anxiety concerning material possessions, we shall not enjoy the jubilee in this age. Furthermore, we need to see that we may enjoy the jubilee in this age, but miss the enjoyment of the jubilee in the next age if we are not watchful and faithful during the Lord's absence.

In order for us to participate in the jubilee in this age, we need the warning concerning hypocrisy in religion and covetousness and anxiety concerning possessions. If we heed these two warnings, we shall enjoy the jubilee today in the age of grace. But while we are enjoying the jubilee in the present age, we need to be watchful and faithful during the Lord's absence. If we are not watchful and the Lord comes back and finds us not being watchful and faithful, then we shall lose the enjoyment of the coming jubilee.

Let us beware of hypocrisy in religion and of the anxiety that causes us to worry about our life, especially about food and clothing. Let us beware of these things so that we may participate in the jubilee today. Then as we are enjoying the jubilee, let us be watchful and faithful in carrying out the Lord's commission. Otherwise, when the Lord comes back, He will find us not watching and not faithful. Then we shall lose the enjoyment of the jubilee in the coming age of the kingdom.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(8)

Scripture Reading: Luke 12:49-59

THE LORD'S LONGING TO BE RELEASED THROUGH DEATH

In 12:1-48 the Man-Savior warned His disciples of the hypocrisy of religion (vv. 1-12), covetousness (vv. 13-34), and concerning watchfulness and faithfulness (vv. 35-48). Then in 12:49-53 He expressed the longing to be released through His death. Here we see that the Lord aspired to be fully released from the bondage of His flesh. This short portion of the Word is very deep, and we need adequate spiritual experience in order to understand it.

When I was in Shanghai more than fifty years ago, I read a book by brother T. Austin-Sparks entitled *The Release of the Lord*. That book made reference to 12:49 and 50. The writer pointed out that the Lord, in His incarnation was bound and concealed in His flesh. He was God, and He had the divine life as His essence, strength, and power. Nevertheless, He was concealed in His humanity, which was a restriction to His divine being. Therefore, He needed to be released through death; that is, He desired that His divine being would be released through death.

Luke 12:49 and 50 correspond to John 12:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Here the Lord likens Himself to a grain of wheat. If a grain of wheat does not fall into the earth and

die, it will abide alone and remain the same. But when it falls into the ground and dies, the death of that grain releases the life within it. We may say that death becomes a release to the inner life of the grain of wheat. Through such a release, the riches of the life of the grain of wheat come forth to produce many grains. The Lord Jesus as a grain of wheat fell into the ground and lost His soulish life through death so that He might release His eternal life in resurrection to the many grains.

When we compare John 12:24 with Luke 12:49 and 50, we see that both portions of the Scriptures describe the release of the divine life, or the release of the divine being of the Lord's Person. As God, the Lord Jesus possessed the unlimited eternal life. However, this unlimited life was greatly restricted and restrained in His humanity, in His flesh. Therefore, the Lord was anxious and desirous for the release of His divine life. Once the divine life was released from within Him, He could impart it into His many believers. This is the basic thought in 12:49-53.

COMING TO CAST FIRE ON EARTH

In 12:49 the Lord Jesus says, "I came to cast fire on the earth, and what can I desire if it has already been kindled?" This "fire" is the impulse of the spiritual life, which comes from the Lord's released divine life and which causes the divisions mentioned in verses 51 through 53. In these verses we see that there will be divisions even in the families of the believers. These divisions come from the fire which is the impulse of the spiritual life, and this impulse comes from the Lord's released divine life. His life was concealed, and the Lord wanted it to be released. He wanted the fire to burst into flame.

In verse 49 the Lord says, "What can I desire if it has already been kindled?" This part of the verse may also be rendered, "How I wish that it were already kindled!" This indicates that the fire was not kindled before the Lord's death. We know from the record in the book of Acts that after the Lord's death this fire became a flame.

PRESSED UNTIL HIS BAPTISM IS ACCOMPLISHED

In 12:50 the Lord goes on to say, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!" The word "baptism" here reminds us of the Lord's word to James and John in Mark 10:38: "Are you able to drink the cup which I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" Both the cup and the baptism refer to the Lord's death. The cup signified that His death was the God-given portion for Him to take for the sinners whom He would redeem for God. Baptism denoted that His death was the God-ordained way for Him to pass through for the accomplishment of God's redemption for sinners.

The Greek word rendered "pressed" in Luke 12:50 may also be translated "constrained." The Lord was constrained in His flesh, which He put upon Himself in His incarnation. He needed to die, to be baptized, in physical death so that His unlimited and infinite divine being with His divine life might be released from His flesh. His divine life, after being released through His physical death, became the impulse of His believers' spiritual life in resurrection.

A CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS

In 12:51 the Man-Savior says, "Do you think that I came to give peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." Here the Lord asks if the disciples thought that He came to give peace on the earth. In a sense, the Lord did come to give peace. When He came, peace came, for He brought peace to mankind. When He was born, the multitude of the heavenly army praised God and said, "Glory in the highest places to God, and on earth peace among men of His good pleasure" (2:14). Hence, the coming of the Savior rendered glory to God in the heavens and brought peace to men on earth. In Ephesians 2:14 Paul even says that Christ is our peace. But, in another sense, the Lord did not come to give peace but rather division. This division is due to the satanic life in the unbelievers struggling against the divine life in the

believers--a conflict between the satanic kingdom and the kingdom of God.

The Lord spoke a similar word in Matthew 10:34: "Do not suppose that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." The whole earth is under Satan's usurpation (1 John 5:19). The Lord Jesus came to call some out from his usurpation. This certainly arouses Satan's opposition, and he instigates the ones under his usurpation to fight against those called by the Lord. To be sure, the Lord's coming did not bring peace but a sword.

The conflict between the satanic life and the divine life is actually a warfare between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God. A kingdom is a matter of life; that is, a certain kind of kingdom has a certain kind of life. For example, we may speak of the vegetable kingdom. The vegetable kingdom depends on the vegetable life. In the same principle, the human kingdom depends on the human life, and the kingdom of God depends on the life of God. Since we have the life of God, we have the reality of the kingdom of God, and we are in this reality. But the unbelievers, who live by the life of Satan, are in another realm, another kingdom. This means that they are in the reality of the satanic kingdom. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan certainly do not agree but are contrary to each other. Hence, there is a struggle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, and this struggle causes division.

In Luke 12:52 the Lord continues, "From now on there will be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three." This kind of division has taken place again and again throughout the last nineteen centuries.

In verse 53 the Lord goes on to say, "They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against the mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law." Here Luke characteristically mentions the details. The kind of division described here is not pleasant, for it is due to the

struggle between two lives, the divine life and the satanic life.

We have seen from 12:51-53 that there will be division caused by the satanic life in the unbelievers struggling against the divine life in the believers. We have pointed out that this is a conflict between the satanic kingdom and the kingdom of God.

Now that we understand the thought conveyed in these verses, we should not do anything to start a war in our family. We should never go to those in our family and say, "I have the divine life, but you don't have this life. Because I have the divine life, there will be war between me and you. Even though I don't want to be against you, you will be against me." To say something like this would be very foolish. Instead of doing anything to provoke conflict with our family, we should live a life that is humble, peaceful, and submissive, and allow the Lord to work in the situation.

TEACHING ABOUT THE DISCERNMENT OF TIME

In 12:54-59 we have the Lord's teaching about the discernment of time. The Lord's words recorded in verses 49 through 53 were delivered to His disciples. What He says in verses 54 through 59 is addressed to the crowd, to the unbelievers.

In 12:54-56 the Lord said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say that a rainstorm is coming, and so it happens; and when a south wind is blowing, you say that there will be heat, and it happens. Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the earth and the heaven; how is it then that you do not discern this time?" The word "discern" in verse 56 also means prove by testing, and "face" denotes appearance. The Greek words rendered "how is it then that you do not discern" may also be rendered "but this time you do not know how to discern." To discern this time is to discern the signs of the time (Matt. 16:3). These signs are that John the Baptist has come to announce the coming of Messiah, as was prophesied (Luke 3:2-6, 15-17), and that Messiah is

here, ministering Himself so that the people may receive Him and be saved. The people could discern signs concerning the weather and the appearance of earth and heaven, but they could not discern the signs brought in by John the Baptist and the Messiah Himself.

In verse 57 the Lord continues, "And why do you not even of yourselves judge what is right?" Even without the teaching of the Lord, the Jews had enough signs to judge of themselves the right way to follow and the right thing to do at that time, that is, to receive the Lord and follow Him. However, they refused to receive Him and follow Him.

A WORD SPOKEN TO THE CROWDS FOR REPENTANCE AND SALVATION

In verses 58 and 59 the Lord says, "For as you are going with your opponent to a magistrate, endeavor to be released from him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge will deliver you up to the officer, and the officer will throw you into prison. I tell you, you will by no means come out from there until you have paid the very last copper coin." The Greek word translated "copper coin" is *lepton,* the second smallest coin of the Greco-Roman coinage of Palestine. The word "for" at the beginning of verse 58 indicates that verses 58 and 59 are a continuation of verse 57, in which the Man-Savior charged the Jews that, while they were still on the way (going), under the law (their opponent--John 5:45) to meet God (the magistrate) and be judged by Christ (the judge--John 5:22; Acts 17:31), they should endeavor to be released from the law so that they might not be judged by Christ and thrown into the lake of fire (prison--Rev. 20:11-15) by the angel (the officer--see Matt. 13:41). If that should happen, they will by no means come out forever (Luke 12:59).

A WORD SPOKEN TO THE DISCIPLES FOR THEIR KINGDOM LIFE

The word in 12:58 and 59 was spoken to the crowds (v. 54) for their repentance and salvation. But in Matthew 5:25 and 26 this word is applied to the disciples for their

kingdom life: "Be well disposed quickly with your opponent, while you are with him in the way, lest the opponent deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, You shall by no means come out from there until you have paid the last quadrans." Here the Lord says that we should "be well disposed quickly" lest we die, our opponent die, or the Lord come back, and thus there be no opportunity for us to be reconciled to our opponent. In Greek "opponent" means an opponent in law, a plaintiff. "In the way" signifies that we are still living in this life. Being delivered to the judge will take place at the judgment seat of Christ when He comes back (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10). The "judge" will be the Lord, the "officer" will be the angel, and the "prison" will be the place of discipline. To "come out from there" (prison) is to be forgiven in the coming age, the millennium.

The Roman quadrans was a small brass coin equal to a quarter of an assarion, which is equal to one cent. The meaning here is that even with the smallest thing we need to make a thorough clearance. This kind of clearance is related to the kingdom life.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-ONE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(9)

Scripture Reading: Luke 13:1-35

In this message we shall consider 13:1-35.

TEACHING ABOUT REPENTANCE

Luke 13:1 says, "Now there were some present at the same time who reported to Him concerning the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mixed with their sacrifices." The Greek word translated "now" may also be rendered "yet," "and," or "furthermore." We follow other versions to use the word "now," not to convey the element of time but to indicate continuation. "Now" indicates that 13:1-9 continues the last verses of chapter twelve, dealing further with the matter of repentance. The Lord uses the two incidents in 13:1-5 to remind the Jews that now is the time for them to repent. Otherwise, they will all perish like the victims of those two incidents.

The Lord's word at the end of chapter twelve indicated that He wanted the Jews to repent. Now in chapter thirteen He continues to speak further concerning repentance. Referring to the case of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mixed with their sacrifices, He said to those present, "Do you think that these Galileans were sinners beyond all the Galileans because they suffered these things? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish." Then He goes on to refer to a second case, the case of the "eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them" (v. 4). Again the Lord warned the people

to repent. He seemed to be telling them, "Don't think that those people were sinful, and the others were not. Unless you repent, you also will perish."

In verses 6 through 9 the Lord goes on to tell the parable of a certain man who had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. The word "and" at the beginning of verse 6 indicates that these verses are the continuation of the foregoing verses concerning repentance.

This parable indicates that God as the owner came in the Son to the Jewish people as to a fig tree (Matt. 21:19; Jer. 24:2, 5, 8) planted in God's promised land as the vineyard (Matt. 21:33) to seek fruit from them. He had been seeking for three years (Luke 13:7), and He did not find any. He wanted to cut them down, but the Son as the vinedresser prayed for them that God the Father would tolerate them until He died for them (dug the ground around the fig tree) and gave them fertilizer (threw on manure), hoping that they would then repent and produce fruit. Otherwise, they would be cut down. The passages in 11:29-32 and 42-52, unveiling the Jewish people as an evil generation, confirm this interpretation.

In this parable the Jewish people are regarded by God as a fig tree. When God did not find fruit on the tree, He was thinking to cut it off. But the vinedresser, the Lord Jesus, begged the Father not to do this until, by means of His death, He dug around the tree. Then if the tree still did not bring forth fruit, it could be cut down. This is actually what took place. Because the Jews did not repent, even after the Lord Jesus died and resurrected and the Spirit came, the "fig tree" was "cut down." This happened in A.D. 70 when Titus brought his Roman army to Jerusalem and destroyed it. That destruction of Jerusalem was the cutting down of the fig tree.

HEALING AND RELEASING A BENT-DOUBLE AND SATAN-BOUND WOMAN ON THE SABBATH

In 13:10-17 we have the case of the Man-Savior healing

and releasing a bent-double and Satan-bound woman on the Sabbath. Verses 10 and 11 say, "And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bent double and utterly unable to stand erect." This "spirit" was a demon, one of the spirits of the living creatures who lived in the preadamic age and were judged by God when they joined Satan's rebellion. The fallen angels work with Satan in the air (Eph. 2:2; 6:11-12), and these demons, unclean spirits, move with him on the earth. Both act evilly upon man for the kingdom of Satan.

Because of a spirit of infirmity, this woman was "bent double." Literally, the Greek words rendered "bent double" mean "bending together." This may signify the demon's oppression over a person to an extreme extent, so that the person is bent toward the satanic world only and is unable to stand erect to look into the heavens.

The Lord Jesus saw the woman who was bent double, utterly unable to stand erect, but forced to look down to the earth as a result of the operation exercised upon her by Satan through his demons. The Lord said to her, "Woman, you have been released from your infirmity; and He laid His hands on her, and instantly she was made erect, and glorified God" (vv. 12-13). Here we see that the woman did not ask the Lord to heal her; rather, He initiated the healing and release of the bent-double and Satan-bound woman.

Verse 14 says, "But the synagogue ruler, being indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, answered and said to the crowd, There are six days in which man should work; therefore come on them and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Here we see that Satan uses not only the evil spirit to possess the woman, but also the religious ruler to oppose the woman's release by the Lord. Religion is much used by the usurper to keep God's chosen people under his oppression. The synagogue ruler, who was very religious, cared for religious regulations and not for the suffering of this woman, who was a descendant of Abraham.

In verses 15 and 16 the Lord answered the ruler of the synagogue, "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away, and give it a drink? And this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--consider it--eighteen years, should she not be released from this bond on the Sabbath day?" The fact that this woman was a daughter of Abraham indicates that she was one of God's chosen people. However, she was bound by Satan. This indicates that the demon's possession of people is Satan's binding of them. Hence, the casting out of the demon is the defeat of Satan (Matt. 12:29). It was fitting for this woman to be released from that bond on the Sabbath day, for the Sabbath was ordained by God for man to rest (Gen. 2:3), not for man to remain under bondage.

Why is this case put here by Luke? In answering this question, we need to remember that this took place as the Man-Savior was approaching Jerusalem, where the atmosphere was extremely religious. I believe that the Lord Jesus entered into the synagogue and initiated the healing of this woman in order to show His disciples that He had no intention of keeping the dead forms of religion and the deformed Sabbatical regulations. He purposely broke those regulations so that His disciples would know that He had come not to keep the regulations that hold people in their suffering, but to break the deformed regulations so that the suffering ones may be released by His jubilee blessing.

When the Lord Jesus healed the woman who had been bound by Satan and bent double, He brought the jubilee to her. In chapter four He had declared the jubilee, in which the captives would be released and the oppressed would be set free. This case, therefore, is a fulfillment of the proclamation of the jubilee in chapter four. The Lord's intention was to let the disciples know that He was going to Jerusalem, not to observe religious regulations but to break them purposely so that the people might be brought into the jubilee.

TEACHING ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD AND AS LEAVEN

In 13:18-21, probably much to the disciples' surprise, the Lord again spoke concerning the kingdom of God. However, here He does not speak of the kingdom in a positive sense. Up until now, the Lord's word concerning the kingdom in Luke has been positive. But here He talks to the disciples concerning the kingdom in a negative way, teaching them about the kingdom as a grain of mustard (vv. 18-19) and as leaven (vv. 20-21).

In verses 18 and 19 the Lord says, "What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I liken it? It is like a grain of mustard, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree; and the birds of heaven roosted in its branches." The fact that this mustard seed grew into a tree indicates that it did not grow into something according to its own kind. According to Genesis 1, the things created by God are according to their own kind. An apple tree, for example, should be according to the apple tree kind. But here the mustard seed does not grow after its kind, but instead grows into another kind. This is the breaking of the principle ordained by God in His creation. If we see this, we shall not interpret this parable in a positive sense.

Some teach that the mustard becoming a large tree is a positive development. But according to the history of Christianity, there has not been such a positive development. In fact, this parable is a prophecy that has been fulfilled in the history of Christianity. Actually, today's Christianity is not something after its kind. The church, which is the embodiment of the kingdom, should be like an herb to produce food. But it became a "tree," a lodge for birds. This means that, contrary to the law of God's creation that every plant must be after its kind, its nature and function were changed. This took place when Constantine the Great mixed the church with the world in the first part of the fourth century. He brought thousands of false believers into Christianity, making it Christendom, no longer the church. Hence, this parable corresponds to the

third of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the church in Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-17). The church, according to its heavenly and spiritual nature, should be like a mustard, sojourning on earth. But since its nature has been changed, the church became deeply rooted and settled in the earth as a tree, flourishing with its enterprises as the branches to lodge many evil persons and things. This has formed the outward organization of the outward appearance of the kingdom of God.

In Luke 13:19 we are told that the birds of heaven roosted in the branches of this tree. In 8:5 and 12 the birds of heaven are related to the Devil. Therefore, the birds of heaven here must refer to Satan's evil spirits with the evil persons and things motivated by them. They lodge in the branches of the great tree, that is, in the enterprises of Christendom.

In Luke 13:20 and 21 the Lord says, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." Some teach that the leaven here is positive. According to their concept, the leaven signifies the power of the gospel spreading throughout the earth. But in the Bible leaven does not have a positive denotation. On the contrary, especially in the four Gospels, it has a negative significance. The Lord Jesus, in particular, does not use the word leaven in a positive sense, but always in a negative sense. Elsewhere in the New Testament leaven signifies evil things (1 Cor. 5:6, 8) and evil doctrines (Matt. 16:6, 11-12).

The church, as the practicality of the kingdom of God with Christ--the unleavened fine flour--as its content, must be unleavened bread (1 Cor. 5:7-8). However, the Catholic Church, which was fully and officially formed in the sixth century and which is signified by the woman here, took many pagan practices, heretical doctrines, and evil matters and mixed them with the teachings concerning Christ to leaven the whole content of Christianity. What is described in Luke 13:20 and 21 corresponds to the fourth of the seven churches in

Revelation 2 and 3, the church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29).

"Meal," which is used for making the meal offering (Lev. 2:1), signifies Christ as food both to God and man. "Three measures" is the quantity needed to make a full meal (Gen. 18:6). Hence, to hide the leaven in three measures of meal signifies that the Catholic Church has fully leavened in a hidden way all the teachings concerning Christ. This is the actual situation in the Roman Catholic Church. It is absolutely against the Scripture, which strongly forbids putting any leaven into the meal offering (Lev. 2:4-5, 11).

The two parables in 13:18-21 indicate that the jubilee has come, but has lost its nature. The kingdom of God is the reality and content of the jubilee. Without the kingdom of God there is no jubilee. We have emphasized the fact that the jubilee is a matter of releasing the captives and of recovering the right to the enjoyment of the Triune God. The same is true of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the return of the captives and the recovery of the divine inheritance. But as these parables indicate, at a certain time the jubilee, the kingdom, lost its nature. On the one hand, it has developed into something that is not after its kind; on the other hand, it has become leavened, that is, its contents have been corrupted. Such a change in nature of the jubilee actually indicates the loss of the jubilee. Where is the jubilee among so many Christians today? As we consider today's situation, we see that in Christendom the real nature of the jubilee has been lost.

In his Gospel Luke writes in such a way as to cover different points related to the jubilee. Therefore, our understanding of the Gospel of Luke must be governed by the principle of the jubilee. The proclamation of the jubilee in chapter four is a governing principle both for Luke's writing of this book and our understanding of it. Whatever is mentioned in chapters four through twenty-four is related to the jubilee either directly or indirectly. This means that everything in these chapters is related directly or indirectly to the kingdom of God, with the release of the captives and the recovery of the divine inheritance.

This jubilee, the kingdom of God, was brought in through the death and resurrection of Christ and can be seen in Acts and the Epistles. Not long afterward, probably before the end of the first century, the jubilee began to be lost. Eventually, as indicated by these two parables in Luke 13, the jubilee changed its nature and was lost.

TEACHING ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM CONCERNING THE ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In 13:22-30 we have the Lord's teaching on the way to Jerusalem concerning the entrance into the kingdom of God. After a number of aspects related to the jubilee have been covered, there is the need for us to know the way to enter into the jubilee, the way to enter into the kingdom of God. The record in 13:22-30 is according to Luke's way of putting various points together to show us aspects of the jubilee. Now he presents us a portion that reveals the way to enter into the kingdom of God as the jubilee.

Luke 13:22 and 23 say, "And He was passing throughout the cities and villages, teaching and making His way toward Jerusalem. And someone said to Him, Lord, are there only a few who are being saved?" Although this question is rather foolish or ambiguous, the Man-Savior answered it in a very clear way: "Struggle to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (v. 24). This is not merely to be saved; this is to enter into the full jubilee, to enter into the full enjoyment of the kingdom of God, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

In verse 25 the Lord continues, "From the time when the Master of the house is risen and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock on the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and He will answer and say to you, I do not know you. Where are you from?" Here the words "I do not know you" do not mean, "I am not familiar with you. You are not known to Me." Instead, these words mean, "I don't appreciate you, I don't approve you, I don't give you any praise."

In verses 26 and 27 the Lord goes on to say, "Then you will begin to say, We ate in Your presence and drank, and You taught in our streets; and He will say, I tell you, I do not know where you are from; go away from Me, all you workers of unrighteousness!" The Lord's word here refers to the Jews and indicates that what the Jews were doing was unrighteous.

In verse 28 the Lord says, "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you being cast outside." Here "weeping" indicates regret, and "gnashing of teeth" indicates self-blame. The Lord's word about being outside the kingdom of God refers to the future, to the millennium. During the millennium, many Jews will be cast out of the kingdom of God.

In 13:23 the Jews asked about salvation. But the Lord answers concerning participation in the kingdom of God in the millennium, which will be the most enjoyable part of God's full salvation before the enjoyment of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1-3a, 5-7; 22:1-5).

Verses 29 and 30 conclude, "And they will come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, there are the last who will be first, and there are the first who will be last." In verse 29 "they" refers to the Gentiles. Gentiles will come from east and west and from north and south and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. This will take place in the kingdom age, in the millennium. In verse 30 the "last who will be first" refers to the saved Gentiles, who will receive the Savior before some of the saved Jews and will participate in the kingdom of God in the millennium. The "first who will be last" refers to the believing Jews who will believe in the Lord later than the Gentile believers (Rom. 11:25-26). The word in this verse is applied in another sense in Matthew 19:30; 20:16; and Mark 10:31.

JOURNEYING UNINTERRUPTEDLY TOWARD JERUSALEM

In 13:31-35 we have a description of the Man-Savior journeying uninterruptedly toward Jerusalem. Verse 31 says, "In the same hour some Pharisees came up, saying to Him, Get out and go from here, for Herod wants to kill you." This is a threat made by the opposers in their jealousy. But, as we shall see, the Lord was not threatened.

The Lord said to them, "Go and tell this fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I am perfected" (v. 32). The Greek words translated, "I am perfected" may also be rendered "end My course" or "reach My goal." The Lord's response indicates that He had a set schedule to carry out His ministry, to end His course, and to reach His goal, through His death and resurrection, and that no one, especially not Herod, could stop Him from accomplishing it.

Here the Lord seems to be saying, "I shall reach My goal. I shall accomplish what I intend to do. I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow and then on the third day, in resurrection, I will be perfected and reach My goal. Don't bother Me or threaten Me. I am the sovereign One, and you can do nothing. Who is Herod? He is a fox. You may be afraid of him, but I am not, because he is under Me. Tell him that I have My schedule. According to this schedule, I will finish My work, reach My goal, and be perfected."

In verse 33 the Lord said, "However, I must journey today and tomorrow and on the following day, because it is not acceptable for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem." The Lord was not prevented by the threat from journeying to Jerusalem to accomplish His redemptive death. Rather, He was bold to proceed there (Mark 10:33) to reach the goal of His ministry.

In verse 33 the Lord seems to be saying, "I must journey today, tomorrow, and the following day because it is necessary for Me to die in Jerusalem. It is not acceptable for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem. Do not interrupt Me or frustrate Me. I have a goal, and My goal is to die in

Jerusalem. I am on the way to reach My goal."

In 13:34 and 35 the Lord says, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I desired to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her own brood under her wings, and you did not want to! Behold? your house is left to you. And I tell you, you shall by no means see Me until the time comes when you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" It has always been God Himself who cared for Jerusalem like a bird fluttering over her young (Isa. 31:5; Deut. 32:11-12). Hence, when the Lord Jesus said, "I desire to gather your children together just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings," He indicated that He was God Himself.

In verse 35 the Lord says, "Behold, your house is left to you." Since "house" is singular, it must denote the house of God, the temple (19:46-47). It was the house of God, but now it is called "your house" because they had made it a den of robbers.

In verse 35 the Lord also says, "You shall by no means see Me until the time comes when you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" This will be the Lord's second coming, when the remnant of Israel will turn to believe in Him and be saved (Rom. 11:23, 26).

In 13:31-35 the Lord refers to His resurrection and to His coming back. When the Lord returns, He will bring in the jubilee. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord, the One who will bring in the enjoyment of the jubilee in the millennium!

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-TWO

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(10)

Scripture Reading: Luke 14:1-24

HEALING A MAN OF DROPSY ON THE SABBATH

Chapter fourteen of the Gospel of Luke begins with another incident that took place on the Sabbath. Verse 1 says, "And it came about, as He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching Him closely." They were watching the Lord closely with an evil intention to accuse Him (Mark 3:2).

"And behold, a certain man suffering from dropsy was before Him." Dropsy is a disease that causes the body to swell up because of fluid forming in the cavities and tissues. This may signify an inner abnormal function of life that causes spiritual death before God.

We do not know whether the man with dropsy came into the house on his own or if he was asked by the Pharisees to be there as a temptation to the Lord. In any case, it was sovereign of the Lord that this man was present. Those in the Pharisee's house were watching to see what the Lord would do. He asked the lawyers and the Pharisees, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" (v. 3). Then He took hold of the man suffering from dropsy, cured him, and sent him away (v. 4). Following this He said to them, "Which of you having a donkey or an ox that shall fall into a well, will not immediately pull it out on the Sabbath day? And they were not able to reply to these

things" (vv. 5-6). In healing this man the Man-Savior once again broke the deformed sabbatical regulations.

TEACHING THE INVITED ONE AND THE INVITING ONE

In 14:1-6 we see that a Pharisee invited the Lord Jesus to eat in his home, and the Lord accepted this invitation. It is possible that the disciples may have received a wrong impression from this. They may have thought that the sabbatical regulations were right and that the religion of keeping the Sabbath was also right. Therefore, on this occasion the Lord took the opportunity to break the sabbatical regulations, that is, to break the Sabbath-keeping religion, in order to impress the disciples that He was going to Jerusalem, not to keep the religion there but to terminate it. This is the reason that chapter fourteen begins with a section concerning the breaking of religious regulations. The Lord did this purposely in order to show His disciples that He was not going to Jerusalem for the sake of the Sabbath-keeping religion.

While the Lord Jesus was in the house of the Pharisee, He observed the situation among the Pharisees and lawyers. "He noticed how they were choosing the places of honor" (v. 7), exalting themselves even in the matter of seating. Therefore, He told them a parable about not reclining in a place of honor when invited by anyone to a marriage feast, but instead sitting down in the last place (vv. 8-10). The Lord pointed out that if we take the place of honor, the one who invited us may come and say, "Give this one that place, and then you will begin with shame to occupy the last place" (v. 9). The Lord went on to say that if we sit in the last place, the one who invited us will say, "Friend, come up higher," and then we shall have glory before all those reclining at the table with us (v. 10). The Lord concludes this parable by saying, "Because everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (v. 11). The Lord's teaching here is like that of a parent teaching his children how to behave.

In verses 12 through 14 the Lord said to the one who had invited Him, "When you make a meal or a dinner, do not call your friends, nor your brothers, nor your relatives, nor your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and it becomes a repayment to you. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they do not have anything with which to repay you; for it will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the righteous." Those mentioned in verse 13--the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind--are the people whom God invited to His salvation (v. 21). The resurrection of the righteous spoken of in verse 14 is the resurrection of life (John 5:29; Rev. 20:4-6), when God will reward the saints (Rev. 11:18) at the Lord's return (1 Cor. 4:5).

TEACHING ABOUT THE ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S INVITATION

In 14:15-24 we have the Lord's teaching about the acceptance of God's invitation. "One of those reclining at the table with Him, hearing these things, said to Him, Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (v. 15). Then the Lord said to him, "A certain man was making a great dinner and invited many; and he sent his slave at the dinner hour to say to those who had been invited, Come, for it is now ready" (vv. 16-17). This great dinner is different from the marriage feast in Matthew 22:2-14. That marriage feast is for the reward of the kingdom. This great dinner is for God's full salvation. God, as the certain man, has prepared His full salvation as a great dinner and sent the first apostles as His slaves to invite the Jews (Luke 14:16-17). But because they were occupied by their riches, such as land, cattle, or a wife, they refused His invitation (vv. 18-20). Then God sent the apostles to invite the street people--the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. Because of their poverty and misery, they received God's invitation (vv. 21-22a). Yet God's salvation still had room for more; so He sent His slaves to go out further to the Gentile world, as the roads

and hedges, to compel the Gentiles to come in and fill up the room of His salvation (vv. 22b-23; Acts 13:46-48; Rom. 11:25).

In this parable the Lord's intention was to let the Pharisees know that God had invited them to His great feast, but they had all asked to be excused. Each one of them denied God's invitation. That made it necessary for God to go to those of the lower class--to the poor, crippled, blind, and lame. After that, because there was still room in God's salvation, God sent His slaves into the Gentile world to gather more people into His feast. Therefore, eventually those who had first been invited by God--the Pharisees, the scribes, and the lawyers--will not be able to enter into the kingdom of God.

This parable is an excellent parable concerning salvation. In order to be saved it is not necessary for us to do anything. We simply need to answer God's invitation. To be saved all we need to do is come and receive what God has prepared for us. As long as we answer His invitation and accept what He has prepared for us, we shall be saved.

SALVATION AND REWARD

God's economy, however, includes more than salvation. It also includes the reward of entering into the blessing of the kingdom age. Hence, to be saved is one thing, and to receive the kingdom reward is another thing. This is the reason for the Lord's teaching in 14:25-35.

Verses 25 and 26 say, "Now great crowds were going along with Him, and He turned and said to them, If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, his own soul life also, he cannot be My disciple." The tone here is very different from that in 14:15-24. For salvation there is no need for us to do anything. This means that for salvation there are no terms, no conditions. We simply need to answer God's invitation and receive what He offers us and we are saved. But there is more to God's economy than just being saved. After we are saved, we need to enter into the coming kingdom to receive a reward. Therefore, to be

saved by grace is one thing, and to be rewarded according to our following of the Lord is another thing.

We all need to see the difference between salvation and reward. It is significant that chapter fourteen, after an opening word concerning the breaking of the sabbatical regulations, goes on to speak concerning God's salvation and God's reward. God's salvation is for us to enjoy the jubilee today, and His reward is for us to enjoy the jubilee in the coming age.

We have seen that the New Testament jubilee is of three stages: first, the jubilee in the present age, the age of grace; the second, the jubilee in the coming age, the age of the kingdom; and third, the jubilee in eternity, in the new heaven and new earth. Enjoying the jubilee today is a matter of salvation. However, enjoying the jubilee in the coming age is a matter of reward. The enjoyment of the jubilee in eternity in the new heaven and new earth will be the full taste of God's full salvation.

ENJOYING CHRIST FAITHFULLY TO RECEIVE THE REWARD

Today everyone who accepts God's invitation and receives the offer of what He has prepared for us has the ground to participate in the New Testament jubilee and enjoy Christ in this age. But in order to receive the reward of the jubilee in the coming age, we need to enjoy Christ faithfully in this age. Many saved ones are not faithful to enjoy Christ today. For this reason, God has set up a reward as an incentive that we may enjoy Christ faithfully in this present age. If we do not enjoy Christ faithfully today, we shall lose the enjoyment of Christ in the coming age. Here we see that in His wisdom God has made the enjoyment of Christ in the coming age a reward for the faithful ones, the ones who enjoy Christ faithfully in this age.

Christians have neglected a number of important

matters in God's New Testament economy. One of these matters is the reward given to the faithful ones in the coming age. Most fundamental Christians emphasize God's salvation, but they do not pay any attention to God's reward. This reward in the coming age has been set up by God as an incentive to encourage all the Lord's believers to enjoy Him and follow Him faithfully in this age.

We have pointed out that there are no terms, no conditions, for enjoying Christ in this age. As long as we believe in Him, accepting God's invitation and offer, we may enjoy Christ today. Nevertheless, we need to enjoy Him faithfully in order to receive the reward in the coming age of the kingdom. Otherwise, we shall lose the enjoyment of Christ in the coming age.

The kingdom will be a reward in the thousand years to the faithful enjoyers of Christ, and that reward will also be a jubilee. Today's jubilee is real, but it is only a foretaste, not the full taste. God has presented us such a foretaste, and we need to have a high regard for it. So many Jews have excused themselves from accepting God's invitation and have denied this jubilee and as a result cannot share its enjoyment. But we Christians have accepted God's invitation and His offer. Therefore, we are on the right ground to enjoy this jubilee. Yet we still need to be faithful to enjoy the jubilee; that is, we need to be faithful to enjoy Christ.

Many genuine believers, truly saved Christians, are not faithfully enjoying Christ. All these unfaithful ones will miss the jubilee in the coming age. This means that they will miss the coming kingdom. We all need to see that today's jubilee is a matter of salvation, that the jubilee in the coming age is a matter of reward, and that the jubilee in the new heaven and new earth will be the full taste of God's full salvation.

According to the New Testament, God's kingdom today is Christ as our enjoyment. This enjoyment is the jubilee. The kingdom of God, which is Christ Himself, has set us free from the bondage of sin, Satan, the world, and the self. The kingdom of God has also recovered our right to

the divine inheritance, the right to enjoy the Triune God in Christ. Today in God's salvation we have the right to enjoy Christ, the right to enjoy the jubilee. Now we must remain faithful in this enjoyment. Properly and faithfully we need to enjoy God's Son who is the all-inclusive Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit. This faithful enjoyment of Christ will qualify us to enter into the kingdom in the coming age and there to enjoy a fuller jubilee. That fuller jubilee will be a reward. Receiving this reward requires the fulfillment of a condition, and this condition is that we faithfully and continually enjoy Christ today.

In our daily living we may fail to enjoy Christ. If you fail, simply repent and confess your failure, and the blood of Jesus will cleanse you. Then you will be brought back to the proper enjoyment of Christ. We may need to do this again and again, each time we fail. When you go to bed at night, you may sense your failures that day. But if you confess them, you will have a new beginning concerning the enjoyment of Christ.

Every day we should exercise to keep ourselves in the faithful enjoyment of Christ. Actually, this is to keep ourselves in God by praying ourselves into Him. It is also to keep ourselves in the kingdom of God for the enjoyment of Christ in this age. This enjoyment will then qualify us to enter into the coming kingdom, which will be a fuller jubilee as a reward to the Lord's faithful ones.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-THREE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(11)

Scripture Reading: Luke 14:25-35

Luke 14 shows us God's salvation, which brings us the enjoyment of the jubilee in this age. Then this chapter goes on to reveal the requirements for the enjoyment of the jubilee in the coming age, that is, the requirements for entering into the kingdom during the millennium. As we shall see, the Lord's word concerning this in 14:25-35 is strong.

HATING OUR SOUL LIFE

Luke 14:25 and 26 say, "Now great crowds were going along with Him, and He turned and said to them, If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, his own soul life also, he cannot be My disciple." In verses 26 through 33 the Lord unveils to the crowds going along with Him the cost of following Him. To receive salvation is to be saved (13:23); to follow the Lord is to enjoy Him as the blessing of God's salvation. This requires us to renounce all, even our life, and to carry our own cross (vv. 27, 33).

We may think that the Lord Jesus teaches us only to love. But in verse 26 He teaches us to hate. This is not religion; this is a matter in God's economy. According to the Lord's word here, we should hate those we love, not those we do not love. Especially we need to hate ourselves, even our own soul life.

What we love in ourselves is not mainly our spirit or body but our soul. For example, you may go to a restaurant not because you love your body, but because you love your soul and want to enjoy life, which is to enjoy your soul. Actually, all forms of amusement, entertainment, and pleasures are for the enjoyment of the soul. In 14:26 the Lord clearly says that if we do not hate our own soul life, we cannot be His disciples. We have received God's salvation, but we must fulfill the requirement in verse 26 in order to receive the reward.

CARRYING OUR CROSS

In verse 27 the Lord goes on to say, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple." The aim of the cross is not suffering; it is the termination of the person. The believers in Christ have been crucified (terminated) with Him (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:6). After being organically united with Him through faith, they should remain on the cross, keeping their old man in the termination of the cross (Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:20). This is to carry their own cross. Christ carried the cross first and then was crucified (John 19:17-18). But the believers in Him have been crucified first and then carry the cross so that they may remain in the termination of their old man. In this way the believers experience and enjoy Christ as their life and life supply.

We need to be impressed with the fact that to carry our own cross means that we remain on the cross and keep our old man in the termination of the cross. Christ has already crucified us. As believers, we have received Christ and have been organically united with Him. Since we are organically united with Christ, we certainly can participate in His crucifixion. As we remain in this crucifixion, this termination, we carry our own cross and experience and enjoy Christ as our jubilee.

POURING OUT WHAT WE HAVE TO FOLLOW THE LORD

In verses 28 through 30 the Lord continues, "For which of you, wanting to build a tower, will not first sit down and

calculate the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all those looking on will begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish." This word and that in verse 31 indicate that to follow the Lord as a career requires us to give all we have and all we can do to it. Otherwise, we shall be a failure and become the tasteless salt to be thrown out of the glorious realm to a sphere of shame (vv. 34-35).

We should not think that following the Lord Jesus is an insignificant matter. Following Him should be a lifelong career. As our career, following the Lord requires that we give all we have and all we can do to it.

In verses 31 and 32 the Lord says, "Or what king, going to engage another king in war, will not first sit down and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Otherwise, while he is yet at a distance, he will send an envoy and ask for the terms of peace." This illustration is also related to the cost of following the Lord. In following Him, we need to pour out whatever we have.

In verse 33 the Lord says, "So therefore, everyone of you who does not renounce all his own possessions cannot be My disciple." The problem is not how much we have. The crucial matter is that in following the Lord we must pour out whatever we have. In order to be His disciples, we must renounce all our possessions.

BECOMING TASTELESS AND BEING THROWN OUT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In 14:34 and 35 the Lord goes on to speak of salt: "Therefore, salt is good; but if even the salt becomes tasteless, with what will you restore its saltness? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; they will throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Salt by nature is an element that kills and eliminates the germs of corruption. To the corrupted earth, the followers of the Lord Jesus should be such an element keeping the earth from being fully corrupted.

The Lord indicates that it is possible for salt to become tasteless. For the followers of the Lord to become tasteless means that they have lost their salting function. They have become the same as earthly people, with no distinction from the unbelievers.

Believers in Christ are the salt of the earth used by God to kill and eliminate the earth's corruption. Their taste depends upon their renouncing of earthly things. The more they renounce the things of the earth, the more powerful will be their taste. They will lose their taste by not being willing to renounce all the things of the present life. If this happens, they will be fit neither for the soil, signifying the church as God's farm (1 Cor. 3:9) issuing in the coming kingdom (Rev. 11:15), nor for the manure pile, signifying hell, the dirty place in the universe (Rev. 21:8; 22:15). They will be thrown out from the kingdom of God, especially from the glory of the kingdom in the millennium. They have been saved from eternal perdition, but they did not renounce the earthly things and have lost their function in the kingdom of God. Thus, they are not fit for the coming kingdom, but need to be put aside for discipline.

We have pointed out that the "soil" refers to the church as God's farm issuing in the coming kingdom and that the manure pile signifies hell. If the believers lose their salty taste, they will not be fit for the soil of the church life today. Even the more, they will not be fit for the coming kingdom. Therefore, such believers will be cast out from the kingdom of God during the millennium.

Chapter fourteen opens with an incident of the breaking of the old religious regulations (vv. 1-6). In 14:15-24 we have the Lord's teaching concerning God's salvation. Salvation is our receiving God's invitation and our acceptance of whatever He offers. After we have been saved, we need to keep ourselves in the enjoyment of Christ properly and faithfully.

HATING WHAT DISTRACTS US FROM THE ENJOYMENT OF CHRIST

In 14:25-35 we have the Lord's teaching concerning how to follow Him. According to His word in verse 26, we need to hate anything or anyone that would frustrate us or distract us from the proper enjoyment of Christ. It is not the Lord's intention to teach us to hate anyone. Rather, His intention is to teach us to hate the frustrations and distractions, to hate whatever would distract us or keep us from the enjoyment of Christ. The Lord, of course, teaches us to love others. Not only should we love the members of our family; we should even love our enemies. In fact, we also need to love ourselves. Therefore, the Lord teaches us to love everyone.

Why, then, does He in verse 26 apparently teach us to hate our father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and even ourselves? The reason for His teaching here is that this kind of love often frustrates us from the proper and faithful enjoyment of Christ. What we should hate is the frustration, not any person. The Lord does not teach us to hate persons, but He does teach us to hate the distractions, frustrations, hindrances, and obstacles. He teaches us to hate whatever keeps us from following Him faithfully. If we do not have a hatred for what frustrates our enjoyment of Christ, we shall be disqualified from enjoying the jubilee in the coming age.

A REWARD TO THE FAITHFUL BELIEVERS

We should not follow the sugar-coated teachings common among today's Christians which tell us that once we believed in the Lord Jesus we shall not have any problems. No doubt, the Lord's salvation is eternal, complete, and perfect. Once we have been saved, we are saved eternally. Regarding eternal salvation we shall not have any problems. Nevertheless, in God's economy there is an insertion in His eternal and perfect salvation, and this insertion is the thousand year period of the coming kingdom as a reward to the faithful believers. In His wisdom God has inserted this

dispensational period of a thousand years as an incentive to encourage His children to enjoy Christ faithfully. He wants us faithfully to enjoy His rich preparation for us in Christ.

Because our Father knows that His children may be "naughty" and not faithfully enjoy Christ, He has made part of His full salvation an incentive and a reward. The reward of the millennial kingdom in the coming age should be an incentive to encourage us, warn us, and remind us to keep ourselves in the enjoyment of Christ today and to behave ourselves in this enjoyment. Otherwise, we shall be disciplined. This does not mean that we shall perish, that we shall be lost. Since we have been saved eternally, we shall never perish. Nevertheless, some of the Father's children will need to suffer discipline during the coming age. Those children who suffer the Father's discipline in the coming age will not cease to be His children. They will, of course, remain the Father's children, but they will be children in need of discipline. This matter of God's dispensational discipline of His children is clearly taught in the New Testament.

THREE PLACES

Many Christians have not seen that in 14:35 there are three places--the soil, the manure pile, and where the salt that is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile is thrown. A person who is truly saved and yet is not faithful in enjoying Christ will be fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. Where, then, will such a believer be? According to the Lord's word, he will be thrown out, that is, put aside or outside. In this chapter the Lord Jesus does not give all the details which are found elsewhere in the New Testament. However, it is clear that the salt that has become tasteless is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile, but will be thrown out to a third place.

We have seen that the soil signifies God's farm, which is the church, and the church will issue in the coming kingdom. The manure pile, the dirtiest place in the universe, signifies hell, the lake of fire. To be sure, no saved person would be fit for such a place. But for what place

will you be fit after the Lord Jesus comes back? You certainly will not be fit for hell, the manure pile, because the Lord's blood has washed you and you have been saved. Will you, then, be fit for the kingdom? Your conscience may not allow you to say that you are fit for the kingdom. If this is your situation, you are fit neither for hell nor for the kingdom. This means that you are fit for a third place, a place of discipline. This is clearly and exactly taught here by the Lord's word.

We are salt, and we should keep our taste and salt this corrupted world. Wherever we are we should kill and eliminate the corruption of the world. However, it is possible for us to lose our salting taste. If this is our situation, when the Lord Jesus comes, where shall we be? We shall be fit neither for the kingdom nor for hell. Salt that is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile will be thrown out of the glory of the coming kingdom. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (v. 35b).

The Lord's word in Luke 14 clearly reveals that in addition to God's salvation there is the reward in the coming kingdom. Salvation is for us to enjoy today; the reward is for us to receive in the next age. There are no terms for receiving salvation, but there is a requirement for receiving the reward, and the requirement is that we enjoy Christ faithfully in this age at any cost. Otherwise, we shall be disqualified from the reward. We may be in the jubilee today, but, if we do not fulfill the requirement set down by the Lord, we shall miss the jubilee in the coming age. We need to be careful concerning this matter.

The intrinsic element of chapter fourteen is the jubilee. The jubilee has nothing to do with the old religion; rather, the jubilee breaks the regulations of religion. Next, the jubilee requires that we accept God's invitation and take what He offers us 80 that we may be saved to enjoy His rich Christ. Now we need to be faithful in enjoying Christ. If we are not faithful to enjoy Christ today, we shall be disqualified from the coming jubilee, which will be a reward in the millennial kingdom.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-FOUR

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(12)

Scripture Reading: Luke 15:1-32

In 9:51--19:27 we have a record of the Man-Savior going from Galilee to Jerusalem. The Lord was going to Jerusalem in order to die so that through His death and resurrection He might bring in the jubilee. On the way to Jerusalem He encountered frustration from the religious people, especially from the Pharisees and lawyers. Many of the cases that took place on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem are related to the frustration caused by the religious ones. The cases in chapter fourteen, for example, concern the Pharisees. In chapter fifteen the situation remains the same, even though the Lord has dealt with the darkened thoughts and nonsensical reasonings of the Pharisees.

THE TRINITY DEPICTED IN THREE PARABLES

Luke 15:1 and 2 say, "Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling, saying, This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." The tax collectors and sinners were grateful to the Man-Savior and drew near to Him. But the religious people were bothered by this and grumbled that the Lord welcomed sinners and ate with them. It was due to this grumbling that the Lord told the three parables in chapter fifteen (v. 3).

In answering the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes

who condemned the Savior for eating with the sinners, He spoke three parables unveiling and depicting how the divine Trinity works to bring sinners back through the Son by the Spirit to the Father. The Son came in His humanity as the Shepherd to find the sinner as a lost sheep and bring it back home (vv. 4-7). The Spirit seeks the sinner as a woman seeks carefully one lost coin until she finds it (vv. 8-10). And the Father receives the repenting and returned sinner as a certain man receives his prodigal son (vv. 11-32). The entire divine Trinity treasures the sinner and participates in bringing him back to God. All three parables emphasize the love of the divine Trinity more than the fallen condition and repentance of the penitent sinner. The divine love is fully expressed in the Son's tender care as the good Shepherd, in the Spirit's fine seeking as the treasure lover, and in the Father's warm receiving as a loving father.

When I was young I heard much concerning how the loving father received the prodigal son. I also heard about the good shepherd. But it was not pointed out to me that in these three parables we can see the Trinity, with each parable referring to one of the Trinity. Clearly, the shepherd refers to the Son, the woman refers to the Spirit, and the father refers to the heavenly Father. Therefore, in these parables the Three of the Trinity are clearly depicted.

The sequence of the Trinity in Luke 15 is different from that in Matthew 28:19. In Matthew 28:19 the sequence is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But in Luke we first have the Son as the shepherd, then the Spirit as the woman, and finally the Father as the father receiving his returned son. Therefore, in Luke 15 the sequence begins with the Son, goes to the Spirit, and leads to the Father. This sequence is exactly the same as that in Ephesians 2:18: "For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father." According to this verse, our access first is in the Son and then through the Spirit. Through the Son and in the Spirit we have access unto the Father. This is our access into the Triune God, access through the Son, in the Spirit, and unto the Father.

It is important for us to understand why the Son is mentioned first in Luke 15. The reason the Son is first is that in God's salvation the One who comes, practically speaking, is the Son. The Son comes to accomplish redemption, which is the first need, because redemption is the foundation of our salvation. The redemption accomplished by Christ's death on the cross is the base of God's salvation. Once this foundation has been laid, we can build upon it. In order to accomplish redemption, the Son, portrayed in Luke 15 as the good shepherd, comes first.

Now that the Son has accomplished redemption, the Spirit comes to find us. The book of Acts indicates this. In the Gospels the Son came to accomplish redemption. After the accomplishment of redemption by the Son, we see from the book of Acts that the Spirit comes to seek us and find us. Because of the Spirit's finding of us, we repent and come back to God the Father. Then, according to the third parable in Luke 15, the Father is waiting for us to come back.

What a wonderful sequence we have in Luke 15! The sequence here is not according to Persons of the Trinity; the sequence is according to the steps of God's salvation, the salvation based on Christ's redemption. God's salvation is by the Son, through the Spirit, and unto the Father.

THE PARABLE OF A GOOD SHEPHERD

Luke 15:4 says, "What man of you, having a hundred sheep and having lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?" Here the "wilderness" signifies the world. The shepherd going into the wilderness to seek the lost sheep indicates that the Son has come to the world to be with men (John 1:14).

Luke 15:5 continues, "And having found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And coming into his house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep, the one

that was lost!" Here we see the Savior's saving strength and His saving love.

THE PARABLE OF A SEEKING WOMAN

In 15:8 the Lord goes on to say, "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek carefully until she finds it?" Literally the Greek word rendered "silver coins" means drachmas (so also v. 9), worth about the same as the Roman denarius. One drachma was equivalent to a day's wages.

The lamp signifies the word of God (Psalm 119:105, 130) used by the Spirit to enlighten and expose the sinner's position and condition so that he may repent.

According to verse 8, the woman sweeps the house and seeks carefully until she finds the lost coin. The word "sweep" indicates the searching and cleansing of the inside of a sinner. The Son's finding in verse 4 is outside the sinner, completed at the cross through His redemptive death. The Spirit's seeking here is inside, carried out by His working within the repenting sinner.

Verses 9 and 10 say, "And having found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me for I have found the coin which I lost! In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting." In verse 9 the Greek words "friends" and "neighbors" are feminine, differing from friends and neighbors in verse 6, which are masculine.

THE PARABLE OF A LOVING FATHER

In 15:11-32 we have the parable of a loving father. Verses 11 and 12 say, "A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he distributed to them his living." The word "share" refers to the Son's inheritance by birth. The Greek word "living" is *bios* (life). This word denotes the present state of existence, as in 8:14; by implication, the means of livelihood, as here and in Mark 12:44. "His living" refers to what the father had to live on,

the father's livelihood, his substance (v. 30).

Verse 13 continues, "And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, traveled into a distant country; and there he squandered his estate, living dissolutely." The "distant country" signifies the satanic world. Literally, the Greek word rendered "dissolutely" means unsavingly. The word in Greek is used to indicate debauched, profligate living.

Verses 14 and 15 say, "And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs." Hogs are unclean (Lev. 11:7). Feeding hogs is a dirty job and signifies the unclean business in the satanic world.

Verse 16 says, "And he was longing to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything." Instead of "to be satisfied," some manuscripts read "to fill his stomach." The younger son was longing to be satisfied with carob pods. Carob is an evergreen tree. Its pod, also called carob bean, was used as fodder to feed animals and destitute persons. An interesting rabbinical statement says, "When the Israelites are reduced to carob pods, then they repent." A tradition says that John the Baptist fed upon carob pods in the wilderness; hence it is called St. John's bread.

Verse 17 tells us that "when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have an abundance of bread, but I am perishing here with famine!" This is due to the enlightening and searching of the Spirit (v. 8) within him.

According to verse 18, the prodigal went on to say, "I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you." The decision to rise up and go to his father was the result of the Spirit's seeking in verse 8. "Against heaven" equals "before you" (God the Father). This means that sinning against heaven is sinning before God, because God the Father is in heaven (11:2).

In verse 19 we see that the prodigal intended to say to his father, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants." This indicates that the prodigal son did not know the Father's love. A fallen sinner having once repented always thinks of working for God or serving God to obtain His favor, not knowing that this thought is against God's love and grace and is an insult to His heart and intent.

Verse 20 says, "And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion; and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately." The father's seeing the son did not happen by chance. Rather, the father went out of the home to look for his prodigal's return.

When the father saw his son, he ran to him and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately. This indicates that God the Father runs to receive a returning sinner. What eagerness this shows! The father's falling on his son's neck and kissing him affectionately shows a warm and loving reception. The prodigal son's return to the Father is due to the Spirit's seeking (v. 8); the Father's receiving of the returned son is based upon the Son's finding in His redemption.

Verses 21 and 22 continue, "And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his slaves, Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet." Verse 22 begins with "but." What a word of love and grace! It counters the prodigal's own thinking and stops his nonsensical talk.

The father told his slaves to quickly bring out the best robe and put it on his son. The word "quickly" matches the father's running (v. 20). The definite article "the" used with "best robe" indicates that a particular robe had been prepared for this particular purpose at this particular time. Literally, the Greek word translated "best" means first. The best robe here signifies Christ the Son as the

God--satisfying righteousness to cover the penitent sinner (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9; see Isa. 61:10; Zech. 3:4). This best robe, which is the first robe, replaced the rags (Isa. 64:6) of the returned prodigal.

According to verse 22, the father also told the slaves to put a ring on his son's hand and sandals on his feet. This ring signifies the sealing Spirit as the God-given seal upon the accepted believer (Eph. 1:13; see Gen. 24:47; 41:42). The sandals signify the power of God's salvation to separate the believers from the dirty earth. Both ring and sandals were signs of a free man. The adornment of the robe on the body, of the ring on the hand, and of the sandals on the feet makes the poor prodigal match his rich father and qualifies him to enter the father's house and feast with the father.

In verse 23 the father goes on to say to the slaves, "And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry." The fattened calf signifies the rich Christ (Eph. 3:8) killed on the cross for the believers' enjoyment.

God's salvation is of two aspects: the outward objective aspect signified by the best robe, and the inward subjective aspect signified by the fattened calf. Christ as our righteousness is our outward salvation; Christ as our life for our enjoyment is our inward salvation. The best robe qualifies the prodigal son to match his father's requirements and satisfy his father; the fattened calf satisfies his hunger. Hence, both the father and the son can be merry together.

In verse 24 the father explains, "Because this son of mine was dead and lives again, was lost and was found! And they began to be merry." The word "dead" here is significant. All lost sinners are dead in the sight of God (Eph. 2:1, 5). When they get saved, they are made alive (John 5:24; Col. 2:13).

Luke 15:25-32 describes the conversation in this parable between the father and the older son. Verse 25 tells us that "his older son was in the field." The older son signifies the Pharisees and scribes (v. 2), representing the unbelieving Jews who pursue the law of righteousness (Rom. 9:31-32) by their work, signified by "in the field."

In verses 29 and 30 the older son said to the father, "Look, so many years I am slaving for you, and I have never neglected a command of yours; and you never gave me a goat that I might be merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who devoured your living with prostitutes, you slaughtered for him the fattened calf." The Greek word translated "neglected" in verse 29 may also be rendered "transgressed." The word "slaving" in this verse signifies slavery under the law (Gal. 5:1).

In verses 31 and 32 we have the father's response to the older son: "Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to be merry and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive, and was lost and was found." In verse 32 the father again says that the prodigal was dead and is now alive, emphasizing the fact that when lost sinners are saved they are made alive.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-FIVE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(13)

Scripture Reading: Luke 15:1-32

We have seen that in answering the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes, who condemned the Savior for eating with sinners (15:1-2), the Lord spoke three parables unveiling how the divine Trinity works to bring sinners back, through the Son by the Spirit to the Father. In 15:4-7 the Son as the Shepherd goes into the wilderness to seek the lost sheep. In 15:8-10 we have the Spirit as the woman lighting a lamp, sweeping the house, and seeking carefully for a lost silver coin. The "house" in verse 8 refers to our being. The Spirit comes into us as the house to enlighten us. Finally, in 15:11-32, the Father receives the returned prodigal son.

THE FATHER'S HOUSE

In the parable of the loving father, the father must have been outside the door of his dwelling when he saw his son approaching (v. 20). The father saw his son even while "he was still a long way off." This would not have been possible if the father had been in the house. Therefore, the father must have been outside the door looking for the son. Eventually, the father with the son came back into the father's dwelling.

Luke 15:25 refers to the father's house. What is signified by the father's house here? Christians may interpret the father's house as signifying a heavenly mansion. According to this interpretation, when a sinner repents and comes

back to God, one day God will receive him into a heavenly mansion. This understanding of the father's house is not logical. It is not logical to say that we have come back to the Father and He has received us and yet we are still not in His house. Where, then, are we? Luke indicates in this parable that the prodigal son was received into the house immediately after he returned, and in the house there was a place to prepare food and a place to dine.

To be sure, the father's house in the parable does not refer to heaven. If this house signifies heaven, then where are we who have been saved and who have been received by the Father, since we are not yet in heaven? Actually, the father's house here should signify the church. In chapter ten the church is signified by the inn. Now in chapter fifteen the church is the father's house. This understanding is logical and scriptural.

In the parable of the loving father there is no time gap between the coming back of the prodigal son and the father's receiving him into his house. The son's coming back is continued immediately by the father's receiving him into the house. Therefore, in these three parables the Son came into the wilderness, the Spirit came into our being, and the Father receives us into His house.

HOW THE SHEPHERD CAME TO SEEK US

What is the wilderness into which the Son as the Shepherd came seeking the lost sheep? The wilderness signifies the world. In the sight of God the world is a wilderness, a wild, desolate place where it is easy to get lost. The Son came in the wilderness to seek us, the lost sheep.

Now we need to ask in what way the Son as the Shepherd came to seek us. In contrast to the Spirit signified by the woman with the lamp, the Son does not seek us by enlightening us. His way to seek us out is to die for us. In John 10:11 the Lord Jesus says that He is the good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep: "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." The work of the Shepherd is to die for us. If He

did not die for us, He would not have a way to seek us out. His way of seeking us is to die for us.

THE SPIRIT'S WORK TO ENLIGHTEN US

As indicated by the parable of the seeking woman, the Spirit's work is to enlighten us inwardly. As this seeking woman, the Spirit enlightens our inner being little by little in a fine careful way. The Spirit enlightens our mind, then our emotion and will, and then our conscience and our entire heart. It is in this way that the Spirit "finds" us.

As the result of the Spirit's finding us through enlightening us, we wake up and come to ourselves and realize how foolish it is to stay where we are. We do not wake ourselves up; on the contrary, we are awakened by the enlightening of the seeking Spirit. This seeking, enlightening, and finding of the Spirit takes place neither in the wilderness nor on the cross; it happens in our heart. This results in repentance, which is a change in our mind that produces a change in the direction of our life.

The fact that the Spirit's finding us takes place within the "house" of our being reveals that we were lost in ourselves. We were lost in our mind, will, and emotion. We were not merely lost in the wilderness--we were lost in ourselves. Christ died on the cross to bring us back from the wilderness of the world, yet we remain lost in ourselves. Therefore, the Spirit finds us in ourselves. We can testify of this from our experience. When the Spirit enlightened our mind, emotion, will, conscience, and heart, then we began to repent.

This repentance resulting from the enlightening of the Spirit is altogether an inward matter. No human being and no angel is able to do such a subjective work in us. This can be done only by the penetrating Spirit, for the Spirit is able to penetrate the depths of our being to enlighten us and expose us. Then we realize how foolish we are, we repent, and we decide to come back to the Father. As we have pointed out, the Father was waiting for us outside the house. In order to meet the Father, it was necessary for us to come to His house.

THE FATHER'S RECEIVING THE RETURNED PRODIGAL SON

If we read carefully the parable of the loving father, we shall see that while the prodigal son was still squandering the father's riches, the father was waiting for him to come back. When the son came to himself and decided to go to his father, he prepared what he would say to him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants" (15:18-19). What would you have said to the father if you had been the prodigal son in this parable? Perhaps you would have said to yourself, "I am going back to my father's house. But what shall I say, and what shall I do when I get there? Should I knock on the door? Should I call out, 'Father, I'm home'? I feel ashamed and foolish for squandering everything my father gave me. I cannot bear to recall the way I have been living. I know for sure that my father will not be outside waiting for me. Probably he will be in the house relaxing and enjoying life. Everything is fine with him, but not with me. Oh, what shall I do when I get home?"

To the prodigal son's great surprise, "While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion; and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately" (v. 20). Perhaps the prodigal said to himself, "This is like a dream! I didn't call out or knock on the door, but my father comes running to me. Now he is embracing me and kissing me!"

THE ROBE, THE RING, THE SANDALS, AND THE FATTENED CALF

Immediately the returned prodigal son said to his father, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (v. 21). However, while he was still speaking, the father interrupted him and said to his slaves, "Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry; because this son

of mine was dead and lives again, was lost and was found!" (vv. 22-24).

The father told the slaves to quickly bring out the best robe and put it on his son. They were to do this "quickly" to match the father's running to receive his son. The definite article "the" indicates that before the son returned the father had prepared a particular robe for him, and the servants knew that this robe was the best robe. Therefore, the father told the slaves to take *the* best robe and put it on his son.

When the son returned home, he was a poor beggar dressed in rags. But after the best robe was put on him, he was covered with a splendid garment prepared especially for him. With this robe on, he was qualified to match his father.

The best robe put on the son is a full type of Christ as our righteousness in whom we are justified before God. Hence, putting the best robe on the returned prodigal signifies justification in Christ. As those who have Christ as the best robe, we are justified by God.

The father also told the slaves to put a ring on his son's hand. I believe this was a gold ring. This ring signifies the sealing Spirit given to a returned sinner (Eph. 1:13). This ring is a sign that a repentant sinner receives something divine, the very Spirit of God Himself. The ring signifying the sealing Spirit indicates that the returned prodigal belongs to the Father. It also indicates that whatever the Father has as an inheritance belongs to the returned son.

In 15:22 we see that sandals were also put on the feet of the returned son. Sandals separate one's feet from the dirt of the earth and strengthen him for walking. The sandals put on the son's feet signify that God's salvation separates us from the world and unto Him so that we may then take His way.

With the robe, the ring, and the sandals the returned one was fully clothed and adorned. This means that he

was fully justified and qualified and could be accepted into the father's house. Then the father told the slaves to bring the fattened calf and slaughter it for their enjoyment. Thus far, we see Christ as righteousness to justify a repentant sinner outwardly, the Spirit as the seal, and the power of God's salvation separating a repentant sinner from the world. Now we see that Christ is also the fattened calf to fill us with the divine life for our enjoyment. The father, the returned son, and all the others could enjoy feasting on this fattened calf. So "they began to be merry."

In this parable we see that God's salvation is of two aspects, the outward aspect and the inward aspect. The outward aspect is Christ as our righteousness to justify us, and the inward aspect is Christ as our life and life supply to satisfy us. After coming back to his father, the prodigal son enjoyed all the riches of God's provision in His salvation. He enjoyed Christ as his outward righteousness, he enjoyed the Spirit as the seal indicating that he belongs to the Father and that the Father and all His wealth belongs to him, he enjoyed the power of God's salvation separating him from the world, and he also enjoyed the inner Christ, the Christ who is his life and life supply. Therefore, he could become a very happy person. With his father he could eat and be merry. What a pleasant picture this is!

A PICTURE OF THOSE IN RELIGION

In 15:25-32 we have a sad picture, a picture of those in religion. The elder son in this parable portrays the Pharisees and scribes. In 15:3 we see that the Lord spoke these parables to the Pharisees and scribes in the presence of the tax collectors and sinners. The religious ones must have been unhappy, but the tax collectors and typical sinners must have been filled with rejoicing. They may have said, "Praise the Lord that now I am happy! Outwardly I am justified, and inwardly I am satisfied." The Pharisees and scribes, however, complained that the situation portrayed in these parables was not fair. We thank the Lord that, in His mercy, we are not Pharisees.

We are repentant sinners who have learned how to be happy and merry in the Lord through God's rich salvation.

In the four gospels only in chapter fifteen of Luke do we have the picture concerning God's salvation worked out by the divine Trinity. According to this picture, first, the Son came to accomplish redemption on the cross; second, the Spirit enters into us to enlighten us and find us; and eventually the Father waits for us, ready to receive us, justify us, seal us, empower us, and satisfy us to make us those who happily enjoy Him in Christ through the Spirit. This is a picture of full salvation.

While the Lord Jesus was on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, He had a suitable environment and an excellent opportunity to present a picture of God's salvation so that repentant sinners may know how blessed they are and that the religious ones may see how foolish they are. In Luke 15 we see that the sinners are blessed, whereas the dissenting religious ones remain in their foolishness.

THE INN AND THE HOUSE

Praise the Lord that we have received Christ as our righteousness, the Spirit as the seal, salvation as the separating and strengthening power, and Christ as our inner life and life supply! Now we are no longer in the wilderness and no longer in the "house" of the self--now we are in the Father's house, the church.

The word "church" is not mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. But in at least two parables there are hints pointing to the church. In the parable of the good Samaritan recorded in chapter ten, the "inn" signifies the church. In the parable of the loving father recorded in chapter fifteen, the father's house signifies the church. While we are on our journey, the church is an inn where we may stay temporarily. But in another sense the church is not an inn; the church is a house, both our house and the house of our Father.

The parable of the loving father indicates that sinners should not be saved far away from the church. Those who are saved apart from the church and remain outside the

church may not be remaining fruits. But those who are saved in the church and stay in the church are remaining fruit.

Sometimes the parable of the father and the returned prodigal is presented in such a way that the son is portrayed as kneeling before the father. This is not accurate. There is no indication in this chapter that the son ever knelt before the father. Instead, Luke presents the father embracing the son and kissing him affectionately.

The parable of the loving father is exceedingly rich. Have you ever realized that the church is included in this parable? Here we see the church as the Father's house to which we may come and in which we may stay.

THE ENJOYMENT OF THE JUBILEE

In these messages we have emphasized the fact that everything in the Gospel of Luke from chapter four onward is related to the jubilee either directly or indirectly. This is true of the parables in chapter fifteen. The enjoyment experienced by the returned prodigal son was actually the enjoyment of the jubilee. The ring on his hand signifying the sealing Spirit points to the recovery of the birthright, the recovery of the right to enjoy the Triune God. Both the ring and the sandals are signs of a free man. A free man is one released from bondage, released from slavery and captivity. On the negative side, the prodigal is released from bondage; on the positive side, he begins to enjoy the riches of the Father's inheritance. When we put these matters together, we have a picture of the real jubilee.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-SIX

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(14)

Scripture Reading: Luke 16:1-13

Chapter sixteen of the Gospel of Luke is actually a continuation of chapter fifteen. This is proved strongly by the fact that the first word in the first verse is "and." This word denotes continuation, especially when it is used at the beginning of a chapter.

SERVING THE LORD AS STEWARDS

In the preceding chapter the Lord spoke three parables concerning a sinner's salvation. In this chapter He continues with one more parable, this one concerning the believer's service. After a sinner becomes a believer, he needs to serve the Lord as a prudent steward.

In chapter fifteen the full salvation accomplished by the divine Trinity is clearly presented. But after this presentation the Lord Jesus does not stop speaking. Instead, He goes on to give the Pharisees another parable. In this parable we do not see salvation; we see the prudence of a steward. This indicates that after we have been received into the house of God, we should become stewards. We were sinners, we have been saved, and we have become children of God. Now as children of God, as saved ones in the house of God, we should be stewards serving God in His house. This means that we should serve God in the church.

In the Gospel of Luke we see that whenever the Lord Jesus speaks of salvation, He goes on further to reveal something concerning the service. For instance, the

parable of the good Samaritan in chapter ten portrays the Man-Savior's saving grace in His human virtues expressing His divine attributes. Immediately after this parable, we have the case of Martha and Mary, a case that shows how we need to serve the Lord according to His desire and preference. The principle is the same in chapter fourteen. First the Lord speaks to us concerning an invitation extended by God to attend a great dinner. This signifies God's salvation. Following this, we have the Lord's teaching concerning following Him at the cost of renouncing all earthly things so that as good and faithful followers we may enter into the coming jubilee. This teaching is also related to service. Then after a full presentation of God's full salvation in chapter fifteen, the Lord gives us a parable in chapter sixteen showing us that after we have been saved we need to serve God in His house as stewards.

TEACHING ABOUT THE PRUDENCE OF A STEWARD

The parable regarding the prudence of a steward is simple and brief. Nevertheless, this parable contains a puzzling point, and this is the Lord's using an unrighteous steward to illustrate the service of a steward in God's house. As we shall see, this does not mean that the Lord is teaching us to be unrighteous as we are serving. The important matter here is the steward's prudence.

Verse 1 says, "And He said also to the disciples, There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this one was accused to him of squandering his possessions." The steward here illustrates how the believers, saved by the love and grace of the Triune God, are the Lord's stewards (12:42; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:10), to whom He has committed His possessions.

Verses 2 and 3 continue, "And he called him and said to him, What is this I hear concerning you? Render the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward. And the steward said within himself, What shall I do, because my lord is taking away the stewardship from me? I am not strong enough to dig. I am ashamed to beg." Here the steward says he is not strong enough to dig as a farmer

digging in the field, and he is ashamed to beg as a beggar begging for help. In verse 4 the steward said to himself, "I know what I will do, in order that when I am removed from the stewardship they may receive me into their own homes." The receiving here signifies being received into the eternal tabernacles (v. 9).

Verses 5 through 7 say, "And he called to him each one of his lord's debtors and said to the first, How much do you owe my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill and sitting down quickly write fifty. Then to another he said, And you, how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He says to him, Take your bill and write eighty." In these verses we see that the discharged steward, while he was still in the house, took the opportunity to do something for others in order that later they might do something for him. This was the steward's prudence.

Concerning the prudence of the steward, verse 8 says, "And the lord praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted prudently; for the sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of light in their own generation." Literally, "the unrighteous steward" means "the steward of unrighteousness." However, the praise here is not for the steward's unrighteous act; it is for his prudence.

In verse 8 the Lord Jesus explains that the sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of light in their own generation. The sons of this age are the unsaved ones, the worldlings. The sons of light are the saved ones, the believers (John 12:36; 1 Thes. 5:5; Eph. 5:8). The phrase "in their own generation" refers to dealings with the people of their generation. Here the Lord certainly is not teaching us to be unrighteous. Instead, He is teaching us to be prudent, that is, to do things at the right time, to take the opportunity at hand.

MAKING FRIENDS BY MEANS OF THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

In verse 9 the Lord goes on to say, "And I say to you,

make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." To make friends by means of mammon is to help others by the use of money to do things according to God's leading.

Mammon, that is, money, is of the satanic world. It is unrighteous in its position and existence. The steward in the parable exercised his prudence by his unrighteous act. The Lord teaches us, His believers, to exercise our prudence in the use of unrighteous mammon.

The phrase "the mammon of unrighteousness" indicates that money is not in the realm of God. Money is outside the kingdom of God; it is in the world of Satan. Therefore, money is unrighteous both in position and existence. Actually, as far as God is concerned, money should not exist. In this universe there should not be such a thing as money. If we love money, we love something that should not exist.

In verse 9 the Lord says that if we make friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, when it fails we shall be received into eternal tabernacles. The word "fails" indicates that when the satanic world is over, mammon will be of no use in the kingdom of God. The eternal tabernacles are the eternal habitations into which the prudent believers will be received by those who share the benefit of their prudence. This will be in the coming kingdom age (Luke 14:13-14; Matt. 10:42).

FAITHFUL IN THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAMMON

In verse 10 the Lord continues, "He who is faithful in the least is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in the least is unrighteous also in much." "Least" refers to mammon, the possessions of this age. "Much" refers to the rich possessions in the next age (see Matt. 25:21, 23).

In verse 11 the Lord says, "If therefore you have not become faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true?" The "true" refers to the true possessions in the coming kingdom age (see Matt. 24:47).

In verse 12 the Lord goes on to say, "And if you have not become faithful in that which belongs to another, who will give to you that which is your own?" It is not God's intent in His New Testament economy for the New Testament believers to care for material possessions. Though the material things in this world were created by God and belong to Him (1 Chron. 29:14,16), they have been corrupted by man's fall (Rom. 8:20-21) and usurped by Satan the evil one (1 John 5:19). Hence, they belong to fallen man and are unrighteous (Luke 16:9). While God does supply the believers with their daily necessities from the material things of this age (Matt. 6:31-33) and commits to them as His stewards a portion of these material goods for their exercise and learning that He may prove them in this age, none of these goods should be considered theirs until the restitution of all things in the next age (Acts 3:21). Not till then will the believers inherit the world (Rom. 4:13) and have an abiding possession (Heb. 10:34) for themselves. In this age they should exercise to be faithful in the temporary material things God has given them so that they may learn faithfulness toward their eternal possession in the coming age.

Verse 13 continues, "No household servant can serve two lords; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will cleave to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." In this verse the Greek word for "serve" means "serve as a slave." Here the Lord indicates that to serve Him requires us to love Him, giving our hearts to Him, and cleave to Him, giving our entire being to Him. Thus we are released from the occupation and usurpation of mammon so that we may serve the Lord wholly and fully. The Lord emphasizes here that to serve Him we must overcome the enticing deceitful mammon of unrighteousness.

In verse 13 we see that mammon is in rivalry with God, competing with Him. Because mammon is in rivalry with God, it is evil. On our part, we cannot serve two lords. We serve either God or mammon. This matter is very serious.

The Lord's word about money was directed especially to

the Pharisees, who were lovers of money (v. 14). They pretended that they loved God and were for Him. But the Lord knew well that they were not lovers of God; they were lovers of money.

THE JUBILEE, THE KINGDOM, THE GOSPEL, AND THE MAN-SAVIOR

While the Lord Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem, certain of the Pharisees came out to encounter Him. Much of what the Lord did and said on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem was aimed at the Pharisees. The record of this is a particular feature of the Gospel of Luke. The record in Mark and Matthew is somewhat different. In his Gospel Luke writes in such a way as to show the conflict that took place on the way to Jerusalem between the Lord Jesus and the Pharisees who came out to meet Him. In chapters fourteen through sixteen the Lord's word is addressed to the Pharisees.

In these chapters the Lord's word is based upon the jubilee He declared in chapter four. We have seen that the jubilee is revealed as having two aspects: the aspect of the jubilee in this age and the aspect of the jubilee in the age to come. In other words, the Lord refers to both the present jubilee and to the jubilee in the coming age. The present jubilee is the jubilee of grace. But in the coming age the jubilee will be the jubilee of the kingdom.

The jubilee both in this age and in the age to come is actually the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the kingdom of God is the Man-Savior Himself. Moreover, the jubilee is the gospel. According to Mark and especially Luke, the gospel is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the Savior Himself, the all-inclusive One coming in His status as both God and man, with the divine attributes expressed in His human virtues, to sow Himself as a seed. In the Life-study of Mark we pointed out that the seed of the kingdom in Mark 4 may be called the kingdom gene. The Lord Jesus sowed Himself as the seed, the gene, of the kingdom of God. His goal is that the seed sown into those

who receive it may grow and develop into a kingdom. This is the genuine kingdom of God. This kingdom is the gospel that frees us from every kind of bondage and recovers our right to the lost inheritance to enjoy God in Christ through the Spirit. This is the jubilee.

We need to be impressed with the fact that in the Gospel of Luke the gospel, the kingdom of God, the Man-Savior, and the jubilee are actually synonymous and refer to the same thing. These four refer to our being set free from bondage and experiencing the recovery of our divine inheritance. This is the jubilee, the gospel, the kingdom of God, and also the Man-Savior Himself.

The basic element of the Lord's speaking on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem is the jubilee. The jubilee is also the governing principle of His teaching. Everything in 9:51--19:27 is related to the jubilee.

If we do not see that the jubilee is the basic element and the governing principle in chapters nine through nineteen, we shall not have the key that enables us to understand these chapters properly and thoroughly. Instead, our understanding of these chapters may be fragmentary; that is, we may understand a piece here and a piece there, but not understand these chapters as a whole. We may compare this section of the Gospel of Luke to a jigsaw puzzle. Only when we use the key to open each chapter are we able to put the pieces together and see the whole picture, a picture portraying the jubilee.

STEWARDSHIP AND THE HANDLING OF MONEY

In chapter fifteen of Luke we see the salvation accomplished by the divine Trinity. God's salvation issues in the stewardship. As saved ones, we should now serve our saving God as His stewards. A steward is one useful in a household. This indicates that after we have been saved, we should serve God in His church, which is His house on earth today, as good stewards.

According to Luke 16, our stewardship has much to do with the handling of money. In a sense, all of us are

"bankers" who deal with money day by day. Daily you may consider how much money you have in your possession.

As an illustration of how people are occupied with money, let me tell you the story of a certain businessman who was called upon to pray after the pastor's sermon. The man was greatly surprised and could not avoid offering a prayer. In the course of his prayer, he suddenly uttered a word concerning an amount of money. As he was praying, he spontaneously spoke about money. This is a fulfillment of the Lord's word that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt. 12:34). Whatever fills our heart will eventually proceed out of our mouth.

When you hear about this businessman, you may think that you would never be that way. However, is it not true that you give much thought to the matter of money? Even during the church meetings you may be concerned with money, perhaps considering how much you have in your checking account or savings account. The handling of money is certainly a great matter.

The satanic world could not exist without money. If there were no money, the world would cease to exist, and the kingdom of God would come. When money is gone, the kingdom comes.

The Lord Jesus surely knows the secret in the depths of our being. This deep secret is mammon, money. The Lord not only knows this secret within us, but He knows how to touch our problem concerning it. Regarding money, we all may be like the Pharisees. Therefore, in 16:1-13 the Lord teaches us to be prudent in handling our money. He teaches us to take the opportunity to use the unrighteous mammon in a prudent way.

A time is coming when money, the mammon of unrighteousness, will fail. This means that there will be a time when money will be useless. I believe that this time will be during the millennium. There is no word in the Bible telling us explicitly that money will be out of use during the millennium. However, as a result of my study of the millennium in the Scriptures, I believe that this will

be the situation. After studying the millennium according to Isaiah, the Gospels, Acts, the Epistles of Paul, and the book of Revelation, I would say assuredly that when the millennium comes, money will be out of use. Today's world is the system of Satan, and money belongs to this satanic system. But when the millennium comes, the satanic system will be terminated and replaced by God's kingdom. Then money will no longer have a place in human society.

Some may think that it will be a long time before the millennium comes and money is useless. But have you ever thought that when a person dies his money becomes useless to him? At the time of death a person's relationship with his money is terminated. Someone may have a great deal of money, but it will all be useless to him when he dies.

USING OUR MONEY TO BENEFIT OTHERS

I mention this to point out that we need to take the opportunity to use our money prudently to benefit others. Try to use your money to benefit others so that when it is out of use, others will do something for you.

In 16:9 the Lord says, "Make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." This indicates that those who have been benefited by our proper use of money will welcome us into the eternal tabernacles. This will be in the coming age of the kingdom. When the Lord Jesus comes back and we are received into His kingdom, some of us will have a number of people welcoming us. Who will be these welcomers? They will be those who have received benefit in this age by our prudent use of money.

Let me give a simple illustration of this. Suppose you use an amount of your money to publish gospel tracts for the purpose of bringing people to the Lord. Those who have been benefited by this use of your money will welcome you in the future. They may say, "Brother, we want you to realize that we were saved through one of the

tracts paid for by you." This is an example of being welcomed into eternal habitations by those who have shared the benefit of our prudence.

In the parable in chapter sixteen the unrighteous steward took the opportunity, while he was still in the house, to help his lord's debtors to reduce their debt (vv. 4-7). He took the opportunity to use money to benefit others. In the same principle, while we are still on the way to the kingdom, we should use our money for the benefit of others. We should not use it for ourselves, for our luxury, amusement, pleasure, or indulgence. On the contrary, we should use our money for others' benefit. There is a great deal of need, and there is much that we can do that will be a benefit to others. This is to be prudent in serving the Lord.

We cannot serve the Lord faithfully without using our money for the right purpose and at the right time. If we claim that we are serving the Lord, but use our money in the wrong way, we are not honest. The first thing an honest steward will do is handle his money properly and prudently.

When I was studying English as a teenager, I read an article by Benjamin Franklin that was concerned with money. In that article Franklin said that it is easy to earn money but very difficult to spend it. I was surprised by Franklin's word, for I thought it was difficult to make money and easy to spend it. But after reading that article I became convinced that it is easy to make money, but difficult to spend it in the right way. It is difficult to spend money in a way that will not damage ourselves, others, or society. Consider how much damage is done to society by rich people spending their money in the wrong way. If the rich would use their money properly, they would benefit themselves, others, and all of society. To be sure, in order to serve the Lord as His stewards, we must handle our money rightly.

Some of us may say, "I am not a rich person. Because I am not rich, I don't have a problem with the way I spend my money." However, you may still have a problem with

the money you have. Even though you are not wealthy, you need to learn how to handle your income.

GIVING FAITHFULLY

As one who has been serving the Lord and the churches for more than half a century, I can testify that any Christian group whose members give faithfully and consistently ten percent of their income will have money in abundance. Statistics concerning church finance prove this. Certain groups require their members to pledge ten percent of their income, and these groups always have money in abundance. The point here is not that we make a legal requirement of giving ten percent of our income. The point is that those who faithfully give a tithe of their income never lack for money.

I would encourage the young people in particular to learn to give a portion of their income to the Lord. Young people, you should begin this immediately after graduation when you begin to work. Give a portion of the first wages you receive to the Lord. I can testify that this was my practice when I was young. When I first earned money, even as a poor student, I set aside a portion to the Lord. Perhaps some of us have never considered this. Therefore, I encourage all the saints, especially the young people, to give the Lord a portion of whatever money they earn. If we do this, we shall learn to handle our money properly.

Those who give to the Lord faithfully and consistently can testify that the more they give, the more they receive. For us Christians, to be rich is to give. The way to receive is to give. The Lord Himself said, "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will give into your bosom; for with what measure you measure, it will be measured to you in return" (6:38). Here we see clearly that giving is the way to receive.

For a church to be in poverty is a shame to the members of that church. Such poverty may indicate that the members are not faithful in their giving. May we all learn to serve the Lord as faithful stewards in handling money.

I encourage you to keep a record of your giving. During the course of a year, keep a record of everything you give. Then at the end of the year consider what percentage you have given to the Lord of what He has given you. I urge you all to practice this.

According to the statistics I have studied and the testimonies I have heard, the more we give to the Lord, the more we shall be able to give. For example, if you give ten percent one year, the next year you may be able to give twenty percent. Then if you are faithful to give a higher amount, you may be able to give even more the following year. The point here is that the more we give, the more we shall be able to give.

When some hear this word about faithfulness and giving, they may say that they do not have enough faith to give consistently. Actually, this is not a matter of our faith; it is a matter of our practice, and our practice is based on the Lord's faith and His faithfulness.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-SEVEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(15)

Scripture Reading: Luke 16:14-31

In this message we shall consider 16:14-31. This portion of the Gospel of Luke covers two matters: the teaching about the entrance into the kingdom of God (vv. 14-18) and a warning to the rich (vv. 19-31).

TEACHING ABOUT THE ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We have seen that in 16:1-13 the Lord teaches about the prudence of a steward, in particular, about prudence in the proper handling of money. The Lord spoke this word purposely to touch the Pharisees, and His word was an arrow penetrating them.

"Now the Pharisees, being lovers of money, heard all these things, and they were sneering at Him" (v. 14). The Greek words translated "were sneering at" literally mean "were turning up the nose." The Lord's word penetrated the depths of their being. But instead of being convinced by it, they were stubborn. Because the Lord's word touched them, they sneered at Him.

In verse 15 the Lord went on to say to the Pharisees, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." The

self-justification of the Pharisees was an exaltation of self in pride. Hence, it was an abomination in the sight of God. Here the Lord was telling the Pharisees that they were altogether an abomination in the sight of God.

In verse 16 the Lord continued, "The law and the prophets were until John; from that time the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it." The "law and the prophets" refer to the Old Testament. The words "until John" indicate the change of dispensation from law to gospel. This proves that the Old Testament dispensation was terminated by the coming of John.

The Lord told the Pharisees that from the time of John "the good news of the kingdom of God is preached." The Savior preached here the gospel of the kingdom of God to the Pharisees, the money-lovers (v. 14). Money and sexual lust, incited by money, held them back from entering into the kingdom of God. Hence, the Savior's preaching hit these two things purposely and strongly in 16:18-31.

In verse 16 the Lord also spoke about forcing one's way into the kingdom of God. For the Pharisees to force their way into the kingdom, they needed to humble themselves and divorce their money, not their wives, that is, to overcome money and the lust incited by money.

Here the Lord Jesus seemed to be telling the Pharisees, "Don't sneer at Me. The good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and you need to force your way into the kingdom. It is no longer the time of the law and the prophets. Now is the time of the jubilee of grace, and you need to force your way into it."

In verses 17 and 18 the Lord says to the Pharisees, "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one serif of the law to fall. Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who has been divorced from a husband commits adultery." A "serif" is a minute horn-like projection which distinguishes various Hebrew letters. Lest the Pharisees think that it was no longer necessary to keep the law since the law and the prophets were until John, the Lord told them that it was easier for heaven and

earth to pass away than for the slightest part of the law to fail.

When the Lord Jesus saw that the Pharisees were sneering at Him, He was not disappointed or discouraged. Neither would He stop speaking. Instead, the Lord went on to speak to them about being an abomination in the sight of God, about the kingdom of God, about keeping the law, and about divorce. In 16:15-18 the Lord seems to be saying, "You Pharisees are sneering at Me. You justify yourselves in the sight of men, but in the sight of God you are an abomination. You need to realize that now is no longer the dispensation of the law, but the dispensation of the acceptable year of the Lord. Now is the time for the jubilee, the good news of the kingdom of God. In a sense, the law and the prophets are over."

When the Pharisees heard this, on the one hand they were unhappy. But, on the other hand, they were somewhat happy in that they may have thought that they no longer needed to keep the law. Now they were free to divorce their wives. Some of the rich Pharisees divorced their wives because they were indulging their lust. This lust was incited by their riches. Hence, the lust of the Pharisees to divorce their wives and marry another was incited by riches.

A poor man is less likely to divorce his wife than a rich man. Today a large percentage of wealthy professional men have been divorced at least once, and a number have been divorced more than once. This is an indication that riches when used wrongly incite lust. This should warn us not to use riches to satisfy our lust. Instead, we should use our money for the benefit of others.

As lovers of money, the Pharisees were incited by their riches to indulge their lust. When one was not satisfied with his wife, he could divorce her and get another one. Knowing their situation and realizing that, in a sense, they would be happy to hear that the law was over, the Lord seemed to tell them, "Don't think that it is no longer necessary to keep the law. The law will never pass away; it remains to condemn you. You are not free from the law in order to divorce your wives." The Lord's dealing with the

Pharisees here actually touches their riches and their lust. His word deals with the matters of money and marriage.

WARNING THE RICH

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Verse 19 begins with the word "now." This conveys the meaning of furthermore and indicates that the Lord had more to say to the Pharisees. In 16:19-31 He went on to tell them the story of the rich man and Lazarus. This story was directed at the rich Pharisees, as money-lovers who were incited by their riches to indulge their lust.

Luke 16:19 says, "Now a certain man was rich, and clothed himself in purple and fine linen, making merry splendidly every day." This story is not a parable, because it mentions the names of Abraham, Lazarus, and Hades. It is a story used by the Savior as an illustrative answer to the money-loving and self-justifying Pharisees (vv. 14-15). Through this story the Lord warns them by unveiling that their miserable future will be like that of the rich man. Such a future will result from their rejection of the Savior's gospel because of their love for money.

In this story the rich man habitually clothed himself in purple and linen and made merry splendidly, sumptuously, every day. But a poor man named Lazarus "was cast at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be satisfied with the things falling from the rich man's table; and not only this, the dogs came and licked his sores" (vv. 20-21). Then we are told that the poor man died and was carried away by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments" and saw "Abraham far off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (v. 23). The words "Abraham's bosom" are a rabbinical phrase, equivalent to being with Abraham in Paradise (M. R. Vincent). Hades, like Sheol in the Old Testament (Gen. 37:35; Psa. 6:5), is the place where the souls and spirits of the dead are kept (Acts 2:27).

The Two Sections of Hades

Abraham's bosom, or Paradise, is the pleasant section

in Hades where Abraham and all the just are, awaiting the resurrection, and where the Lord Jesus went after His death and stayed until His resurrection (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:24, 27, 31; Eph. 4:9; Matt. 12:40). This Paradise differs from the paradise in Revelation 2:7, which will be the New Jerusalem in the millennium.

Often when Christians hear the word Hades, they think only of a bad place. Hades is not an eternal abode for people in the next life; Hades is a place where disembodied spirits are kept temporarily. There are two sections in Hades: the section of comfort, a pleasant section, for the saved, and the section of torment for the unsaved. By God's mercy and through His redemption, there is in Hades a pleasant section for His redeemed people. According to 16:22-25, Abraham is in this section. No doubt, Isaac, Jacob, and all the other Old Testament saints are also there. Likewise, the poor man Lazarus went there after he died. Furthermore, the Lord told the thief on the cross who begged the Lord to remember him in His kingdom that he would be with Him in Paradise (23:42-43). As we have pointed out, this Paradise is the pleasant section in Hades, a section of comfort for God's redeemed people.

According to God's way, whenever a person dies his spirit leaves his body and goes to Hades. The body is usually buried. A disembodied spirit is a sign of death and is therefore shameful. Hence, a place has been prepared for disembodied human spirits. Among these disembodied spirits, some are the spirits of the saved in Paradise, the pleasant place of Hades, and others are the spirits of the unsaved in the section of torment.

In the story recorded in 16:19-31 we see these two sections. We also see that there is a chasm between them: "And besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm has been firmly fixed, so that those wanting to pass from here to you cannot, neither may they cross over from there to us." This great chasm is a gulf that divides Hades into the pleasant section and the section of torment. These two sections are cut off from each other and have no

bridge for thoroughfare. Yet those in the two sections can see each other and even talk to each other (vv. 23-25). Therefore, the rich man could see Abraham and Lazarus, he could speak to Abraham, and Abraham could answer him.

The dead will remain in Hades until the day of resurrection. When the Lord Jesus comes back, the saved ones will be resurrected. This will take place before the millennium, before the thousand years of God's reign on earth. The unsaved ones will remain in the section of torment in Hades for another thousand years. At the end of the millennium the unsaved ones will be resurrected from Hades and, with a body, will stand before the white throne to be judged and condemned to eternal perdition. Then their entire being--body, soul, and spirit--will be cast into the lake of fire.

In this story of the rich man and Lazarus the Lord Jesus revealed to the rich Pharisees their destiny, their future. By telling them this story, He was saying, "Rich man, don't indulge yourself in lust. You need to realize that your destiny will be the section of torment in Hades."

The Need to Hear the Word of God

According to verses 27 and 28, the rich man said to Abraham, "Then I ask you, Father, that you may send him to my father's house--for I have five brothers--so that he may solemnly charge them, lest they also come to this place of torment." To this Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (v. 29). "Moses and the prophets" refer to the law of Moses and the books of the prophets, which are the word of God (Matt. 4:4). Whether one hears the word of God or not determines one's salvation or perdition. The poor man was saved not because he was poor, but because he heard the word of God (John 5:24; Eph. 1:13). The rich man perished not because he was rich, but because he rejected the word of God (Acts 13:46).

In the conversation between Abraham and the rich man we see why the rich man went to the section of torment. He went there because he did not listen to the

word of God and believe it. He did not go there because he was rich. Likewise, Lazarus, the poor man, went to the section of comfort because he listened to the word of God conveyed in Moses and the prophets. He did not go to that section simply because he was poor. Abraham told the rich man that his brothers had Moses and the prophets and should listen to them.

The rich man then said to Abraham, "No, Father Abraham, but if someone from the dead would go to them, they will repent. But he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead" (vv. 30-31). If people do not hear what the word of God says, they will not be persuaded even by one who resurrects miraculously from the dead. The Savior's word here implies that if the Jews represented by the Pharisees do not hear the word of God in the Old Testament, even though He will rise from the dead, they will not be persuaded. This very tragedy occurred after His resurrection (Matt. 28:11-15; Acts 13:30-40, 44-45).

Luke 16:31 indicates that we should not have a mind of curiosity. Those with such a mind may pay attention to a person who claims to be resurrected from among the dead. We should not listen to things that arouse our curiosity. Instead, with a sober mind we should listen to the written Word of God. If we pay attention to the Word of God with a sober mind, not with a curious mind, we shall understand God's mercy and grace, and we shall be clear concerning His salvation.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-EIGHT

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(16)

Scripture Reading: Luke 17:1-37

In this message we shall begin to consider chapter seventeen of the Gospel of Luke. This chapter continues to speak of matters that took place as the Lord Jesus was on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem. Concerning this, the record in Luke comprises much more than the record in Matthew and Mark. In those Gospels the record concerning the Lord's going from Galilee to Jerusalem is somewhat brief; Luke's account of this, however, is much more inclusive.

FOUR MINOR MATTERS

After speaking in chapter sixteen on riches, the Lord goes on in 17:1-10 to cover four minor matters: stumbling others (vv. 1-2), forgiving others (vv. 3-4), faith (vv. 5-6), and realizing that we are unprofitable slaves (vv. 7-10). Regarding this last point, we need to realize that we are actually not very useful. This means that no matter how much we have done for the Lord, we need to consider ourselves unprofitable slaves.

A Word Related to the Deeds of the Pharisees

I have spent much time wondering why these four points are inserted here immediately after chapter sixteen. At first I could not see any connection between

them and the record in the previous chapter. Eventually, I saw that there is a connection, and this connection is that the four points in 17:1-10 are a teaching given by the Lord to the disciples because of what the Pharisees were doing. For instance, as religious hypocrites, the Pharisees often stumbled others. No one stumbles others more than a hypocritical religionist. Being false leaders in religion, the Pharisees were continually stumbling others. While they stumbled people on the one hand, they would not forgive them on the other hand. This means that even though they offended others, once they themselves were offended by someone, they would never forgive the one who offended them. Furthermore, these false leaders in religion did not have faith. If they had had faith, they would not have lived the way they did. Finally, the Pharisees were proud, viewing themselves as being very useful and profitable.

From this we can see that the teaching in 17:1-10 was given by the Lord over against the background provided by the Pharisees. In these verses the Lord seems to be telling His disciples, "Don't be like the Pharisees, stumbling others and yet not forgiving those who offend them. The Pharisees are without faith and yet are proud of themselves, thinking that they are useful."

As those who are enjoying the Lord in the New Testament jubilee, we should not stumble others. On the contrary, we should do our best to perfect, protect, and preserve others. Second, if we are offended by someone, we should always be ready and willing to forgive. Luke 17:3 and 4 say, "If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and turns to you seven times, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him." Here the Lord emphasizes the need to be willing to forgive. Furthermore, in any kind of circumstance or environment, we need to exercise our faith, believing in God and trusting Him for everything. Moreover, although we may be somewhat useful and profitable, we should humble ourselves and not think of ourselves as being useful. On the contrary, we should always consider that we are unprofitable slaves.

Teaching concerning Service

In 17:7-10 we have the Lord's teaching about service. In verses 7 through 9 He says, "Now which of you, having a slave who is plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, Come immediately and recline at the table? But will he not rather say to him, Prepare something that I may dine, and gird yourself and serve me until I eat and drink; and after this you shall eat and drink? Does he thank the slave because he did the things which were directed?" This indicates that the slave, after plowing or tending sheep, should not expect to be highly praised for his work. It is still necessary for him to go to the kitchen, prepare food for his master, and serve him so that he may be satisfied. After all this, the slave should realize that he is unprofitable. Therefore, the Lord concludes, "So also you, when you do all the things which you are directed, say, We are unprofitable slaves; we have done what we ought to have done" (v. 10). I appreciate the point the Lord makes in 17:7-10, for it strengthens us in our service.

The Seriousness of Offending Others

In the church life, the church service, and the Lord's ministry it is a very serious thing to offend others. Sometimes it seems that we can accomplish a great deal. Nevertheless, we may tear down more than we build up. This is the result of stumbling others.

When I was young I was given the following admonition: "Don't do the Lord's work in such a way that you build up one foot and then tear down a foot and a half." According to this admonition, it is possible for us first to build up and then to tear down more than what we have built up. This is what some who are serving the Lord are doing. On the one hand, they have done much for the Lord; on the other hand, simultaneously they have torn down a great deal, even more than they have built up. We need to learn from this not to stumble others and thereby tear down what has been built up. We always need to be

careful and cautious not to hurt others, not to offend others, and not to stumble others.

Ready and Willing to Forgive

If we are offended by someone, we need to be ready and willing to forgive that one. Then we shall not have problems with others. However, on the one hand, some servants of the Lord stumble others, and, on the other hand, are easily offended by others. Therefore, they are always having problems with people. Either they stumble others, or they are offended by others. We should try not to stumble others, but always be ready and willing to forgive anyone who may offend us.

Do you know what it means to forgive? To forgive means not to be offended. According to the Lord's word in 17:4, even if a brother sins against us seven times a day, we should always be ready to forgive him. As soon as we forgive someone, we shall not be offended by him. But if we do not forgive, we shall be offended. The point here is that forgiving annuls offending. If we do not forgive others, we shall be offended by them. But if we forgive them, we shall annul the offense.

Suppose a certain brother offends you, and you forgive him. Your forgiving of him will annul his offending of you. Then there will be no problem between you. However, suppose this brother offends you, and you are not willing to forgive him and forget the offense. This will cause trouble, especially to you, for you will become entangled as the result of being offended. Hence, we should avoid stumbling others, and we should also avoid being offended by others. We should always be careful and cautious not to offend others. At the same time, we should always be willing to forgive others.

Exercising Faith and Realizing That We Are Not Useful

In addition to being careful not to offend and being ready to forgive, we need to exercise faith in God under all kinds of circumstances. We need to believe that whatever

happens to us is of God and that He is sovereign and is taking care of us.

As we exercise our faith in God, we need to do everything we can for Him. Yet we need to realize that we are not useful, that we are not profitable. Thus, we need to humble ourselves before the Lord with the attitude that we are not profitable servants. If we do these things, we shall be preserved in usefulness under the hand of the Lord.

CLEANSING TEN LEPERS IN SAMARIA

In 17:11-19 we have the record of the Man-Savior's cleansing ten lepers in Samaria. I believe that this was narrated by Luke in order to show the highest standard of morality in the Lord's saving grace.

Luke 17:11-13 says, "And it came about as He was going to Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten leprous men, who stood at a distance; and they raised their voice, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" Instead of making any selection, the Lord immediately healed them all. Actually, He did not say to them, "Be healed!" He said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests. And it came about as they were going away, they were cleansed" (v. 14).

Only one of the ten--a Samaritan--remembered the One who had healed him and came back to say something to Him (vv. 15-16). The important point is that this record reveals the highest standard of morality in the Lord's saving grace.

We know from chapter ten of the Gospel of Luke that while the Lord was on the way through Samaria, He was rejected in Samaria. The Lord must have realized that the majority of the ten lepers in 17:11-19 were Samaritans. If I had been the Lord, I might have said, "You Samaritans rejected Me and now you come to Me for cleansing. You must regret the wrong that you did to Me and apologize, and then I will heal you." The Man-Savior, however, did not calculate matters in this way. On the contrary, He acted in the highest standard of morality to exercise His

saving grace. As soon as the ten appealed to Him for mercy, He healed them all without preference. This displays His high standard of morality in His salvation.

TEACHING ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE RAPTURE OF THE OVERCOMERS

In 17:20 we see that the Pharisees came to the Lord Jesus again. The troublesome Pharisees simply would not leave Him alone.

Luke 17:20 says, "And being questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God comes, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, Look, here! Or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is among you. The Lord's answer to the question raised by the Pharisees concerning the kingdom of God indicates that the kingdom of God is not material but spiritual. It is the Savior in His first coming (vv. 21-22), in His second coming (vv. 23-30), in the rapture of His overcoming believers (vv. 31-36), and in His destroying of the Antichrist (v. 37) to recover the whole earth for His reign there (Rev. 11:15).

Verses 22 through 24 prove that the kingdom of God is the Savior Himself, who was among the Pharisees when He was asked by them regarding the kingdom. Wherever the Savior is, there is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is with Him, and He brings it to His disciples (v. 22). He is the seed of the kingdom of God to be sown into God's chosen people to develop into God's ruling realm. Since His resurrection, He is within His believers (John 14:20; Rom. 8:10). Hence, the kingdom of God is within the church today (Rom. 14:17).

In verse 21 the Lord said to the Pharisees, "Behold, the kingdom of God is among you." The word "you" here refers to the questioning Pharisees (v. 20). The Savior as the kingdom of God was not within them; He was only among them.

When the Pharisees questioned the Lord about the coming of the kingdom of God, He answered that the kingdom of God does not come with observation. This

means that the kingdom of God is not visible or observable. Rather, the kingdom of God is invisible; it is something that cannot be seen with physical eyes.

In the Lord's answer to the Pharisees, there is a strong indication that the kingdom of God is actually the Savior Himself. The Lord seems to be saying to them, "You cannot see the kingdom of God, but right now it is among you. Although the kingdom of God is here now, you do not have the spiritual perception to see it. You need spiritual eyes to see spiritual things, to see the kingdom of God. Actually, this kingdom is a wonderful Person. With your physical eyes you can see the material existence of this Person. But you do not have spiritual sight to perceive His spiritual reality. The spiritual reality of this Person is actually the kingdom of God. Therefore, I say that the kingdom of God is now here among you. You, however, cannot perceive this spiritual reality."

In verse 22 the Lord went on to say to His disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it." This indicates the Savior's absence. During His absence, the world, having rejected Him, will be an evil generation, living in the indulgence of lust (vv. 23-30), and an opponent of His followers, persecuting them because of their testimony concerning Him (18:1-8). Hence, His followers need to overcome the stupefying effect of the world's indulgent living by losing their soul life in this age (17:31-33) and deal with the world's persecution by longsuffering and persistent prayer in faith (18:7-8), so that they may be raptured as overcomers to enter into the enjoyment of the kingdom of God at the Savior's coming back (17:34-37).

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE THIRTY-NINE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(17)

Scripture Reading: Luke 17:1-37

In 17:20 the Pharisees questioned the Lord Jesus as to when the kingdom of God comes. He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, Look, here! Or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is among you" (vv. 20-21). The Lord's answer indicates that the kingdom of God is not material but spiritual. It is the Savior in His first coming (vv. 21-22), in His second coming (vv. 23-30), in His overcoming believers' rapture (vv. 31-36), and in His destroying of the Antichrist (v. 37) to recover the earth for His reign (Rev. 11:15).

Luke 17:22-24 proves that the kingdom of God is the Savior Himself who was among the Pharisees when He was asked by them concerning the coming of the kingdom. Wherever the Savior is, there is the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is with Him, and He brings it to His disciples. He is the seed of the kingdom of God to be sown into God's chosen people to develop into God's ruling realm.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE LORD IN HIS SECOND COMING

In 17:23-30 the Lord Jesus indicates that the kingdom of God is He Himself in His second coming. Verse 24 says, "For just as the lightning flashes from one part of heaven and shines to the other part of heaven, so will the Son of

Man be in His day." Concerning this verse we need to realize that the second coming of Christ has two aspects: one is the secret aspect toward His watchful believers; the other is the open aspect toward the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. The "lightning" here signifies the open aspect of the Lord's coming. Lightning is concealed in a cloud, waiting for an opportunity to flash forth. Christ will also be clothed with a cloud (Rev. 10:1) in the air for a time, and then He will suddenly appear like a flash to the earth.

Executing Judgment on the Corrupted World

In Luke 17:25 the Lord says, "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." Then in verses 26 through 29 He goes on to describe this generation, saying that the days of the Son of Man will be as the days of Noah (vv. 26-27) and the days of Lot (vv. 28-29). In the days of Noah certain conditions existed. People were stupefied by eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage. Furthermore, they did not know until the flood came and took them away. It will be the same in the days of the Son of Man. People will be stupefied by the necessities of this life, not knowing that God's judgment (signified by the flood) will come upon them by the Lord's coming. The believers, however, should be dedrugged and soberly know that the Lord is coming to execute God's judgment upon this corrupted world.

Eating, drinking, and marriage were originally ordained by God for man's existence. But due to man's lust, Satan utilizes these necessities of human life to occupy man and keep him from God's interests. Toward the end of this age, this situation will be intensified and will reach its climax during the days of the Son of Man.

The characteristics of the days of Noah were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage. The characteristics of the days of Lot were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building. These last four

characteristics indicate business. Consider the characteristics of today's world. The characteristics of this generation are eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, buying, selling, planting, and building.

The Appearing of the Man-Savior

The conditions of evil living that stupefied the generation of Noah before the deluge and the generation of Lot before the destruction of Sodom portray the perilous condition of man's living before the Lord's parousia (presence, coming) and the great tribulation (Matt. 24:3, 21). If we would participate in the overcomers' rapture to enjoy the Lord's parousia and escape the great tribulation, we must overcome the stupefying effect of man's living today.

In verse 30 the Lord goes on to say, "It will be in the same way on the day in which the Son of Man is revealed." The Greek words translated "it will be in the same way" literally mean, "according to the same things it will be." As indicated by verse 24, at the end of this generation the Man-Savior will be revealed as lightning flashing from one part of heaven and shining to the other part. That flashing light will be the appearing of the kingdom. Actually, that lightning flash will be the appearing of the Man-Savior, the appearing of a Person; yet that appearing will also be the appearing of the kingdom of God.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE RAPTURE OF THE OVERCOMING BELIEVERS

Being Filled with Christ

In 17:31-36 the Lord indicates that the kingdom of God is related to Him and the rapture of His overcoming believers. This means that even the rapture of the believers is part of the kingdom of God. In fact, the rapture is also the Savior Himself. We can understand this if we realize that if we did not have Christ within us, we could never be raptured. The rapture in which we shall participate will be Christ Himself. When we have Christ in us to a sufficient degree, we shall be raptured.

We may compare ourselves to a balloon and the

indwelling Christ to the air that fills the balloon. The more a balloon is filled with air, the more it will rise up. In a similar way, in order to be raptured, we need to be filled with Christ. The rapture, therefore, is a matter of being filled with Christ to the uttermost. By the time of the rapture, the "air," the indwelling Christ, will rapture us, the "balloon" filled with this air, this *pneuma*.

The Warning concerning Lot's Wife

The overcomers do not seek to preserve their soul life. In view of the warning concerning Lot's wife, they do not love or care for material things. Verse 31 says, "In that day, he who shall be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind." This verse reveals that lingering in the earthly and material things will cause us to miss the overcomers' rapture described in verses 34 through 36.

In verse 32 the Lord says, "Remember Lot's wife." Lot's wife became a pillar of salt because she took a lingering, backward look at Sodom. That look indicated that she loved and treasured the evil world which God was about to judge and utterly destroy. She was rescued from Sodom, but she did not reach the safe place that Lot reached (Gen. 19:15-30). She did not perish; neither was she fully saved. Like the salt which becomes tasteless (Luke 14:34-35), she was left in a place of suffering shame. This is a solemn warning to world-loving believers.

Lot's wife was rescued from Sodom by angels, but her heart was still in that evil city. When the angels had brought forth Lot and his wife, they said, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (Gen. 19:17). Lot and his wife were charged to go forward and not look back. Sodom was altogether under God's condemnation and was about to be consumed, and they should forget it. However, unable to forget the city of Sodom, Lot's wife had a lingering look backward at the city, and immediately she became a pillar of salt: "But his

wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt" (Gen. 19:26).

The warning concerning Lot's wife is related to the warning concerning tasteless salt in Luke 14:34 and 35. When we put together 14:34 and 35 and 17:32, we see that a person who belongs to the Lord may become tasteless salt, even a pillar of tasteless salt. We may say that Lot's wife had salt, but the salt had lost its flavor. What a shame!

We have seen that in 14:35 salt may be in one of three locations: the soil, the manure pile, or a place outside, neither in the soil nor in the manure pile. In the case of Lot's wife, there are also three locations: the city of Sodom, the place where Lot was taken, and the place in between, a location of shame, where Lot's wife remained as a pillar of salt.

Not many Christian leaders and teachers have seen this third location. Most teach that there are only two locations, a place for the saved and a place for the lost. But according to the New Testament revelation, there is definitely a third location. This is not the location of the saved nor the location of the lost; it is a location of suffering shame.

If we love the Lord and are warned by the case of Lot's wife, we shall not care for material things or set our hearts on them. Instead of preserving our soul by loving material things, we shall be filled up with Christ as the heavenly air. Then we shall rise in rapture.

Not Preserving Our Soul Life

After reminding us of Lot's wife, the Lord Jesus goes on to say, "Whoever seeks to preserve his soul life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose it, shall preserve it alive" (v. 33). To preserve the soul life is to allow the soul to have its enjoyment and not to suffer. To lose the soul life is to cause the soul to suffer the loss of its enjoyment. If the followers of the Man-Savior allow their soul to have its enjoyment in this age, they will cause their soul to suffer the loss of its enjoyment in the coming kingdom age. If they allow their soul to suffer the loss of its enjoyment in this age for the sake of the Man-Savior, they will cause their soul to have its

enjoyment in the coming kingdom age, that is, to share the Lord's joy in ruling over the earth (Matt. 25:21, 23).

To preserve our soul is related to lingering in the earthly and material things mentioned in Luke 17:31. We linger in the earthly things because we care for the enjoyment of our soul in this age. This will cause us to lose our soul; that is, our soul will suffer the loss of its enjoyment in the coming kingdom age.

The Rapture in Relation to Our Practical Living

In 17:.34 and 35 the Lord says, "I tell you in that night there will be two on one couch; the one will be taken, and the other will be left. There will be two grinding at the same place; the one will be taken, but the other will be left." In these verses the rapture of the overcoming believers is revealed. It will occur secretly and unexpectedly, at night to some believers who are sleeping and in the daytime to some sisters grinding at home and to some brothers working in the field. They are chosen because they have overcome the stupefying effect of this age.

In 14:25-35 the Savior charges us to pay the price insofar as we are able that we may follow Him. In 16:1-13 He charges us to overcome mammon so that we may serve Him prudently as a faithful steward. Here in 17:22-37 He charges us to overcome the stupefying effect of self-indulgent living in this age so that we may be raptured into the enjoyment of His parousia (presence, coming). These charges are all related to overcoming in the believers' practical living.

In both 17:34 and 35 the Lord says that "the one will be taken." The Greek word for "taken" literally means "taken with." This word denotes the rapture of the overcomers, who do not preserve their soul life by loving the worldly things of this age. Those who are taken in this way will be raptured before the great tribulation (Matt. 24:21), which will be a severe trial upon the whole inhabited earth (Rev. 3:10). To be thus raptured is to be kept out of the hour of trial which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth (Rev. 3:10).

The words "grinding" in Luke 17:35 and "in the field" in Matthew 24:40 signify working for a living. Although the believers should not be stupefied by the necessities of this life, they need to work for a living. Any thought of giving up proper work for a living is another extreme of Satan's tactics.

Not All Believers Raptured at Once

In 17:34-36 we see that some who are sleeping will be raptured in the night, and some sisters grinding and some brothers farming will be raptured in the day. Here we see that the rapture will involve saints who are in different places at different times. When the rapture takes place, some will be raptured in the night, and others will be raptured in the day, depending on where they live on earth. Perhaps the saints in the Far East will be raptured in the night, and the saints in the West will be raptured in the day.

In these verses we see that not all those who are sleeping, grinding, or farming will be raptured. This indicates that not all the believers will be raptured at once. The Lord says that two will be on one couch, and one will be taken and the other will be left. The same will be true of two grinding at the same place and of two laboring in the field. In each case, the one who is left may not know the whereabouts of the one who has been taken. This is the rapture of the watchful believers.

Certain fundamental teachers of the Bible do not believe in the rapture of the overcomers as distinct from the general rapture of all believers. In other words, they do not believe in what has been called the "partial rapture." These fundamental teachers believe only in what is mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4. They do not believe that Matthew 24 and Luke 17 speak of the rapture of the watchful, overcoming believers. However, as we consider these chapters, we realize that the only way to interpret

such portions is to regard them as speaking of the rapture of the overcoming believers.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEING A LIVING PERSON

We need to understand 17:21-37 in light of the question asked by the Pharisees in verse 20. The Pharisees asked the Lord as to when the kingdom of God comes, and His answer is given in all the following verses. His answer includes all that is covered in verses 20b through 37. In His answer the Lord indicates that the kingdom of God is actually He Himself in His first coming, in His suffering, in His second coming, and in His overcomers' rapture. In all these He is within us as the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not an organization or a material realm. Rather, the kingdom of God is the Son of God as life sown into the believers to grow and develop into a spiritual realm where God rules in life. Hence, the kingdom of God is a living Person. This living Person is the kingdom of God in His first coming and in His suffering, and He will also be the kingdom in His second coming and in the rapture of His overcoming believers. In each of these instances, this living Person is the kingdom of God.

I can testify that I have been considering this portion of the Gospel of Luke for over half a century. Again and again I would come to this portion, study it, and research it, looking for the proper interpretation. After studying the four Gospels thoroughly over and over, I have been brought to a certain conclusion concerning the kingdom of God as revealed here, a conclusion which I believe is correct.

Luke 17:20-37 reveals that the kingdom of God is the Son of God as the seed of life sown into God's chosen people to grow and develop in them into a spiritual realm where God reigns and rules in His divine life. This kingdom of God is actually a living Person. When He comes, the kingdom of God comes. The kingdom came in the Lord's first coming and in His suffering, and it will come in His second coming, in His overcoming saints' rapture, and, as we shall now see, in His destroying of the Antichrist.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ANTICHRIST

Luke 17:37 says, "And answering, they say to Him, Where, Lord? And He said to them, Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered together." Literally, the word "body" here signifies a corpse. This is a most mysterious verse, and I have been puzzled by it for more than fifty years. Eventually, after careful study of the Bible and the writings of others, I have concluded that this verse is concerned with the Lord's destroying of the Antichrist.

Antichrist will be the cause of the great tribulation. Thus, it is he who will need to be judged and destroyed. As all people in Adam are dead (1 Cor. 15:22), so the evil Antichrist with his evil armies, who will war against the Lord at Armageddon (Rev. 19:17-21), is in the eyes of the Lord a foul corpse, good for the appetite of the vultures. And as in the Scriptures both the Lord and those who trust in Him are likened to an eagle (Exo. 19:4; Deut. 32:11; Isa. 40:31), and the swift destroying armies are also likened to flying eagles (Deut. 28:49; Hosea 8:1 NASV), so the vultures here, raptorials of the eagle kind, must refer to Christ and the overcomers, who will come as a swift flying army to war against Antichrist and his armies and destroy them, thus executing God's judgment upon them at Armageddon. This indicates not only that at His appearing to the earth Christ with His overcoming saints will be where Antichrist is with his armies, but also that Christ with the overcomers will appear swiftly from the air like vultures. This corresponds to the lightning's flash in Luke 17:24.

Now we have the full answer of the Lord to the question asked by the Pharisees regarding the coming of the kingdom of God. The answer is that when the Son of God came the first time, the kingdom came with Him, and

when He went to the cross, the kingdom went with Him. Furthermore, when He comes back, the kingdom will come back with Him. When His overcoming saints are raptured, the kingdom of God will be there. Finally, when Antichrist will be defeated by the coming Christ, the kingdom of God will be there as well. From all this we see that the kingdom of God is actually the living Person of the Man-Savior. Because He is the kingdom of God, wherever He is, the kingdom of God is there. Whenever He appears, He appears as the kingdom of God.

A SUMMARY

Let us now briefly summarize chapter seventeen as a whole. In this chapter the Lord teaches us not to stumble others, to be always ready and willing to forgive when we are offended, to exercise faith in our sovereign God, and to consider ourselves unprofitable slaves. If we do these things, we shall be kept in a high standard of morality. As those with such a high standard of morality, we shall not stumble others nor be offended by them. Because we have faith in God, we shall not complain. Furthermore, instead of considering ourselves great, useful, and profitable to God and others, we shall humble ourselves and say that we are unprofitable slaves. In addition, we shall realize how merciful the Savior is. When ten lepers came to Him, He did not exercise any choice, selection, or preference, but healed them all.

In this chapter we also see that when the Pharisees troubled the Lord with a difficult question concerning the kingdom of God, He indicated in His answer that the kingdom of God is actually a living Person, the Man-Savior Himself. The spiritual reality of this Person who is the kingdom of God is not observable to physical eyes. Hence, the kingdom of God does not come with observation. In order to see the spiritual reality of the kingdom of God, we need spiritual perception. As the living Person of the Lord Himself, the kingdom of God appeared in His first coming and in His suffering, and it will appear in His second

coming, in the rapture of His overcoming believers and in His destruction of Antichrist and his army.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(18)

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:1-8

The record of the Gospel of Luke is quite inclusive. After covering a number of matters in chapter seventeen, especially matters related to the kingdom of God, Luke goes on in chapter eighteen to cover several more points: the teaching about persistent prayer (vv. 1-8); the teaching about the entrance into the kingdom of God (vv. 9-30), a teaching that includes humbling ourselves (vv. 9-14), being like a little child (vv. 15-17), and renouncing all and following the Man-Savior (vv. 18-30); unveiling His death and resurrection the third time (vv. 31-34); and healing a blind man near Jericho (vv. 35-43). In this message we shall consider the Lord's teaching about persistent prayer.

KNOWING THE ECONOMY OF GOD CONCERNING THE JUBILEE

As the Savior was going from Galilee to Jerusalem, He was training His followers to know the economy of God concerning the jubilee. The jubilee is actually Christ as the embodiment of God for our enjoyment. Such words cannot be found in the Gospel of Luke. Nevertheless, this underlying thought is there: the jubilee, which is the kingdom of God, is Christ as the embodiment of God for our enjoyment.

For the sake of the jubilee, it was necessary for Christ to die to accomplish an all-inclusive redemption and then enter into resurrection. Through His all-inclusive redemption Christ has fulfilled the requirements for us to

be released from every kind of bondage. Now we can be released from the bondage of sin, Satan, the world, the self, and the old creation. We need to see that it was necessary for Christ to die to set us free from this bondage. Then it was necessary for Him to be resurrected to bring us positively into the enjoyment of the divine inheritance. This inheritance is the Triune God processed to become the all-inclusive Spirit for our enjoyment.

This understanding of the underlying thought concerning the jubilee in the Gospel of Luke is not according to the concept of the natural mind. On the contrary, this understanding is in accord with the revelation given in the New Testament, especially that in Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation. In other words, the New Testament books from Acts to Revelation are an explanation, definition, and development of the vision in Luke concerning Christ's death accomplishing full redemption to set us free from all negative things and His resurrection bringing us positively into the enjoyment of the Triune God, who, having been processed, is the all-inclusive Spirit for our enjoyment. This is the jubilee.

THE UNRIGHTEOUS STEWARD AND THE UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGE

While the Lord was on the way to Jerusalem with His disciples, they had no idea what was happening or what was being taught to them by the Man-Savior. As we read the account of that journey, we see many different instances, and hidden in certain of these instances are a number of puzzling points.

We have seen that in chapter sixteen the Lord tells the disciples the parable of the unrighteous steward. Now in 18:1-8 He gives them another parable, the parable of an unrighteous judge. The unrighteous steward in chapter sixteen signifies us as the Lord's stewards. As we shall see, the unrighteous judge in chapter eighteen refers to the righteous God. Therefore, the Lord used two parables, one denoting us and the other denoting God.

The unrighteous steward signifies us serving the Lord. and the unrighteous judge signifies God avenging us. To some degree at least, we have covered the parable of the unrighteous steward. In this message we shall seek to cover the problem presented by an unrighteous judge being used to signify the righteous God.

TEACHING ABOUT PERSISTENT PRAYER

Luke 18:1-3 says, "And He told them a parable with the purpose that they ought always to pray and not lose heart, saying, There was a certain judge in a certain city who did not fear God and did not respect man. And there was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, Avenge me of my opponent." The widow in verse 3 signifies the believers. In a sense, the believers in Christ are a widow in the present age because their Husband Christ (2 Cor. 11:2) is absent from them.

In verse 3 the widow asked the judge to avenge her of her opponent. The Greek word rendered "avenge" may also be translated "procure justice for."

In this parable the Lord indicates that the believers in Christ have an opponent. This opponent is Satan, the Devil, concerning whom we need God's avenging. We ought to pray persistently for this avenging (see Rev. 6:9-10) and not lose heart.

According to verse 4, the judge for a time would not avenge the widow of her opponent. Then he said within himself, "Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow causes me trouble, I will avenge her, lest by continually coming she wears me out" (vv. 4-5). Following this, the Lord went on to say, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says; and God, shall He not by all means carry out the avenging of His chosen ones, who cry to Him day and night; and yet He is longsuffering over them? I tell you that He will carry out their avenging quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (vv. 6-8). The Lord's word in verse 8 indicates that God's avenging of our enemy will be at the Savior's coming back.

Literally, the Greek words rendered "faith" mean "the faith." This denotes the persistent faith for our persistent prayer, like that of the widow. Hence, the faith here is the subjective faith, not the objective faith.

TODAY'S EVIL GENERATION

We need to consider the parable in 18:1-8 in the context of the lengthy record of the Lord's journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51--19:27). During the course of His teaching given on this journey, the Lord covers many aspects of matters related to the jubilee, to the kingdom of God, and to Himself as our enjoyment. He speaks regarding His death, His resurrection, God's salvation, the coming reward, the kingdom age, the evil generation, and the condition of the Pharisees. All these matters are related either directly or indirectly to the kingdom of God and to the enjoyment of Christ.

Today's evil generation can distract us from the enjoyment of Christ. This generation seeks to stupefy us, to drug us, so that we have no sense about what is happening. The entire world has become stupefied, and, having been drugged, the worldly people have no sense, no consciousness, of the fact that they have been carried away from the enjoyable Triune God.

The Triune God is for man's enjoyment. Nevertheless, the fallen human race has no concept of this whatever; it has no sense concerning it at all. The people of the world are busy with marrying and giving in marriage, with buying and selling, with planting and building (17:27-28). They have no thought concerning God being their enjoyment, for they all have been drugged, stupefied. Therefore, in His long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem the Lord touched this matter a few times. For example, in chapter fourteen He told His disciples that they must hate the things of this generation. They even need to hate their own soul life, for they should hate anything that distracts them from the enjoyment of Christ. In chapter seventeen the Lord comes to this point again when He speaks about the stupefied generation, which keeps God's people away

from their enjoyment of the divine inheritance. before He touches this matter again in chapter eighteen, He unveils to us something else that concerns our enjoyment of the jubilee, and this is the persecution that comes from our opponent.

PERSECUTED BY OUR OPPONENT

We need to realize that as God's people in this stupefied and stupefying generation we are like a widow. In a sense, our Husband, the Lord, is absent. Furthermore, we have an opponent who is constantly persecuting us.

Before the Lord Jesus went to the cross to accomplish His all-inclusive redemption, He opened the veils from many directions to show His followers things that are related directly and indirectly to their enjoyment of Him as their jubilee. They needed to realize that the most distracting thing is this present generation with all its components. The components of the evil generation stupefy the worldly people.

The Lord also reveals to His disciples that while we are seeking Him, we need to hate any thing and any matter that frustrate us from our enjoyment of Him. Furthermore, as we are enjoying Him, we shall suffer persecution. This persecution comes from our opponent, the one who is the enemy of God and who has become our enemy because we take sides with God.

The parable in 18:1-8 indicates the suffering we have from our opponent during the Lord's apparent absence. Actually, the Lord is not absent; He is present. But during His apparent absence, we are a widow whose opposer is troubling her all the time.

WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD SEEMS UNRIGHTEOUS

While our opposer is persecuting us, it seems that our God is not righteous, for He allows His children to be unrighteously persecuted. For example, John the Baptist was beheaded, Peter was martyred, Paul was imprisoned, and John was exiled. Throughout the centuries, thousands upon thousands of honest and faithful followers of the Man-Savior have suffered unrighteous persecution. Even

today we are still undergoing unrighteous mistreatment. Our God seems to be unjust, since He does not come in to judge and vindicate.

Often we have prayed for God to vindicate us. Yet, many of our co-workers, faithful ones, have been imprisoned and even put to death. Where is the living, righteous God? Why does He tolerate this situation? Why would He not judge those who persecute us? Because of this situation, the Man-Savior in 18:1-8 uses an unjust judge to signify God who does not seem to do anything on behalf of His persecuted people.

What shall we do in a situation when we are persecuted and it seems that our God is not living, present, or just? From this parable we learn to be a bothering widow, one who prays to God persistently.

Many times I have become tired of praying for the Lord to vindicate His recovery. It seems that the more I pray for the Lord to vindicate, the less vindication there is. Apparently, the Lord is not present or does not care. It seems that He is not righteous. Nevertheless, I have learned that we need to bother God in prayer, that we should pray to Him persistently without losing heart.

THE PERSISTENT PRAYER OF THE MARTYRED SAINTS

In Revelation 6:9 and 10 we see that this kind of persistent prayer is carried out by the souls of the martyred saints: "I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O sovereign Lord, holy and true, will You not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" In figure, the altar is in the outer court of the tabernacle and the temple, and the outer court signifies the earth. Hence, "underneath the altar" is underneath the earth, where the souls of the martyred saints are. This is in the Paradise where the Lord Jesus went after His death (Luke 23:43). It is the comfortable section of Hades (Acts 2:27), where Abraham is (Luke 16:22-26). Here we see that the souls of the martyred

saints are crying out, "How long, O sovereign Lord? They seem to be saying, "Lord, how long will You be silent? How long will You apparently be unjust? You are the righteous Judge. How can You tolerate the unrighteous persecution that is still taking place on earth? How long, O Lord, how long?" This is the prayer from the unseen realm, the prayer from the martyred saints in Paradise.

PRAYING PERSISTENTLY TO THE SOVEREIGN LORD

In Luke 18:1-8 we see the prayer from the visible realm. This kind of prayer is related to our enjoyment of the jubilee.

Often the children of those who are faithful followers of the Lord ask their parents why they are suffering persecution. They may ask, "Since we love the Lord Jesus so much, why must we suffer?" Usually the parents do not know how to answer. It seems to the children that the Lord whom their parents follow is not righteous. We also may wonder why we suffer, since we love the Lord and follow Him. The parable in 18:1-8 answers our question.

When our Husband is apparently absent and we are left on earth as a widow, temporarily our God seems to be an unrighteous judge. Although He appears to be unrighteous, we still must appeal to Him, pray persistently, and bother Him again and again.

We need to be careful in understanding a parable such as the one recorded in 18:1-8. We should not try to understand it in a natural way. On the one hand, this parable indicates that the Judge is sovereign. This means that whether or not He judges is up to Him. Seemingly without reason, He may either listen to the widow or not listen to her. This parable reveals that He is the sovereign Lord and that He judges whenever He chooses.

On the other hand, this parable indicates that we need to bother the Lord by praying persistently. We need to say to Him, "Lord, praying is up to me, not up to You. You never told me that I should not pray. On the contrary, You charged me to pray. Therefore, Lord, I am praying now for Your vindication."

The significance of this parable is profound, and we all need to know God as He is revealed here. We also need to see that the kind of prayer described here helps us to enjoy the jubilee.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-ONE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(19)

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:9-30

In 18:9-30 we have the Lord's teaching about the entrance into the kingdom of God. What is covered in these verses may be considered the condition and requirements for entering into the kingdom of God. Here the Lord mentions three steps: first, to humble oneself before God as a sinner, realizing the need of God's propitiation (vv. 9-14); second, to be like a little child, without any preoccupying concept (vv. 15-17); and third, to follow the Savior by overcoming being occupied by riches and all other material matters (vv. 18-30). Let us consider each of these aspects of the Lord's teaching.

HUMBLING ONESELF

In 18:9-14 we see that in order to enter into the kingdom of God, we need to humble ourselves. In verse 14 the Lord says, "Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted." We should not think that we are somebody. Instead, we should humble ourselves and regard ourselves as nobody and nothing.

The Prayer of the Pharisee

In verses 10 through 14 the Lord tells a parable of two men who "went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector" (v. 10). The Lord often used tax collectors and Pharisees as examples. Verses 11 and 12 record the Pharisee's prayer: "The

Pharisee stood and prayed these things to himself: God. I thank You that I am not like the rest of men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all, whatever I get." The Pharisee's word in verse 11, where he thanks God that he is not like the rest of men, does not sound like a prayer at all; instead, it sounds like an accusation of others. Likewise, his word in verse 12 about fasting and paying tithes does not sound like a prayer, but rather like an arrogant boast to God. Therefore, in his prayer the Pharisee was accusing others and boasting to God.

The Prayer of the Tax Collector

In verse 13 we see that the despised, accused, and condemned tax collector prayed in the way of humbling himself to the uttermost: "But the tax collector, standing at a distance, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be propitiated to me, the sinner!" This word implies the need of a Redeemer and also the need of propitiation. The tax collector realized how his sinfulness offended God. Hence, he asked God to be propitiated, to be appeased toward him by a propitiation, so that God may be merciful and gracious to him.

Romans 3:25 says that God set forth Christ Jesus a propitiation-cover through faith in His blood. The Greek word for propitiation is *hilasterion,* different from *hilasmos* in I John 2:2 and 4:10 and *hilaskomai* in Hebrews 2:17. *Hilasmos* is that which propitiates, that is, a propitiatory sacrifice. In 1 John 2:2 and 4:10 the Lord Jesus is the propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. The Lord offered Himself to God as a sacrifice for our sins (Heb. 9:28), not only for our redemption but also for God's satisfaction. In Him as our Substitute, through His vicarious death, God is satisfied and appeased. Hence, He is the propitiation between God and us.

Hilaskomai means to appease, to reconcile one by satisfying the other's demand, that is, to propitiate. In Hebrews 2:17 the Lord Jesus made propitiation for our sins to reconcile us to God by satisfying God's righteous demands on us. The Lord Jesus made propitiation for our

sins to appease God's righteousness, to reconcile us by satisfying the demand of God's righteousness.

In Romans 3:25 *hilasterion* is the place of propitiation. So in Hebrews 9:5 this word is used for the lid of the ark within the Holy of Holies, and in Exodus 25:16-22 and Leviticus 16:12-16 the Septuagint also uses this word for the cover of the ark. The law of the Ten Commandments was in the ark, exposing and condemning by its righteous requirement the sin of the people who came to contact God. By the lid of the ark with the atoning blood sprinkled upon it on the day of atonement, the whole situation on the sinner's side was fully covered. Therefore, it was upon this lid that God could meet with people who broke His righteous law without, governmentally, any contradiction to His righteousness, even under the observing of the cherubim that bore His glory overshadowing the lid of the ark. The propitiatory or expiatory sacrifice, which foreshadowed Christ, satisfied all the requirements of God's righteousness and glory. This is what Romans 3:25 refers to. Thus, the word *hilasterion* is used to reveal that the Lord Jesus is the propitiation place, the propitiation-cover. As the propitiatory sacrifice, He has made full propitiation on the cross for our sins and has fully satisfied the requirements of God's righteousness and glory.

It is significant, therefore, that the tax collector in Luke 18:13 said, "God, be propitiated to me, the sinner!" He realized that he had offended God and that he needed someone to be his offering of propitiation so that God would be appeased. This humble person realized that he was nothing but a sinner. Because he offered up a prayer that was based upon God's propitiation, he "went down to his house justified" (v. 14).

Humbled and Subdued

The Lord's word in verse 14 about being justified refers to the initial stage of our salvation. Every saved person should be one who humbles himself to the same extent the tax collector did. Actually, to repent and confess our sins is to humble ourselves. All saved ones are those who have been humbled and subdued.

When I was young, I was proud and arrogant, never willing to admit that I was wrong. But one day the Spirit caught me, and I was convinced, humbled, and subdued. It seemed to me that no one was as sinful as I was. My attitude was the exact opposite of what it had been before. I can testify from experience that a saved person is a humble, subdued person. We need to humble ourselves to such an extent that we consider ourselves nobody and nothing.

BEING LIKE A LITTLE CHILD

After humbling ourselves, we need to become like a little child (vv. 15-17). In verses 16 and 17 the Lord Jesus says, "Allow the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child shall by no means enter into it." A little child, not filled with and occupied by old concepts, can easily receive a new thought. Hence, people need to receive the kingdom of God as a new thing, with an unoccupied heart, like a little child.

We were all born into the kingdom of man, and we are all in the kingdom of man. In order to go from the kingdom of man into the kingdom of God, to be transferred out of the kingdom of man into the kingdom of God, we need to accept some new thoughts. Who is able to receive these new thoughts? Only those who are babes, those without preoccupations, can receive them. However, many saved ones do not want to be like babes. Instead, they like to regard themselves as intelligent and knowledgeable, thinking that they know everything. Those who have this attitude are through as far as entering into the kingdom of God is concerned. Although they are saved, it will be difficult for them to enter into the enjoyment of the jubilee. A requirement for entering into the kingdom of God is that we become like little children.

RENOUNCING ALL AND FOLLOWING THE MAN-SAVIOR

In 18:18-30 we see that if we would enter into the kingdom of God, we need to renounce all and follow the Man-Savior. In particular, we need to renounce material possessions.

Inheriting Eternal Life and Having Eternal Life

Luke 18:18 says, "And a certain ruler questioned Him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" To inherit eternal life is different from having eternal life. According to the Gospel of John, to have eternal life is to be saved with God's uncreated life so that we may live by this life today and for eternity. But to inherit eternal life is to share in the manifestation of the kingdom in the coming age. The certain ruler in 18:18 apparently was seeking eternal life in the coming age.

In 18:19 the Lord Jesus said to this ruler, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except One--God." Only God is good. This indicates not only that the one who asked the question is not good, but also that the Lord Jesus is God, who is good. If He were not God, He also would not be good.

The Supreme Requirement for Entering into the Kingdom of God

In verse 20 the Lord went on to say to the ruler, "You know the commandments: you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not testify falsely, honor your father and mother." The ruler answered, "All these I have kept from my youth" (v. 21). When the Lord Jesus heard this, He said to him, "Yet one thing you are lacking: all things, whatever you have, sell and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come, follow Me" (v. 22). Here the Lord comes to a matter He has emphasized previously--the renouncing of material things. For example, in 14:33 the Lord said, "So therefore, everyone of you who does not renounce all his own possessions cannot be My disciple." Here we see that to follow the Lord requires that we love

Him above all things. This is the supreme requirement for entering into the kingdom of God.

In 18:22 the Lord Jesus said to the ruler. "One thing you are lacking." This ruler may have observed the commandments of the old law, but he was still lacking one thing. He was not willing to sell what he had and have treasure in the heavens and follow the Lord.

Luke 18:23 says, "But when he heard these things, he became very sorrowful, for he was exceedingly rich." Loving material possessions above the Lord causes one to sorrow. But those who love Christ above all things are joyful in losing their possessions (Heb. 10:34).

Verses 24 and 25 say, "And Jesus observing him said, How difficult it is for those who hold on to riches to go into the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The Greek word for "needle" here is a different word from that in Matthew and Mark. The word here indicates a surgeon's needle. The Lord's word here indicates the impossibility of entering into the kingdom of God by our natural life.

Salvation and the Kingdom of God

In verse 26 we see that those who heard the Lord's word said, "Then who can be saved?" The hearers, like most Christians today, confused salvation with the kingdom of God. The Lord's word to the ruler concerned entering into the kingdom of God. But the disciples thought that it referred to salvation. They had the natural, common concept of being saved. They did not grasp the Lord's revelation concerning entering into the kingdom of God.

In verse 27, the Lord went on to say, "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God." By our human life it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of God. But this is possible by God's life, the divine life, which is Christ Himself imparted into us so that we may live the kingdom life. We can fulfill the requirements of the kingdom by Christ, who empowers us to do all things (Phil. 4:13).

In verse 28 Peter said to the Lord, "Behold, we have left our own things and have followed You." Here Peter in a boasting way was saying, "Lord, we left everything to follow You. We left our boats, our nets, and the Sea of Galilee. We have left everything behind, and now we are with You on the way to Jerusalem. Lord, what shall we get for this? What will You pay us for leaving everything, even our own country, to follow You? Thus far. we haven't received anything. What will You give us, Lord?"

In verses 29 and 30 we have the Lord's answer: "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not by all means receive many times as much in this time, and in the coming age, eternal life." In verse 29 the Lord says, "for the sake of the kingdom of God," but Matthew 19:29 says, "for My name's sake." This indicates that the Savior equals the kingdom of God. As we have seen, this also is indicated by the Lord's word in Luke 17:21, where He tells the Pharisees, "Behold, the kingdom of God is among you," referring to Himself. The kingdom of God is the Savior Himself. Wherever the Savior is, there is the kingdom of God.

In Luke 18:30 the Lord speaks of receiving eternal life in the coming age. This is the life which the overcoming believers will enjoy in the coming kingdom. To enter into this enjoyment in the coming age is to enter into the coming kingdom and participate in its enjoyment of eternal life.

When Peter made the statement recorded in verse 28, he was not yet in the kingdom, but he was at least standing on the threshold. He was very close to entering into the kingdom. However, he was still a little proud and needed a further word from the Lord.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-TWO

MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(20)

Scripture Reading: Luke 18:31--19:10

In this message we shall cover 18:31--19:10. These verses cover three matters: the Lord's unveiling of His death and resurrection the third time (vv. 31-34); His healing a blind man near Jericho (vv. 35-43); and His saving Zaccheus in Jericho (19:1-10).

UNVEILING HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION THE THIRD TIME

While the Man-Savior was making the long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, He spoke to His disciples about many things. In 18:31 He took the twelve aside in order to speak a private word to them. This word spoken privately to the disciples concerned His going to Jerusalem to die.

In verses 31 through 33 this word is recorded in some detail: "Behold we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things will be accomplished which have been written through the prophets regarding the Son of Man. For He will be delivered up to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and outrageously treated and spit upon; and when they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and on the third day He will rise." It is significant that in verse 31 the Lord does not say, "Behold I am going up to Jerusalem"; instead, He says, "Behold we are going up to Jerusalem."

This was the third time the Lord Jesus revealed His

death to the disciples. The first was in Caesarea Philippi, before His transfiguration (9:22). The second was in Galilee. after His transfiguration (9:44-45). This time, the third time, was on the way to Jerusalem. This revelation was a prophecy, altogether strange to the natural concept of the disciples, yet fulfilled literally in every detail.

We have seen that the Man-Savior had predicted His death and resurrection twice already. Since the time for His death had come, He was going to Jerusalem. This was His obedience to God unto death (Phil. 2:8), according to the counsel of God (Acts 2:23), for the fulfillment of His redemptive plan (Isa. 53:10). He knew that through His death He would be glorified in resurrection (Luke 24:25-26) and that His divine life would be released to produce many brothers for His expression (John 12:23-24; Rom. 8:29). For the joy set before Him, He despised the shame (Heb. 12:2) and volunteered to be delivered to the Satan-usurped leaders of the Jews and condemned by them to death. For this God exalted Him to the heavens, seated Him at His right hand (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33-35), gave Him the name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9-10), made Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36), and crowned Him with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9).

Luke 18:84 says, "And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know what was being said." We may compare the Man-Savior's word to His disciples concerning His death to beautiful music played to those who do not appreciate such music. The disciples were not able to appreciate the "music" "played" to them by the Lord. They did not understand anything the Lord said. Although He used simple words, they could not comprehend what He was saying.

Why were the disciples not able to grasp the Lord's word concerning His death and resurrection? The reason for their inability to understand was that they were altogether in another kingdom, in their own kingdom. Because they were in their own kingdom, they did not have a heart for the things of the kingdom of God.

HEALING A BLIND MAN NEAR JERICHO

The Lord's unveiling of His death and resurrection the third time is related to the healing of the blind man near Jericho. Actually, the Lord's disciples were blind and in need of healing. They could not understand what the Lord was saying about His death and resurrection, because they were lacking in perception and insight. Therefore, following the third unveiling of the Lord's death and resurrection, we have the case of the healing of a blind man.

A Sequence according to Morality

Luke 18:35 says, "And it came about as He drew near to Jericho, that a certain blind man was sitting by the road, begging." Here there seems to be a problem with respect to Jericho. In chapter ten the Lord was received into Martha's home, and her home was in Bethany. In His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem the Lord would have come to Jericho before He reached Bethany, and then He would have gone from Bethany to Jerusalem. Why, then, is Bethany implied in chapter ten and Jericho clearly mentioned in chapter nineteen? Does this mean that He came to Bethany and then went back to Jericho? No, actually He was received by Martha after He passed through Jericho. But in chapter ten Luke is not concerned with geography or historical sequence; he is concerned with the high standard of morality. This is a strong evidence to show that Luke's narration is not according to the sequence of historical events but according to morality.

Sight and Salvation

We have pointed out that verse 35 says that the Lord drew near to Jericho. The following verses indicate that near Jericho the Man-Savior healed a blind man. This means that He healed the blind man before He entered Jericho. But Matthew 20:29 and Mark 10:46 say that the healing occurred at His coming out from Jericho. Luke's narrative has a spiritual bearing. The blind man's receiving of sight was followed in 19:1-9 by the salvation of Zaccheus. This indicates that to receive salvation first

requires sight to see the Savior. These two cases, occurring at Jericho in direct continuation, should be considered spiritually as one complete case. A sinner in darkness needs to receive sight so that he may realize his need of salvation (Acts 26:18).

What is covered in 18:35--19:10 shows how one can fulfill the conditions, as revealed in 18:9-30, for entering the kingdom of God. These conditions are first to receive sight from the Savior (18:35-43) and then to receive the Savior as the dynamic salvation (19:1-10). Thus, the blind man could be like the repenting tax collector and the unoccupied little child to receive the Savior, and Zaccheus could renounce all his riches to follow Him.

The Blind Man Representing the Disciples

When the blind man near Jericho heard that Jesus was passing by, he cried, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (v. 38). The title "Son of David" is the royal title of Christ for the children of Israel. Only the children of Israel were privileged to address the Lord with this title.

Verses 40 and 41 continue, "And Jesus stopped and ordered him to be led to Him. And when he drew near, He questioned him, What do you want Me to do for you? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight!" The Lord's question in verse 41 shows open love toward this needy one. It expressed the Man-Savior's humanity to an unimaginable extent.

The Lord then said to the blind man, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you" (v. 42). Literally, the Greek word translated "healed" means saved. Instantly the man received his sight and followed the Lord, glorifying God (v. 43).

After the Lord unveiled His death and resurrection to the twelve for the third time, they were still blind. Hence, they were represented by the blind man near Jericho. The Lord's healing of the blind man signifies His dealing with the blindness of the twelve disciples.

Here I would like to say, once again, that it is not an

easy matter to understand the Bible. In understanding the Scriptures it is not sufficient to know the letters in black and white. If we would understand the Bible, we need to know the spirit of the particular book we are reading. The burden in Luke's spirit in this part of chapter eighteen was to show us that all the Lord's followers, even His twelve chosen ones, were blind. The Pharisees were not the only ones who were not able to see the spiritual reality of the kingdom of God. We may say that the twelve were foremost in lacking this ability. Three of them--Peter, James, and John--were with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration. Although they saw so much on the mountain, actually, in a spiritual sense, they did not see anything at all, for they were blind. Therefore, the man near Jericho was not the only one who was blind. All those around the Lord also were blind.

Our Need of the Lord's Healing

I am concerned about the situation of today's believers, including our situation. Some of us may still be spiritually blind. We may need to pray, "O Lord, have mercy on me. I need You to heal my blindness. Lord, I want to receive my sight."

Mark 4:12 indicates that we may see and not perceive and hear and not understand. Since this may be our condition, we need to pray that the Lord will have mercy on us. We also need to empty ourselves in order to see the spiritual reality of the kingdom of God.

The Pharisees thought that they saw a great deal, and they regarded themselves as somebody. Actually, they were nobody. They were even more empty than the tax collectors were. Likewise, although the disciples followed the Lord Jesus from the beginning of His ministry and saw the things that took place in His ministry, they continued to be blind. As we have pointed out, we also may be spiritually blind. Some of us have been in the Lord for years. Subconsciously we may think that we know a great deal. But actually we still may be blind, not seeing the things that we need to see. Therefore, we need the

Lord's healing. In the presence of the Lord, we need to have the deep conviction that we are nobody, that we know nothing, and that we need Him to give us sight.

In our reading of the Gospel of Luke, we may wonder why the case of the healing of a blind man near Jericho is recorded so far along in the narrative. We may think that such a case belongs much earlier in the book, perhaps in the section that records the Lord's ministry in Galilee. Nevertheless, in chapter eighteen, when the Lord is very close to Jerusalem, we have the account of the healing of this blind man. This case indicates that the followers of the Man-Savior need Him to heal their blindness.

SAVING ZACCHEUS IN JERICHO

In 19:1-10 we have the record of the Lord's saving Zaccheus in Jericho. Verse 1 says, "And He entered and was passing through Jericho." We have seen that Jericho is a city of curse (Josh. 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34).

Luke 19:2 says, "And behold there was a man whose name was called Zaccheus; and he was a chief tax collector and he was rich." Tax collectors were those who collected the taxes levied by the Romans. Nearly all of them abused their office by demanding more than they should by false accusation (Luke 3:12-13; 19:8). To pay taxes to the Romans was very bitter to the Jews. Those engaged in collecting them were despised by the people and counted unworthy of any respect (Luke 18:9-10). Often they defrauded the people. Hence, they were classed with sinners (Matt. 9:10-11).

According to Luke 19:3-6, in order to see the Lord Jesus, Zaccheus, who was small in stature, climbed up in a sycamore tree. When the Lord came to that place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down; for today I must stay in your house" (v. 5). Zaccheus came down and welcomed the Lord, rejoicing. But those who saw this "grumbled, saying, He has gone in to lodge with a sinful man" (v. 7).

In 19:8 Zaccheus said, "Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusations, I restore four

times as much." Here we see that once a sinner receives the Savior the issue of this dynamic salvation is his dealing with material possessions and the clearance of his past sinful life.

The Greek word for "taken anything"? in verse 8 is the same as that used in 3:14. It is a mild way of speaking of extortion. The tax collectors used to put a higher value on property or income, or increase the tax of those unable to pay, and then charge usury.

Zaccheus told the Lord that if he took anything by false accusations, he restored four times as much. That was according to the law's requirements for restoration (Exo. 22:1; 2 Sam. 12:6).

In Luke 19:9 the Lord Jesus went on to say to Zaccheus, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham." However evil this tax collector was, he was nonetheless also a son of Abraham, a chosen heir of God's promised inheritance (Gal. 3:7, 29).

In verse 10 the Lord says, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost." This indicates that the Savior's coming to Jericho was not accidental but purposeful. He came to Jericho purposefully to seek this unique lost sinner, just as He sought the sinful woman in Samaria (John 4:4).

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-THREE

THE MINISTRY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR IN HIS HUMAN VIRTUES WITH HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

(21)

Scripture Reading: Luke 19:1-27

In this message we shall consider 19:1-27. This portion of Luke covers two matters: the saving of Zaccheus in Jericho (vv. 1-10) and the Lord's teaching about faithfulness (vv. 11-27).

THE SALVATION OF ZACCHEUS

A Leading Sinner

Luke 19:1 and 2 say, "And He entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold, there was a man whose name was called Zaccheus; and he was a chief tax collector, and he was rich." As a chief tax collector, Zaccheus was a chief sinner, a leading sinner. He became rich through his sinfulness as a tax collector.

In his confession to the Lord related to restitution and clearing of the past, Zaccheus said to Him, "Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusations, I restore four times as much" (v. 8). We may regard the words "if I have taken anything" as a euphemism, a nice way of referring to extortion. Tax collectors put a higher value on property or increased the tax of those unable to pay and then charged high interest. This was the way they extorted others. As Zaccheus was seeking to make restitution, he referred to his extortion. What Zaccheus did in restoring four times the amount he extorted was

very honest. Nevertheless, he still referred to his acts of extortion in a euphemistic way. A man who had become rich by being sinful, Zaccheus now wanted to make full restitution in order to clear up his sinful past.

Seeking to See Jesus

Luke 19:3 and 4 say, "And he was seeking to see Jesus, who He is; and he could not because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. And he ran on ahead and climbed up in a sycamore tree that he might see Him, for He was about to pass through that way." Although Zaccheus climbed up in the tree to see the Lord Jesus, we are told not that he saw the Lord but that the Lord saw him: "And as He came to the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry and come down; for today I must stay in your house" (v. 5). The seeing was not on Zaccheus' side; it was on the Savior's side. Once again we see the Man-Savior's high standard of morality in saving sinners. Nothing was done by the sinner; rather, everything was done by the Savior, even the seeing. In verse 6 we are told that Zaccheus "hurried and came down, and welcomed Him, rejoicing."

The Man-Savior Staying in Zaccheus' House

Zaccheus certainly was an isolated person. He was despised to the uttermost by the Jewish community and was even more isolated than a leper. Especially the Pharisees, the high ranking hypocrites in the Jewish religion, did not care for him. In their sight he was more unclean than someone with leprosy. Nevertheless, in front of a large crowd the Savior told Zaccheus, "Today I must stay in your house." What a great surprise that was to Zaccheus and to everyone in the crowd! The entire city of Jericho must have been shaken by it. Verse 7 says, "And seeing it, they all grumbled, saying, He has gone in to lodge with a sinful man."

The Spontaneous Issue of the Dynamic Power of the Lord's Salvation

In verses 1 through 7 we are not told that the Lord

said much to Zaccheus. Zaccheus, however, responded in a very strong way, recognizing the Savior as his Lord. "And Zaccheus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor" (v. 8). Zaccheus could utter such a word even though he had not heard the Man-Savior's teaching concerning material possessions.

On the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, the Savior spoke about material possessions a number of times. The first was in chapter twelve. When someone out of the crowd asked Him to tell his brother to divide the inheritance, He said to them, "Take heed and guard yourselves from all covetousness; for no one's life is in the abundance of his possessions" (12:15). Then in 14:33 the Savior went on to say, "Everyone of you who does not renounce all his own possessions cannot be My disciple." In chapter sixteen He spoke to His disciples concerning the mammon of unrighteousness and then issued a warning to the rich. In chapter seventeen He spoke about material possessions in relation to the rapture of the overcomers: "In that day, he who shall be on the housetop and his goods in the house, let him not come down to take them away; and he who is in the field, likewise, let him not turn back to the things behind" (v. 31). Following this, in 18:22 He said to the rich ruler, "All things, whatever you have, sell and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come, follow Me." From all these instances we see that the Man-Savior spoke repeatedly concerning material possessions. Zaccheus, of course, did not hear any of this. Nevertheless, in responding to the Savior's word, he said that half of his possessions he gives to the poor.

We have seen that in verse 8 Zaccheus went on to say to the Lord, "If I have taken anything from anyone by false accusations, I restore four times as much." What Zaccheus did here was according to the requirements of the law for restoration (Exo. 22:1; 2 Sam. 12:6). This was the spontaneous issue of the dynamic power of the Lord's salvation.

In the case of the saving of Zaccheus in Jericho, we see that the Lord's salvation is actually the Lord Himself. In verse 5 He says, "Today I must stay in your house." But in

verse 9 He says to Zaccheus, "Today salvation has come to this house." When we put these verses together, we see that "I" in verse 5 is equal to "salvation" in verse 9. This indicates that salvation is actually the Lord Himself. When He comes, salvation comes. Wherever He stays, there salvation stays.

A Captive under Oppression

We have pointed out that Zaccheus responded to the Man-Savior in the way he did because of the dynamic power of His salvation. With the Man-Savior there is dynamic power, and this power is the Holy Spirit. He ministered the jubilee by the Holy Spirit. In chapter four He declared that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him because He had been anointed to proclaim release to the captives. The Lord had been appointed and anointed to proclaim the jubilee to all those who were oppressed.

In the sight of the religious people, especially the Pharisees, Zaccheus was a leading sinner, for he was a chief tax collector. But in the sight of the Man-Savior he was a captive under oppression. Before he climbed up the tree to see the Savior, Zaccheus may have given much consideration to how to be released from his sinful condition. As a Jew, he must have been condemned in his conscience for working as a tax collector to gather taxes for the Roman imperialists. Hence, he was condemned by his own conscience as a traitor to his country. Therefore, he may have tried to get out of his sinful condition, but he was unable to do so, for he was a captive and was oppressed.

Seeking and Saving the Lost

Luke 19:10 says, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost." Here we see that Zaccheus was not only a sinner; he was also lost. The Savior came to Jericho purposely to seek and to save such a lost one.

The Lord's seeking Zaccheus in Luke 19 may be compared to His seeking the Samaritan woman in John 4. The Savior told Zaccheus, "I must stay in your house," and John 4:4 says of Him, "He had to pass through Samaria."

It was necessary for Him to go through Samaria in order to meet a lost Samaritan woman. The Lord went there to seek her and save her. The same kind of thing happened in Luke 19. The Lord had to stay in Zaccheus' house in order to save this lost person.

Salvation, the Jubilee, and the Kingdom

In 19:1-10 we see that wherever the Man-Savior is there salvation is also, for He Himself is salvation. Furthermore, when this salvation is present, the kingdom of God is also present, and the kingdom of God is the jubilee. Therefore, when the Lord came into the house of Zaccheus, that was a jubilee not only for an individual but for the entire household. When the Lord came into his house, salvation came to that house.

We may say that the case of the healing of the blind man near Jericho and the case of the saving of Zaccheus in Jericho are one. In the first case the blind man receives sight from the Savior, and in the second case Zaccheus receives the Savior as dynamic salvation. This indicates that first we receive sight from the Savior, and then we receive the Savior Himself. This Savior is salvation, and salvation is the kingdom of God as the jubilee. Now we can realize that in 19:1-10 a leading sinner is brought into the jubilee of grace. Now he can enjoy the Savior and the kingdom of God, for now he is in the kingdom of God and enjoying this kingdom as his jubilee.

TEACHING ABOUT FAITHFULNESS

Luke 19:11 says, "Now as they heard these things, He spoke further a parable, because He was near to Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was about to instantly appear." This further parable is spiritually a continuation of the former case of salvation. This parable depicts how the saved ones should serve the Lord so that they may inherit the coming kingdom.

A Man of Noble Birth

Verse 12 continues, "He said therefore, A certain man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return." This certain man of

noble birth signifies the Savior with the highest status, the status of the God-man. The word "went" signifies the Savior's going to heaven after His death and resurrection (24:51; 1 Pet. 3:22), and "return" signifies the Savior's coming back with the kingdom (Dan. 7:1314; Rev. 11:15; 2 Tim. 4:1).

The Common Portion Given to Each Slave

In verse 13 the parable continues, "And having called ten of his own slaves, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, Do business until I come." In the parable in Matthew 25:14-30 the slaves are given a varying number of talents according to their individual ability. Here the parable emphasizes the common portion given equally to each slave based upon the common salvation. However, the point of both parables is the same: the faithfulness of the slaves will determine their portion in the coming kingdom as their reward.

According to verse 13, the man of noble birth gave the slaves ten minas. This is a sum of money equal to a hundred drachmas, or a hundred days' wages.

The Unbelieving Jews

Verse 14 says, "But his citizens hated him and sent an envoy after him, saying, We do not want this man to reign over us." The citizens signify the unbelieving Jews. Their declaring that they did not want the Lord to reign over them was fulfilled in Acts chapters two through nine.

The Good Slaves and the Wicked Slave

Verses 15 through 17 continue, "And it came about that when he came back, having received the kingdom, he said that those slaves to whom he had given the money should be called to him, that he might know what they had gained doing business. And the first came up, saying, Lord, your mina has gained ten minas. And he said to him, Well done, good slave; because you became faithful in the least, have authority over ten cities." Having authority

over ten cities signifies the overcomers' reigning over the nations (Rev. 2:26; 20:4, 6).

Verses 18 and 19 say, "And the second came, saying, Your mina. lord, has made five minas. And he said also to this one, And you, be over five cities." This indicates that the overcoming saints' reigning in the coming kingdom as a reward will differ in extent.

Verses 20 and 21 say, "And the other came, saying, Lord, behold your mina, which I have held, laid away in a handkerchief; for I feared you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow." The word "held" in verse 20 signifies how the unfaithful believers keep their salvation in an idle way instead of using it productively. The word "feared" in verse 21 is negative. We should be positive and aggressive in using the Lord's gift.

Verses 22 and 23 continue, "He says to him. Out of your mouth I will judge you, wicked slave! You knew that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow. Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and when I came, I would have collected it with interest?" Apparently the Lord's work always begins from zero. He seemingly demands us to work for Him with nothing, taking up what He did not lay down and reaping what He did not sow. This should not be an excuse for us to neglect the use of our gift. Rather, this should force us to exercise our faith to use our gift to the uttermost.

Putting the money in the bank signifies using the Lord's gift to save people and minister His riches to them. "Interest" in verse 23 signifies the profitable result we gain for the Lord's work by using His gifts.

Verses 24 through 26 continue, "And to those standing by he said, Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has ten minas. And they said to him, Lord, he has ten minas! I tell you that to everyone who has shall be given, but from him who does not have, even what he has shall be taken away." The taking away of the mina signifies that the Lord's gift will be taken away from

slothful believers in the coming kingdom. Giving the minas to the one who has ten minas signifies that the gift of faithful believers will be increased. To everyone who gains profit in the church age, more gift will be given in the coming kingdom age. But from him who has not gained profit in the church age, even the gift he has will be taken away from him in the coming kingdom age.

In verse 27 the parable concludes, "However, these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them before me." This signifies that all the unbelieving Jews who reject the Savior will perish.

The Need for Us to Serve Faithfully

We need to understand why the further parable in 19:11-27 follows the case of Zaccheus. The reason is that after we have been saved we need to serve the Lord faithfully. We see the same matter in chapter ten, where the case of Martha and Mary follows the parable of the good Samaritan. This indicates that after salvation we need to serve. The same thought occurs in chapters fourteen, sixteen, and seventeen. Now once again in chapter nineteen we see that after salvation we need to take care of the Lord's service.

As we have seen, this parable opens with a word concerning "a certain man of noble birth." No doubt, this man is the God-man. He certainly had a noble birth. I like the expression "noble birth." None of us had a noble birth. The Lord Jesus is the only One whose birth was noble because His birth was the birth of a God-man.

The parable in 19:11-27 resembles that in Matthew 25:14-30. However, in Matthew 25 the Lord gave talents to His slaves according to each one's ability (Matt. 25:14-15). But in Luke 19:11-27 the gifts, the minas, are given equally, since this parable emphasizes the common portion given equally to each slave based upon the common salvation. Nevertheless, each parable makes the point that after we are saved we need to serve faithfully. We need to use what has been given to us. We have received the divine life with its attributes and the Holy Spirit with His

gifts. As those who have received the gifts of the divine life and the Holy Spirit, we need to use these gifts as the "capital" to "do business" and gain "profit" for the Lord.

Making a Profit and Receiving a Reward

According to 19:16-19, those who make a profit receive a reward. The one who gains ten minas will have authority over ten cities, and the one who gains five minas will be over five cities. This is a strong indication that the overcoming saints will be rewarded with ruling power in the coming kingdom. That reward will be a great part of their enjoyment of the lost inheritance as their jubilee. Ruling over ten cities or five cities is part of the enjoyment of the jubilee, part of the enjoyment of the recovered birthright.

As we have pointed out, the jubilee today is a foretaste, and the jubilee in the next age will be a fuller enjoyment. In the coming age the overcomers will enjoy the earth, inheriting it as the Lord says in Matthew 5:5. Inheriting the earth and ruling over cities will be our enjoyment of the kingdom of God, Christ, and the jubilee.

This parable also indicates that some will miss the reward. This means that some of the genuinely saved ones will have no participation in the coming jubilee. In the kingdom age they will not rule over the earth.

The teaching among Christians today ignores the fact that certain of the saved ones will not participate in the jubilee in the coming age of the kingdom. Luke, however, emphasizes this again and again, in chapters fourteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and once more in nineteen. The Gospel of Luke clearly reveals that the saved ones need to be faithful in serving the Lord. Otherwise, they will miss the reward in the coming kingdom. Some of those who are saved will lose the enjoyment of the jubilee in the kingdom age. This should be a warning to us, and it should cause us to be careful in serving the Lord.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-FOUR

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PRESENTATION OF HIMSELF TO DEATH FOR REDEMPTION

(1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 19:28-48

In the foregoing messages we covered the first three sections of the Gospel of Luke: the introduction (1:1-4), the preparation of the Man-Savior in His humanity with His divinity (1:5--4:13), and the ministry of the Man-Savior in His human virtues with His divine attributes (4:14--19:27) both in Galilee (4:14--9:50) and on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51--19:27). Now we come to the fourth section of this Gospel--the Man-Savior's presentation of Himself to death for redemption (19:28--22:46). After the Savior finished His ministry in 19:27, the time came for Him to go up to Jerusalem to present Himself to the death ordained by God for the accomplishment of eternal redemption.

The Lord's transfiguration on the mountaintop took place toward the end of His ministry in Galilee. The purpose of that transfiguration as reported in the Gospel of Luke was to show the disciples that for the enjoyment of the jubilee there is the need of transformation signified by transfiguration. After completing His ministry in Galilee, the Man-Savior began to make the long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.

SALVATION, SERVICE, AND THE ENJOYMENT OF THE JUBILEE

While the Lord was making the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, He had a number of talks with His disciples. In those talks certain main things were covered. First, the Lord showed the disciples how to receive God's salvation.

Then He revealed to them how to serve God. To receive God's salvation is to enjoy His jubilee today in the age of grace. Serving God qualifies us to enter into the coming kingdom to enjoy the jubilee in the next age. At least five times in the Gospel of Luke the Lord speaks concerning how to follow Him and serve Him so that we may be qualified to enter into the coming kingdom and enjoy the jubilee in the next age. He speaks of this in chapters fourteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen, where He gives the parable of the servants who received gifts with which to serve Him (19:11-27). As servants who have received gifts from the Lord, we need to make a profit for Him so that we may be qualified to inherit the earth and rule over it as kings. Participating in the coming jubilee in the millennium, therefore, will be a reward to the overcoming saints.

The Man-Savior's ministry was carried out first in Galilee. It began with His proclaiming the jubilee of grace, and it continued until His transfiguration. The Lord's transfiguration signifies that all His followers need to be transformed in order to share in the enjoyment of the jubilee. After completing His ministry in Galilee, the Lord left Galilee for Jerusalem. On the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, He repeatedly taught His disciples and followers how to take God's salvation, that is, how to receive the kingdom of God, which is actually the Man-Savior Himself, in order to enter into the enjoyment of the jubilee today. The Lord also taught them that to follow Him and serve Him, we need to renounce material things. We must overcome all distractions and frustrations so that we may love Him to the uttermost and serve Him faithfully. Then we shall be qualified to enter into the kingdom in the coming age and have the full participation of the jubilee in the millennium.

We all need to see that enjoying Christ as the kingdom of God in this age qualifies us to enjoy Him as the jubilee in the next age. In other words, the present enjoyment of Christ qualifies us to enjoy Him in a further way in the coming age. However, thousands and even millions of

those who believe in the Lord and who have received His salvation do not enjoy Him. This failure to enjoy the Lord today will disqualify them from enjoying Him as the jubilee in the coming age. We need to be impressed with the fact that today's enjoyment of Christ qualifies us to have the enjoyment of the jubilee in the next age and even ushers us into this enjoyment. Therefore, let us learn to enjoy Christ in the church life so that we may be qualified to enjoy Him in the kingdom age.

The jubilee proclaimed by the Lord Jesus in chapter four of Luke is of three stages: first, the stage of grace in this age; second, the stage of the kingdom in the coming age; and third, the stage of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity. These are the three stages of the enjoyment of the jubilee. The jubilee in this age is a foretaste. The jubilee in the coming age will be fuller than today's jubilee. Ultimately, in the New Jerusalem we shall enjoy the jubilee to the fullest extent for eternity. There all believers will enjoy Christ as the jubilee. For eternity there will be a testimony that the Lord Jesus is our jubilee, that He has set us free from bondage and has brought us into the full enjoyment of the processed Triune God.

THE PRIEST AND THE OFFERINGS

The Gospel of Luke may be divided into seven sections: the introduction (1:1-4), the preparation of the Man-Savior in His humanity with His divinity (1:5--4:13), the ministry of the Man-Savior in His human virtues with His divine attributes (4:14--19:27), the Man-Savior's presentation of Himself to death for redemption (19:28--22:46), the death of the Man-Savior (22:47--23:56), the resurrection of the Man-Savior (24:1-49), and the ascension of the Man-Savior (24:50-53). In this message we shall begin to consider the fourth section of this book--the Man-Savior's presentation of Himself to death for redemption.

The Lord Jesus made the long journey from Galilee to Jerusalem for the purpose of being put to death. He knew that in Jerusalem He would present Himself to God on the

altar. In the book of Leviticus the offerings offered on the altar are types of Christ, and in the New Testament fulfillment the altar is the cross.

The Bible reveals that Christ is not only the offerings, but also the offering Priest to offer the sacrifice to God. This means that He is both the Priest and the offerings. As the offering Priest, He presented Himself to the altar, to the cross. The thought that Christ is both the offering and the Priest is revealed clearly in the Epistle of Hebrews. In Hebrews we see that Christ is the High Priest who offered Himself to God as the eternal sacrifice (Heb. 9:11, 14). Now in the Gospel of Luke we see that Christ went down from Galilee, the place where He was working, to Jerusalem, the place where He would be put to death. In Jerusalem He would be both the offering and the Priest presenting this offering to God on the cross.

ENTERING INTO JERUSALEM TRIUMPHANTLY

The Lord Jesus was not arrested by the Pharisees in Galilee and then brought by them to Jerusalem to be put to death. On the contrary, He went to Jerusalem of His own initiative. Furthermore, He did not sneak into Jerusalem as a thief, but entered the city in a public way. When He drew close to Jerusalem, He prepared Himself to enter the city as a King. However, He did not enter the city as a king in splendor but as a King in humility. Instead of riding on a horse, He rode on a colt that sovereignly was made ready for Him.

How this colt was prepared for the Lord's use is a mystery. The Lord simply told two of His disciples, "Go into the village opposite you, in which, as you are entering, you will find a colt tied, on which no man has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it" (19:30). The Lord went on to tell the disciples that if they were asked why they were untying the colt, they should say, "Because the Lord needs it" (v. 31). The disciples went away and found the colt just as the Lord had told them. When they were asked why they were untying the colt, they replied, "Because the Lord needs it"

(v. 34). Then they brought the colt to Jesus, "and throwing their garments on the colt. they put Jesus on it" (v. 35).

It may seem that the preparation of the colt was not a great matter. Actually, for the colt to be prepared in such a mysterious way was something great. Only the Creator of the universe could do such a thing. No doubt, the Lord Jesus is the real King. He spoke a brief word to His disciples concerning the colt. When they took His word and acted on it, everything happened exactly as He said it would.

Luke 19:37 and 38 say, "And as He was already drawing near to the descent of the Mount of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples began, as they were rejoicing, to praise God with a loud voice for all the works of power which they had seen, saying, Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" The disciples who brought the colt to the Lord Jesus may have taken the lead to be excited, for they believed that the triumphant entry into the capital was for the purpose of taking over the country.

According to John 12, the raising of Lazarus was a great miracle that attracted people to the Lord. That miracle took place shortly before the feast of the Passover, which was the time for the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God to be put to death. Not long before He was killed, He raised Lazarus from the dead, and that miracle caused many to crowd around Him. Luke, however, does not record this miracle.

There was a great celebration as the Lord traveled from Bethany to Jerusalem. The temple in Jerusalem was built on Mount Moriah (later called Zion), the place where Abraham offered Isaac, and Bethany is located at the foothill of the Mount of Olives. Between these two mountains there is a valley. I believe that as the Lord passed through this valley, He was followed by a long parade of celebration. Those in this celebration were excited and even beside themselves with joy. The Pharisees, who were not able to do anything about the situation, were greatly surprised. They said to one

another, "Behold, the world has gone after him" (John 12:19).

LAMENTING OVER JERUSALEM

As the Lord Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, He was not joyful. Instead, He lamented over the city. Of all those in the crowd, He must have been the only one who lamented. All the others were celebrating, rejoicing, and shouting praises to God. The disciples may have said to one another, "What a celebration this is! Our King will soon take over the country. We are His followers, and we shall participate in His ruling." This may have been the thought of the Lord's followers, but it certainly was not His thought. "As He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it" (v. 41).

In 19:42-44 we see what the Lord said as He wept over the city: "If you knew in this day, even you, the things that are for your peace! But now it has been hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a rampart before you, and will encircle you, and will press you in on every side, and will level you to the ground, and your children within you, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation." The peace in verse 42 will be in the restoration of Israel (Acts 1:6) after the Savior's return. The Greek word rendered "level" in verse 44 may also be translated "dash." Jerusalem was leveled, dashed, to the ground in A. D. 70 by Titus with the Roman army. The word "visitation" in verse 44 refers to the Savior's first coming to visit them in grace in the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 2:10-14; 4:18-22).

In His lamentation the Lord seemed to be saying, "O Jerusalem, poor Jerusalem! I wish that you knew your days. This is the day of your visitation, but you do not recognize it. You are not grateful for the visitation I am rendering you. You need to realize that not long after I die and am resurrected and ascend to the heavens, a different day will come upon you. In that day you will be leveled to the ground." Later, the Roman army destroyed the city of Jerusalem. The narration of Josephus shows in detail what a terrible destruction that was.

In the midst of the celebration the Man-Savior had sorrow instead of joy. He was about to make a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, but He was moved with compassion for the city.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE AND TEACHING IN IT

Luke 19:45 and 46 say, "And entering into the temple, He began to cast out those who were selling, saying to them, It is written, And My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a robbers' cave." The Lord entered into the temple for the purpose of cleansing it. Do you know what was in the temple? The temple was filled with mammon and material things, filled with the matters of buying and selling. This was the reason the Lord cleansed the temple.

On His journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, the Lord emphasized the need to overcome mammon and material possessions. He even said that in order to follow Him we need to renounce our possessions and stay away from the stupefying effects of material things. Because what He required His disciples to renounce was prevailing in the temple, He went into the temple to cleanse it.

The Lord's cleansing of the temple indicates that His presenting of Himself on the cross to God was for the producing of a cleansed temple. This means that His death has the effect of producing a church that is a purified, cleansed temple. Our basis for saying this is the clear revelation in the New Testament. The New Testament reveals that the Lord Jesus died to produce many grains that would be formed into one loaf, which is the Body (John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17). This Body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23), and the church is the temple of God (Eph. 2:21; 1 Cor. 3:16). This temple, in contrast to the robbers' cave, is a purified and cleansed house for God's dwelling place.

The Man-Savior's triumphant entry into Jerusalem was not for the purpose of taking over the country. The Lord entered into Jerusalem to present Himself to an all-inclusive death, to the death ordained by God. This death

would not merely bring in the jubilee; it would also produce a cleansed and purified dwelling place for God.

When I was young. I knew only that the Lord entered into Jerusalem and cleansed the temple. I did not know the significance of these things. Now I can declare strongly that the Lord's real concern was to take care of the temple. When He was twelve, He was found in the temple (Luke 2:46), and when He came forth to minister at the age of thirty, He cleansed the temple (John 2:14-16). Because He was concerned with His Father's interests, He said to His parents, "Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?" (Luke 2:49). This indicates that He cared for the temple, God's dwelling place composed of His chosen ones according to His eternal economy. Therefore, the temple is the central point, the focal point, of God's economy. The Lord was concerned for this when He was twelve, when He began to minister at the age of thirty, and when He reached the end of His earthly ministry. The Man-Savior entered into Jerusalem to present Himself to God as the all-inclusive offering. But before presenting Himself in this way, He once again expressed His concern for the interests of His Father, for the Father's dwelling place.

In contrast to the disciples, the Lord Jesus was not concerned with gaining a kingdom for Himself. His only concern was that God's people become God's dwelling place. According to the full revelation of the New Testament, the Lord's concern in entering into Jerusalem was to produce a purified temple for God's dwelling place.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-FIVE

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PRESENTATION OF HIMSELF TO DEATH FOR REDEMPTION

(2)

Scripture Reading: Luke 20:1--21:4

Luke 19:28--22:46 is a section concerned with the Man-Savior's presentation of Himself to death for redemption. We have seen that the Lord entered into Jerusalem triumphantly (19:28-40), lamented over the city (vv. 41-44), and cleansed the temple and taught in it (vv. 45-48). Then in 20:1--21:4 we see that the Lord passed through the examination of the chief priests scribes and elders (vv. 1-19), of the Pharisees and the Herodians (vv. 20-26), and of the Sadducees (vv. 27-38). He muzzled the examiners (vv. 39-44), warned against the scribes (vv. 45-47), and appraised a poor widow (21:1-4).

After the Lord came into Jerusalem and visited the temple, He went out of the city and rested in Bethany. Then in the morning He came again to the temple. Luke 20:1 says that He was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the good news. He was still carrying on the ministry of presenting the jubilee to the needy ones.

DYING AT THE PLACE AND TIME FOREORDAINED BY GOD

While the Lord was in the temple teaching and preaching, "the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came upon Him, and spoke, saying to Him, Tell us by what authority you are doing these things, or who is the one who gave you this authority?" (20:1-2). Here we see that leaders from the Jewish community were prepared to test Him. Actually this test was not initiated by them; it

was initiated by the Man-Savior. He knew that, according to the prophecy, He had to be killed on the Passover as the Lamb of God. The prophecies in the Old Testament specified both the time and the place He would be put to death.

The Man-Savior had been ministering for over three years in the despised region of Galilee, far from the holy temple and the holy city, the place where it was necessary for Him to die for the accomplishment of God's eternal plan. As the Lamb of God (John 1:29), He had to be offered to God at Mount Moriah, where Abraham offered Isaac and enjoyed God's provision of a ram as a substitute for his son (Gen. 22:2, 9-14) and where the temple was built in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 3:1). It had to be there that He would be delivered, according to the counsel determined by the Trinity of the Godhead (Acts 2:23), to the Jewish leaders and there be rejected by them as the builders of God's building (Acts 4:11). It was also there that He had to be crucified according to the Roman style of punishment (John 18:31-32; 19:6, 14-15) to fulfill the type concerning the kind of death He would die (Num. 21:8-9; John 3:14). Moreover, that was the very year that Messiah (Christ) was to be cut off (killed) according to Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-26). Furthermore, as the Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7) He had to be killed in the month of the Passover (Exo. 12:1-11). Hence, He had to go to Jerusalem before the Passover (John 12:1; Mark 14:1) so that He might die there on the day of the Passover (John 18:28) at both the place and the time foreordained by God.

According to the prophecy in the Old Testament, both the place and the time of the Lord's death were definite. Daniel 9:25 and 26a say, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." Here we see that the Messiah, the Christ, would be killed at the end of the sixty-ninth week.

The year in which the Man-Savior went up to Jerusalem to die was the very year prophesied in the ninth chapter of Daniel. Even more specifically, the Lord was to he put to death on the Passover, that is, on the fourteenth day of the month. The Lord knew that it was necessary for Him to be in Jerusalem in time to die on the Passover. Furthermore, according to the prophecy concerning the Passover lamb, He needed to be examined for four days. Therefore it was necessary for Him to be in Jerusalem at least four days before His crucifixion.

In the Gospels we see that the Lord Jesus was very careful not to be killed either before or after the appointed time. If He had been killed before the Passover, there would have been no way for the prophecy to be fulfilled. In such a case, He would not have been the real Lamb of the Passover. But since He was the real Passover Lamb, He preserved Himself until the time had come for Him to be offered on the cross.

Just as the Lord was to be put to death at a definite time, so He was to die at a specific place. This place was Mount Zion, which previously was called Mount Moriah.

If we have the proper understanding of the time and the place of the Lord's crucifixion, we shall know why the Lord was careful in His actions during those crucial days in Jerusalem. He knew that if He had been put to death even one day earlier, He would have missed the mark concerning the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy. Therefore, the Lord was very careful in returning to the temple each day. His purpose in going back to the temple was to present Himself to the Jewish people for them to thoroughly examine Him. We have the record of this examination in 20:1--21:4.

EXAMINED BY THE CHIEF PRIESTS, SCRIBES, AND ELDERS

In 20:1 we see that as the Lord was teaching in the temple and preaching the good news, the chief priests, scribes, and the elders came to Him. The priests were the serving ones in the temple, the scribes were those with a

thorough knowledge in the Mosaic law, and the elders were administrators among the Jewish people. These three categories of people were the outstanding leaders in the Jewish community. They came prepared to carry out a thorough examination of the Lord as the Passover Lamb.

Luke presents the examination of the Lord Jesus from a different angle from that found in Matthew and Mark. Luke's presentation is from the angle of the highest standard of morality. In chapter twenty of the Gospel of Luke we have a picture of the Man-Savior behaving Himself in the highest standard of morality. Of course, in all the foregoing chapters we have seen the Lord's high standard of morality produced by His divine essence with the divine attributes and His human essence with the human virtues. Now in chapter twenty we have a more detailed portrait of the Man-Savior's highest standard of morality.

The chief priests, scribes, and elders said to the Lord, "Tell us by what authority you are doing these things. or who is the one who gave you this authority?" (20:2). They thought that they could catch the Lord by asking Him about the source of His authority. As the One who was being examined, the God-man was frank, genuine, wise, and dignified. But those who were questioning Him were base, subtle, insidious, and dishonest. They did not come either with a proper attitude or in a proper spirit.

In answering the question raised by the chief priests, scribes, and elders, the Man-Savior was wise. When asked who gave Him authority, He did not say, "My Father gave Me this authority." To answer the question in such a way would not be wrong, but it would be lacking in wisdom. In His wisdom the Lord said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and you tell Me: the baptism of John, was it from heaven or from men?" (vv. 3-4). This question put them into a dilemma, and they debated among themselves about it, saying, "If we say, From heaven, he will say, Why did you not believe him? But if we say, From men, all the people will stone us to death, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet" (vv. 5-6). Eventually, not having the

wisdom to handle the situation, they could do nothing except lie by answering, "We do not know where it was from" (v. 7). Knowing that they were lying, the Lord said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things" (v. 8). This indicates that the Lord knew the Jewish leaders would not tell Him what they knew. Hence, neither would He tell them what they asked. They lied in saying, "We do not know." But the Lord spoke the truth wisely to them, exposing their lie and avoiding their question.

In this incident we can see how base and insidious were the chief priests, scribes, and elders. At the same time we see how pure, wise, and dignified the Man-Savior is. What a sharp contrast!

EXAMINED BY THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS

After the chief priests scribes, and elders were defeated by the Man-Savior, the Pharisees and the Herodians tested Him (20:20-26). The Pharisees, a religious party, were patriotic and faithful to the Jewish community. The Herodians took sides with King Herod's regime and took part with him in infiltrating the Jews with Grecian and Roman manners of life. They sided with the Sadducees, but were opposed to the Pharisees. But here they joined with the Pharisees to ensnare the Lord Jesus. They worked together in the attempt to carry out a plot to trap the Man-Savior.

According to verse 21, the Herodians and the Pharisees questioned the Lord, saying, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach correctly, and do not accept man's person, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" This was truly an ensnaring question. Paying taxes to Caesar was opposed by the Jews. If the Lord Jesus said that it was lawful to do this, He would offend the Pharisees. But if He said that it was not lawful, He would give the Herodians, who stood with the Roman government, ground to accuse Him. By asking the Lord such a question they exposed themselves as being base, dishonest, and insidious.

In handling this dilemma the Lord was again honest, pure, and wise. Considering their craftiness, He said to them, "Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have? And they said, Caesar's. And He said to them, Therefore pay the things of Caesar to Caesar and the things of God to God" (vv. 24-25). To pay the things of Caesar to Caesar is to pay tribute to Caesar according to his governmental regulation. To pay the things of God to God is to pay the half shekel to God according to Exodus 30:11-16 and to offer all the tithes to God according to the law of God.

In 20:20-26 we see two completely different standards of morality. The Pharisees and Herodians were base, dishonest, and insidious. But the Man-Savior was genuine, frank, honest, and wise.

EXAMINED BY THE SADDUCEES

In 20:27-38 the Man-Savior was examined by the Sadducees. Verse 27 says, "And some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and questioned Him." They went on to present to the Lord a case of a man who died leaving his wife childless: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us, If anyone's brother dies having a wife, and this one is childless, that his brother should take the wife and raise up seed to his brother. There were then seven brothers; and the first took a wife and died childless; and the second; and the third took her; and similarly the seven also did not leave children and died. Afterward the woman also died. In the resurrection therefore which one's wife shall the woman become, for the seven had her as wife?" (vv. 28-33). The Sadducees thought that they were wise in presenting this matter to the Lord. To be sure, they were very subtle.

In verses 34 through 36 the Lord replied, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are counted worthy to obtain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die anymore, for they are equal to angels, and they are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."

Here the Lord indicates that marriage is something of this age. But those who are worthy of the coming age and of the resurrection of the dead will be equal to angels, and there will be no marriage among them. No doubt, the Sadducees never imagined that there would be such an age, an age of resurrection.

In 20:35 the Lord speaks of those who are counted worthy to obtain the coming age and the resurrection from the dead. The coming age of the kingdom (13:28-29; 22:18) and the resurrection of life (John 5:29; Luke 14:14; Rev. 20:4, 6) are both eternal blessings and enjoyments in the eternal life for the believers who are counted worthy (Luke 18:29-30; Matt. 19:28-29).

In 20:37 and 38 the Lord went on to say, "But that the dead are raised, even Moses disclosed at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for to Him all are living." Since God is the God of the living and is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this indicates that the dead Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be resurrected. Otherwise, God would be the God of the dead. But the fact that He is the God of the living implies that one day Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be resurrected. From this we see that the divine title--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob--implies the truth of resurrection.

In the Lord's answer to the Sadducees we see His wisdom not only in answering their subtle question but also in understanding the depths of God's Word. It takes wisdom to understand the depths of the divine title. The Man-Savior certainly knew the Word of God. Unlike the Sadducees, who were very superficial, the Lord had the wisdom to penetrate into the depths of the holy Word.

According to the record in Matthew and Mark, the question asked by the Sadducees is followed by a fourth question, the question raised by a lawyer concerning the great commandment in the law. The fact that Luke does not record this fourth question is further evidence that his concern is with the Man-Savior's highest standard of

morality. The question about which commandment is the greatest does not involve morality. This, I believe, is the reason Luke does not include this question.

Luke 20:39 and 40 simply say, "And some of the scribes answered and said, Teacher, you have spoken well. For they no longer dared to question Him about anything." The fault-finding opposers' insidious questions exposed their evil, subtlety, and meanness, which were countered by the Man-Savior's perfection, wisdom, and dignity. This vindicated Him in His human perfection with His divine splendor and muzzled them in their hateful plot and the Satan-instigated conspiracy.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-SIX

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PRESENTATION OF HIMSELF TO DEATH FOR REDEMPTION

(3)

Scripture Reading: Luke 20:1--21:4

A QUESTION CONCERNING CHRIST

In 20:1-38 the Man-Savior is examined by the chief priests, scribes, and elders (vv. 1-19), by the Pharisees and Herodians (vv. 20-26), and by the Sadducees (vv. 27-38). In 20:39-44 the Lord muzzles all the examiners. The scribes answered and said, "Teacher, you have spoken well" (v. 39). We are told that "they no longer dared to question Him about anything" (v. 40). In 20:41-44 the Lord went on to ask the examiners a question, a question concerning Christ.

In 20:1-38 the Lord was surrounded by the chief priests, elders, Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees, who tried to ensnare Him by asking insidious questions. First, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, representing the authority of the Jewish religion and the authority of the Jewish people asked Him concerning His authority (v. 2). This was a question according to their religious concept. Second, the fundamental Pharisees and political Herodians asked Him a question related to politics. Third, the Sadducees questioned Him concerning the resurrection. After answering all their questions wisely, the Lord asked them a question concerning Christ. This is the question of questions. Their questions were related to religion, politics, and belief. His question was concerning Christ, who is the center of all things. They knew religion, politics, and belief, but they paid no attention to Christ.

In verses 41 through 44 the Lord said to His examiners, "How can they say that the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I place Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet. David therefore calls Him Lord, and how is He his son?" As God in His divinity, Christ is the Lord of David. As man in His humanity, He is the Son of David. His examiners had only half the scriptural knowledge concerning Christ's Person, that He was the Son of David according to His humanity. They did not have the other half, concerning Christ's divinity as the Son of God. The Lord's intention in 20:41-44 was to help His examiners to see that the One they were questioning was actually the Lord.

THE EXAMINATION OF THE GOD-MAN

We need to realize that the One being examined here was the God-man. Yes, in that situation the Man-Savior was a man, but He was also God. This means that as God He was surrounded by opposers who were examining Him. How blind, foolish, and ignorant they were! They did not realize that the One they were examining was God Himself.

If we have this understanding, we shall see what patience the God-man exercised when He was examined by the chief priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees. Although He was frank, straightforward, and wise, He was not angry with them. He was God, but He was willing to be examined by His creatures.

We need to be deeply impressed with the fact that the One being examined was the God-man. The very Creator of all was surrounded by His creatures and was examined by them in an insidious and insulting way. Nevertheless, He was patient and was not at all angry. He answered them properly and wisely.

In this chapter we have a clear picture of the highest standard of morality. This morality is expressed in the Lord's human virtues with His divine attributes. Here we see the riches of the Man-Savior's human virtues with His

divine attributes. After being questioned by His examiners, He tried to help them. His creatures, to realize that He was both man and God, both a human son and the Lord God. His question concerning Christ silenced them.

In the type, the Passover lamb was examined for four days before it was killed (Exo. 12:3-6). The Man-Savior, as the real Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7), was also examined for four days before He was killed. He came to Bethany six days before the Passover (John 12:1; Mark 11:1). The next day He came into Jerusalem and went back to Bethany (John 12:12; Mark 11:11). The third day He came to Jerusalem again (Mark 11:12-15) and began to be examined by the leaders of the Jews according to the Jewish law (Mark 11:27--12:37; 14:53-65; John 18:13, 19-24), and by Pilate, the Roman governor, according to the Roman law (John 18:28--19:6) until the Passover day when He was crucified (Mark 14:12; John 18:28). This insidious and ensnaring examination from many angles took exactly four days. The Man-Savior passed this examination, proving that He was fully qualified to be the Lamb required by God for the accomplishment of His redemption so that God might pass over the sinners, both the Jews and the Gentiles.

WARNING AGAINST THE SCRIBES

In 20:46-47 the Lord warns His disciples concerning the scribes: "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, and best seats in the synagogues, and places of honor at the dinners, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense pray long prayers. These will receive even more judgment." After muzzling the mouths of all His opposers, the Savior warned His disciples of the hypocrisy and evils of the scribes. This indicates that they were condemned by the One in whom they tried their best to find fault.

What would you have done if you had been one of the scribes? Would you have dared to show your face? I do not think the scribes knew what to say. In the words of Jude 19, they seemed to not have spirit, to be devoid of spirit.

APPRAISING THE POOR WIDOW

In 21:1-4 we have the Man-Savior's appraising of a poor widow. He saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and "He saw a certain needy widow putting in two small copper coins" (v. 2). The Greek word for "needy" is a stronger word than "poor" and indicates a penniless condition.

In verses 3 and 4 the Lord said, "Truly I tell you that this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all these out of their abundance put in their gifts, but this woman out of her lack has put in all the livelihood which she had." The Man-Savior was God living in humanity. As such, He was concerned to see how God's people expressed their loyalty in their offering to Him. In this way He appraised the widow's loyalty to God. The Man-Savior's observation is more penetrating than man's.

Luke 21:1-4 should not be separated from chapter twenty. In the warning against the scribes and in the appraising of the poor widow, Luke once again shows us a high standard of morality. The morality of the scribes was very low, but the morality of the poor widow was very high.

Why did Luke put these two instances immediately after the opposers' examination of the Man-Savior? He did this because the governing principle of his Gospel is the highest standard of morality. This principle controls the writing of this book. Therefore, the first four verses of chapter twenty-one should be taken with chapter twenty so that we may have a clear view of the highest standard of morality. Those who examined the Lord had a low standard of morality. But as the One who behaved in the highest standard of morality, the Man-Savior appraised the poor widow, for she also lived according to a high standard of morality.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S TRIPLE STATUS

According to Exodus 12, each family was to take a lamb without blemish for the Passover (Exo. 12:3-5). We

may say that the Lord Jesus was the Passover Lamb appointed to die for the family of mankind. In the Old Testament the lamb had to be examined to determine if it was without blemish. In Luke 20 the chief priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees, and Sadducees were examining the real Passover Lamb. But they did not realize that the One they were examining was the God-provided Lamb to die for them. This Lamb had the highest standard of morality. In the words of Exodus 12, He was without blemish; that is, He was altogether perfect, without defect, without spot. Therefore, the term "without blemish" is equal to the expression "the highest standard of morality."

Consider who was the One examined in Luke 20. The One examined here was the God-man as the Passover Lamb. As such a One, the Lord had a triple status--the status of God, man, and the Passover Lamb. He was the Lamb ordained by God and provided by Him for both the Jewish family and the Gentile family. He was the unique Lamb ordained from the foundation of the world. Hence, He was examined not only by the Pharisees, the religious party, but also by the Herodians, the political party. This means that the Passover Lamb was examined by both Jews and Gentiles. Furthermore, before He died, He was tried not only by the Jewish Sanhedrin, but also by Pilate, the Roman governor, and by Herod, the king.

As the God-man, the Lord Jesus is unique. He has both the divine essence and the human essence. The divine essence is in His humanity. God is actually an essential element of the Lord's being. Hence, as the Passover Lamb, He was composed essentially of two elements--the divine element and the human element. As the One who is both human and divine, He is the God-man.

This God-man was the unique, universal Lamb examined by the two great families of mankind, the Jewish family and the Gentile family. This examination proved that this Man had the highest standard of morality. It also exposed the subtlety, meanness, and insidiousness of those who tested Him. As His examiners were being exposed, the Lord was revealed in His wisdom, genuineness, and honesty. The examination recorded in

the Gospel of Luke manifests the perfection of this unique Passover Lamb.

TERMINATION AND GERMINATION

We have seen that the Lord Jesus unveiled His death and resurrection to His disciples three times (9:22; 9:44-45; 18:31-34). Why did the Savior reveal His death and resurrection to His disciples? The full answer to this question requires the fourteen Epistles of Paul.

The Lord's death involves the termination of His followers. The followers of the Man-Savior were all in the old creation, and it was necessary for this old creation to be brought to the cross and terminated. After the termination of the cross, there is germination. For germination there is the need of resurrection. Therefore, it was necessary for the Lord to die and then to be resurrected. He died to bring His followers into termination, and He resurrected to bring them into a new life.

When the Lord unveiled His death and resurrection to His disciples, He seemed to be telling them, "If you remain in the old creation, you cannot enjoy the jubilee. In order to enjoy the jubilee you must be a new creation. You need to be re-created. For this, you first need to be terminated, and then you need to be germinated. In this way you will become a new creation. The jubilee is not for the old creation; it is for the new creation. If you would participate in the jubilee, you need to go with Me to the cross."

In Mark we have the thought of universal replacement. But in Luke we have the thought of termination and germination. When we have the termination of the old creation and the germination of the redeemed ones to be a new creation, we shall be in the jubilee.

RENOUNCING EARTHLY POSSESSIONS BY RECEIVING THE MAN-SAVIOR AS OUR DYNAMIC SALVATION

In the Gospel of Luke the Man-Savior emphasizes the dealing with riches and material possessions. We see this emphasis in the case of Zaccheus, who said to the Lord, "Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the

poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusations, I restore four times as much" (19:8). Zaccheus could renounce riches and material things because he received the living Savior as his dynamic salvation. This indicates that it is not by our old creation that we can renounce material things. Even if we could do this by the old creation, this would not mean anything. The way to renounce earthly possessions is to receive the living Savior to be our dynamic salvation.

Zaccheus did not hear the Lord's messages concerning money and material possessions. He was not present when the Lord spoke about this in chapters twelve, fourteen, sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen. However, Zaccheus received the Man-Savior as his dynamic salvation. Therefore, automatically and spontaneously he could give half of his possessions to the poor.

Today sinners also need the Man-Savior to be infused into them as the all-inclusive Spirit. When the Lord is infused into people in this way, He becomes their dynamic salvation.

The case of Zaccheus is an illustration of the richness and all-inclusiveness of the Gospel of Luke. In these messages I can do little more than give you some hints how to study this book. I encourage you to spend more time to delve into the riches of this Gospel.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-SEVEN

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PRESENTATION OF HIMSELF TO DEATH FOR REDEMPTION

(4)

Scripture Reading: Luke 21:5-38

Luke 19:28--22:46 is a section concerned with the Man-Savior's presentation of Himself to death for redemption. In 21:5--22:46 the Lord prepares the disciples for His death. In 21:5-36 He does this by telling them of things to come. These things include the destruction of the temple (vv. 5-6), the plagues between His ascension and the great tribulation (vv. 7-11), the persecution of His disciples in the church age (vv. 12-19), the great tribulation and His coming (vv. 20-27), and the disciples' redemption and the overcomers' rapture (vv. 28-36).

The Man-Savior came to Jerusalem for the purpose of presenting Himself to death for redemption. After passing through an examination conducted by the opposers, He took some time to prepare His disciples for His death. He did this because they were ignorant and unprepared. Therefore, during those last days in Jerusalem, the Lord prepared His disciples to receive His death and even to participate in it. This preparation was accomplished in two main steps: first, by telling the disciples of things to come; second, by instituting His supper so that the disciples might participate in His death (22:7-23).

In 21:5-36 the Lord gave a prophecy to His disciples in which He unveiled to them the things to come during the time from His ascension until His return. The first thing He unveiled was the destruction of the temple.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

Luke 21:5 and 6 say, "And as some were speaking

about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and devoted gifts, He said, As for these things which you are gazing at, the days will come in which there will not he left a stone upon a stone which will not be thrown down." Because the disciples were boasting about the temple, the Lord told them that what they were gazing at would be destroyed. He revealed that there would be a complete destruction, a leveling, of the temple. This destruction took place approximately thirty years after the Lord's ascension. In fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy, Titus, the Roman prince, destroyed Jerusalem with the Roman army in A.D. 70.

THE PLAGUES BETWEEN HIS ASCENSION AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

In 21:7-11 the Lord speaks regarding the plagues between His ascension and the great tribulation. Many readers of the Bible are not clear about this section of the Gospel of Luke. After years of study and after consulting a number of reference books, we have seen that these verses refer to the plagues, sufferings, and disasters that will take place during the long period of time between the Lord's ascension and the coming great tribulation. Today we are still living in this period of time.

Wars

In verse 7 the disciples questioned the Lord, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" In His answer the Lord said, "Beware that you be not led astray; for many will come in My name, saying, I am He, and, The time has drawn near. Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumults, do not be alarmed, for these things must take place first, but the end is not immediately" (vv. 8-9). The wars in verse 9 refer to all the wars from the first century to the present. They are signified by the red horse of the second seal in Revelation 6:3 and 4. "The end" is the consummation of this age

(Matt. 24:3; Dan. 12:4, 9, 6-7), which will be the three and a half years of the great tribulation.

If we study history, we shall see that before the Lord's ascension there were not that many wars. But since His ascension wars have been increasing. There has been one war after another. The long history of wars from the time of the ascension until now is a fulfillment of the Lord's word in Luke 21:9.

In verse 10 the Lord goes on to say, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." The word "nation" here refers to people. to the Gentiles, and the word "kingdom" refers to an empire. The rising up of nation against nation refers to civil war, and the rising up of kingdom against kingdom refers to international war.

Earthquakes, Pestilences, and Famines

In verse 11 the Lord says, "There will be both great earthquakes in various places and pestilences and famines; there will be both terrors and great signs from heaven." Since the time of Christ's ascension, earthquakes have been increasing. Throughout the centuries there have been more and more earthquakes, and earthquakes will be intensified at the end of this age (Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18). Famines are mostly the issue of war. According to history, war has always brought famine, signified by the black horse of the third seal in Revelation 6:5 and 6. Earthquakes, pestilences, famines, terrors, and great signs from heaven will continue to take place.

THE PERSECUTION OF HIS DISCIPLES IN THE CHURCH AGE

In 21:12-19 the Lord speaks about the persecution of His disciples in the church age. During the present period of time, which is the church age, faithful Christians will suffer persecution. In verse 12 the Lord says, "But before all these things they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, leading you away before kings and governors for the sake of My name." Here the pronoun "you" refers to

the disciples as faithful believers in Christ. The "synagogues" indicate persecution in the Jewish land, and "kings and governors" point to persecution in Gentile lands. In verse 13 the Lord says that this persecution will turn out to the disciples for a testimony.

The Lord Giving the Disciples Utterance

In verses 14 and 15 the Lord continues, "Settle it therefore in your hearts not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all those opposing you will not be able to resist or refute." Here the Lord says that our hearts should be settled and should not be in suspense. Neither should we prepare beforehand to defend ourselves. Whenever we are about to suffer persecution, we should not consider beforehand what we shall say. Instead, we should trust in the Lord, for He will give us a mouth and wisdom.

It is significant that in verse 15 the Lord says, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom," whereas 12:12 says, 'the Holy Spirit will teach you in the same hour what should be said." Furthermore, Matthew 10:20 says, "For you are not the ones speaking, but the Spirit of your Father is the One speaking in you." According to the record in Mark 13:11, the Lord said, "It is not you who are speaking, but the Holy Spirit." These verses indicate that the Father, the Spirit, and the Son, the Man-Savior, are one. When the Father gives utterance, this means that the Spirit and the Son give utterance.

Hated by All because of His Name

In Luke 21:16 and 17 the Lord goes on to say, "And you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death; and you will be hated by all because of My name." Here we see that even family members will cause others in the family to be put to death because of their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus. The Lord's word here is a fulfillment of His word in 12:52 and 53: "From now on there will be five in one house divided, three against two,

and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against the mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law." Throughout the centuries many families have been divided during times of persecution.

By Endurance Possessing Our Souls

In 21:18 the Lord says, "And a hair of your head shall by no means perish." This indicates that nothing of the faithful ones will perish. Therefore, their person certainly will not perish.

Verse 19 says, "By your endurance you will possess your souls." The Greek word rendered "possess" here may also be translated "acquire." The Lord's word here means that the faithful believers in Christ will preserve, save, possess, their souls. Although they may be persecuted and suffer in both body and soul, that suffering will be a salvation to their souls in the coming age. In the next age, when the kingdom comes, their souls will be saved to enjoy the coming jubilee, and they will share in the joy of the Lord.

In Matthew 25 the Lord says to the faithful ones, "Enter into the joy of your Lord" (vv. 21, 23). This is the invitation to participate in the Lord's joy. Entering into the joy of the Lord will primarily be an enjoyment in our souls. The unfaithful ones, however, will lose their souls during the coming age. This means that they will lose the enjoyment of the Lord's joy in the millennial kingdom. Hence, the Lord's word about possessing our souls by our endurance is related to the enjoyment of the jubilee in the coming age of the kingdom.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND HIS COMING

Luke 21:20-27 refers to the great tribulation and the Lord's coming. How long the period of time will be for verses 8 through 19 no one knows. But the prophecy in verses 20 through 27 will be fulfilled in the last three and a half years of this age, the time of the great tribulation

(Matt. 24:21), the second half of the last week prophesied in Daniel 9:27. This period of time will begin with the setting up of Antichrist's image (the idol) in the temple (Matt. 24:15) and will end with Christ's open coming (Luke 21:27).

Verse 20 says, "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that her desolation has drawn near." This does not refer to the time in A.D. 70 when the Roman armies, led by Titus, surrounded Jerusalem and destroyed it. Verse 20 refers to something that will take place in the future. Antichrist will bring his army to Jerusalem, and the city will be surrounded by this army. Some Bible teachers have not been clear concerning the difference between the surrounding of Jerusalem by armies in A.D. 70 and the surrounding of the city by the army of Antichrist at some time in the future.

The Lord says that when we see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, we know that her desolation has drawn near. Then those in Judea should flee to the mountains, those in the midst of Jerusalem should get out, and those in the country should not enter into the city (v. 21). All those who remain in Jerusalem will be involved in her suffering.

Verses 22 and 23 say, "Because these are days of vengeance, that all the things which have been written may be fulfilled. Woe to those that are pregnant and to those nursing their babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people." The "land" here does not refer to the entire earth; instead, it refers to the land of Palestine, to the holy land. The "people" in verse 23 denotes the Jewish people. The Jewish land and the Jewish people will suffer under the hand of Antichrist. According to verse 24, "they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive to all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled by the nations until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Verses 25 through 27 say, "And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth anguish of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the billows, men fainting from fear and expectation of what is coming upon the inhabited earth; for the powers of the

heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." These supernatural calamities in heaven will follow the great tribulation at the close of this age. This will differ from the fourth trumpet (Rev. 8:12), which will occur very close to the great tribulation.

Verse 27 speaks of the Man-Savior's open coming. This is the open aspect of His second coming.

The Lord's word in Luke 21:20-27 refers to the great tribulation, the destruction of Jerusalem by Antichrist, and to the coming back of the Man-Savior. In the following message we shall consider the Lord's word concerning the disciples' redemption and the overcomers' rapture.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-EIGHT

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PRESENTATION OF HIMSELF TO DEATH FOR REDEMPTION

(5)

Scripture Reading: Luke 21:5-38

In 21:5--22:46 the Man-Savior prepares the disciples for His death. As part of this preparation, He tells them of things to come (21:5-36). We have seen that these things include the destruction of the temple (vv. 5-6), the plagues between the Lord's ascension and the great tribulation (vv. 7-11), the persecution of His disciples in the church age (vv. 12-19), and the great tribulation and the Lord's coming (vv. 20-27). In this message we shall go on to consider what the Lord says concerning the disciples' redemption and the overcomers' rapture (vv. 28-36).

OUR REDEMPTION DRAWING NEAR

In 21:28 the Man-Savior says, "And when these things begin to happen, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." In this verse "redemption" surely refers to the redemption of our body, that is, the transfiguration of our body. Paul speaks of this redemption in Romans 8:23: "Even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly expecting sonship, the redemption of our body." In Philippians 3 he speaks of the transfiguration of our body: "The Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, conforming it to the body of His glory" (vv. 20-21). Therefore, the redemption in Luke 21:28, the redemption that is drawing near, is not the redemption of our spirit or soul but the redemption of our body. We shall experience this redemption at the Lord's coming back.

THE SIGN OF THE FIG TREE

In 21:29-31 the Lord tells the disciples a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; when they are already sprouting leaves, you see it and know of yourselves that the summer is already near. So also you, when you see these things taking place, know that the kingdom of God is near." The fig tree, signifying the nation of Israel, was cursed in Matthew 21:19. It passed through a long "winter," from the first century to A.D. 1948, when the nation of Israel was restored. That was its branch becoming tender and putting forth its leaves.

This fig tree is a sign to the believers of the end of this age. The fig tree becoming tender (Matt. 24:32) signifies that life has come back. The sprouting of leaves in Luke 21:30 signifies outward activities. Winter signifies the time of being dried up, the time of tribulation, whereas summer signifies the age of the restored kingdom (Luke 21:30-31), which will begin at the Lord's second coming.

In verse 30 the Lord speaks of summer being near, and in verse 31, of the kingdom of God being near. However, in the Bible the word "near" does not mean that something will happen within a few days or even within several years. To the Lord an event that will take place in two thousand years may still be regarded as near, because with Him time and space do not mean anything.

When I heard about the re-formation of Israel in 1948, I was excited. I said to myself, "Look, the end of the age must be near. The nation of Israel has been under the control of the Gentiles since the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Now Israel has been re-formed as a nation." I thought that probably in just a few years the Lord would come back. But thirty-six years have gone by, and the "leaves" are still sprouting. Even though Jerusalem was returned to the Jews in 1967, we can still say only that the time is "near."

In 21:32 and 33 the Lord goes on to say, "Truly I tell you that this generation shall by no means pass away until all things take place. The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My words shall by no means pass away." The word "generation" in verse 32 is not the generation

according to age or people, as the generations in Matthew 1:17. Rather, this is the generation according to the moral condition of the people, as the generation in Luke 11:29-32 and Proverbs 30:11-14. "All things" in verse 32 refer to the things predicted in the foregoing verses. The word "until" implies that some things have not yet taken place. Therefore, more time is needed for all things to take place.

A WARNING CONCERNING DISSIPATION, DRUNKENNESS, AND ANXIETY

In verses 34 and 35 the Lord says, "And take heed to yourselves lest at some time your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and anxieties of life, and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare; for it will come in upon all those dwelling on the face of all the earth." The Greek word rendered "dissipation" indicates a drunken hangover. The phrase "dissipation and drunkenness" refers to indulgence in the enjoyment of eating and drinking.

The Lord's word here is similar to that in 17:27: "They were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day in which Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all." The generation of Noah was characterized by the indulgence of the lustful self. Dissipation and drunkenness in 21:34 refer to the indulgence of the lustful self in the excess of the enjoyment of eating and drinking. The Lord's word concerning dissipation, drunkenness, and anxieties of life may be considered the concluding word of His message about these things recorded in chapters twelve, fourteen, and sixteen through eighteen.

Those who indulge their lust in eating, and drinking and who are weighed down with the anxieties of life will become stupefied by their enjoyment and anxiety. Suddenly, unexpectedly, "that day" will come upon them as a snare as a net cast over them. This snare will come upon all those dwelling on the face of all the earth.

As an elderly man, I can testify that the trend, or the tide, among mankind has changed a great deal over the

years. Dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxiety of life have never been as prevailing as they are today. On the one hand, people are struggling for enjoyment; on the other hand, they are suffering from anxiety. Dissipation, drunkenness, and anxiety lead to different kinds of disease. This country is very good, but consider how many people are struggling to indulge their lusts. Many are competing with others to have better cars and houses. But as they struggle for enjoyment, they suffer from the anxiety of life. As a result, that day will come upon them as a snare.

PREVAILING TO ESCAPE AND STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN

In 21:36 the Lord says, "But be watchful, at every time beseeching, that you may prevail to escape all these things which are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." To prevail here is to have strength and ability. The strength and ability to escape the great tribulation come from watchfulness and beseeching.

The word "escape" in 21:36 signifies being taken, raptured, before the great tribulation (Matt. 24:21), which will be a severe trial upon the whole inhabited earth (Rev. 3:10; Luke 17:34-36). To be thus raptured is to be kept "out of the hour of trial which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3:10). Furthermore "all these things" are the things of the great tribulation. To stand before the Son of Man corresponds to the standing of those in Revelation 14:1. It indicates that the raptured overcomers will stand before the Savior on Mount Zion in the heavens before the great tribulation (see Rev. 12:5-6, 14).

BESEECHING TO BE KEPT OUT OF THE HOUR OF TRIAL

In verse 36 the Man-Savior charges us to be watchful. Instead of being stupefied or drugged, we need to be vigilant. Furthermore, at every time we need to beseech. This is not to pray in a general way; it is to pray in a particular way that we may prevail to escape the things that are about to take place. As we have pointed out, to prevail

in this way is to have the strength and ability to escape the great tribulation. We should not be caught in the trend of today's world. Instead, we need to escape this trend. The strength and ability to escape come from being watchful and from beseeching. If we pray in a particular way, we shall prevail to escape all the things that are about to take place.

We have seen that to escape the things that are about to take place is to be raptured before the great tribulation. This is also to be kept out of the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole inhabited earth to try those who dwell on the earth. Hence, the Lord's word in 21:36 is the fulfillment of the promise He gives to the church in Philadelphia: "Because you have kept the word of My endurance, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial which is about to come on the whole inhabited earth, to try them who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3:10). "Trial" here undoubtedly denotes the great tribulation, as indicated by the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets with the seven bowls (Rev. 8:13--9:21; 11:14-15; 15:1; 16:1-2). This trial may also include the supernatural calamities of the sixth seal and the first four trumpets.

In Revelation 3:10 the Lord promises the recovered church, the church in Philadelphia, that He will keep her out of the hour of trial. He will keep her not only out of the trial, but also out of the *hour* of trial, because she has kept the word of the Lord's endurance. This promise of the Lord, like that in Luke 21:36, indicates that the saints who have kept the word of the Lord's endurance will be raptured before the great trial. This implies that those who have not kept the word of His endurance will be left in the trial.

THE RAPTURE OF THE OVERCOMERS

Before the great tribulation, the Savior will probably still be on the throne. The Lord's *parousia* (presence) will begin from the throne. This *parousia* will continue with His coming to the air and will end with His coming to the earth. Within His *parousia,* there will be the rapture of the majority of the believers to the air (1 Thes. 4:15-17), the

judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 6:10), and the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9). However, certain believers, such as the one hundred forty-four thousand firstfruit in Revelation 14, will be raptured to the throne of God and stand with the Savior on the heavenly Mount Zion. This is what it means in Luke 21:36 "to stand before the Son of Man." Therefore, to stand before the Son of Man is to be raptured to the throne in the heavens to stand before the Savior. After this rapture, the Savior will leave the throne with those who have been raptured to the heavens and descend to the air in order to take care of the other believers who will be raptured later.

There has been much debate among Bible teachers concerning the rapture of the saints and the second coming of the Lord Jesus. Some claim that the rapture will be before the tribulation, and others say that it will take place after the tribulation. According to the Scriptures, we believe not only in the general rapture of all the saints but also in the rapture of the overcomers. Concerning this, I encourage you to study the messages we have given on Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation.

We need to put together verses 34, 35, and 36. These verses help us to realize that the downward trend on earth today is very strong. Actually, this trend has become a tide that carries everything and everyone along with it. It is extremely difficult for us as believers in Christ to stand in the midst of this tide. In order to stand, we need to be watchful and pray daily in a particular way so that we may receive the strength that comes from the resurrection life within us to stand against the trend, the tide, of the world. If we are strengthened in this way, we shall not be caught by the trend of this age. Rather, we shall be full of Christ and shall be buoyant. As those filled with Christ as the divine air, we shall be raptured to stand before the Son of Man.

Although the word "rapture" is not found in 21:34-36, there is a strong indication of the rapture in verse 36. This verse speaks negatively of escaping all the things that are about to take place and positively of standing before the

Son of Man. Where will the Son of Man be at the time implied in verse 36? He will still be on the throne in the heavens. How, then, can we stand before Him there? The only way for us to stand before the Son of Man on the throne is for us to be raptured, to be taken away to the heavens.

In the epistle to the church in Philadelphia, the Lord promises the overcomers that they will be kept from, taken out of, the hour of trial. He promises to keep them from the time of the great tribulation. This means that they will be raptured before the three and a half years of the great tribulation and will not remain on earth to meet Antichrist.

Whether or not we shall be raptured before the great tribulation and be taken away to meet Christ on the throne does not depend on Him. It depends on our watchfulness and on our praying in a particular way. Constantly we need to be watchful and beseeching that we may prevail to escape the great tribulation. We need to pray that we may have the strength and ability to escape the things that will take place on earth.

Lot's wife is an example of one who did not prevail to escape. In 17:32 the Lord says, "Remember Lot's wife." Lot's wife became a pillar of salt because she took a lingering, backward look at Sodom. This indicates that she loved the evil world that God was about to judge and destroy. We should not be like Lot's wife. We should prevail to escape, prevail to be kept away from the great tribulation. As we have emphasized, this is to be raptured to stand before the Son of Man on the heavenly Mount Zion. Then He will begin His *parousia* with us. When He leaves the throne to come back to earth, we shall be with Him. How exciting that will be! No doubt, those who stand before the Son of Man on Mount Zion in the heavens will be beside themselves with joy in the Lord.

TEACHING DAILY IN THE TEMPLE

Luke 21:37 and 38 say, "Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but during the night He went out and spent the night on the mountain called the Mount of

Olives. And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple to hear Him." The Lord's teaching recorded in 21:5-36 was given on the Mount of Olives. Then, as verses 37 and 38 indicate, the Lord taught daily in the temple. However, during the night He stayed on the Mount of Olives. By teaching in the temple day by day, He made everything ready for Him to be killed on the day of Passover. He prepared Himself, His disciples, and the environment for His crucifixion. The people who came to the temple early in the morning to hear the Lord did not know what was happening. But He was clear about what was taking place. He knew that He was preparing Himself His disciples, His opposers, and the environment for the accomplishment of His redemptive death.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FORTY-NINE

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PRESENTATION OF HIMSELF TO DEATH FOR REDEMPTION

(6)

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:1-23

In this message we shall consider 22:1-23. However, before coming to this section of the Gospel of Luke, I would like to give a further word on 21:5-36.

ASPECTS OF THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PROPHECY

In 21:34 and 35 the Lord says, "And take heed to yourselves lest at some time your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and anxieties of life, and that day come upon you suddenly as a snare; for it will come in upon all those dwelling on the face of all the earth." Here the snare does not refer to the day of the Lord's coming. Rather, the snare is the time of the great tribulation, the hour of trial, which will come upon the whole earth (Rev. 3:10). Thus, the great tribulation will come in as a snare upon all those dwelling on the face of all the earth.

In verse 24 the Lord Jesus speaks of the times of the Gentiles: "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive to all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled by the nations until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." The times of the Gentiles here does not refer to the period of grace, which is the time for the Gentiles to be saved, as indicated in Romans 11:25. In Luke 21:24 the times of the Gentiles signifies the time for the Gentiles to control the nation of Israel. This control began with Nebuchadnezzar and will be completed when Antichrist is

destroyed at the war of Armageddon referred to in Revelation 19.

Verse 24 is a difficult verse for expositors. The reason for the difficulty is that certain prophecies in the Bible concerning the destruction of Jerusalem mingle two or three things together. The temple has already been polluted twice, and it will be polluted once more in the future. The temple was polluted first by Antiochus Epiphanes, who is signified by the little horn in Daniel 8:8-9. Antiochus was a type of Titus, the Roman prince who polluted the temple for the second time in A.D. 70. Hence, the prophecy in Daniel 8 mixes the pollution of the temple by both Antiochus Epiphanes and Titus. Furthermore, the prophecy concerning Titus at the end of Daniel 9 mixes him with Antichrist. Therefore, the prophecies in Daniel concerning the destruction of Jerusalem imply the destruction by Antiochus Epiphanes, Titus and Antichrist.

As we read Luke 21:24, we may think that this verse describes the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. However, if we consider the context, we shall see that verse 24 does not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Verse 25 says, "And there will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth anguish of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the billows." According to history, such things did not happen after Titus destroyed Jerusalem. Furthermore, verses 26 and 27 go on to say, "Men fainting from fear and expectation of what is coming upon the inhabited earth; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power." Of course, these things did not happen after Titus destroyed Jerusalem. Therefore, these verses indicate that the destruction in verse 24 should refer to a future destruction, the coming destruction of Jerusalem under Antichrist.

Today Jerusalem is free. But when Antichrist rises up against God, he will capture Jerusalem and destroy it. Luke 21:24 speaks of this coming destruction.

In 21:5-36 we have the Man-Savior's prophecy of things to come. First, He unveils to His disciples the destruction of the temple (vv. 5-6). Then He goes on to speak of the

plagues that will come between His ascension and the great tribulation (vv. 7-11). During this same period of time, the time between the Lord's ascension and the great tribulation, the followers of Christ will be persecuted. The Lord speaks of this persecution in verses 12 through 19. Therefore, in 21:7-19 we see that two things will take place during the same period--plagues and persecution.

In verses 20 through 27 the Lord speaks concerning the great tribulation and His coming, and in verses 28 through 36, of the disciples' redemption and the overcomers' rapture. Before the time of trial, the great tribulation, we need to be watchful, at every time beseeching, so that we might escape "all these things which are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man" (v. 36). This is to be raptured before the great tribulation, that is, to be taken to the throne in the heavens. While the plagues are taking place and the persecution is going on, we are waiting to be raptured. But if we would be raptured before the great tribulation comes, we need to be watchful and take heed to ourselves, lest at some time our hearts be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxieties of life, and that day come upon us suddenly as a snare (v. 34). We need to be watchful so that our hearts will not be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and the anxieties of the present life.

Luke 21:5--22:46 is a section in which the Man-Savior prepares the disciples for His death. The Lord accomplishes this preparation in two ways: first, by telling the disciples of things to come (21:5-36); second, by instituting His supper so that the disciples may participate in His death (22:7-23). Even by instituting His supper, or what we may call the Lord's table, the Man-Savior was preparing the disciples for His redemptive death.

THE ACTIVITIES OF GOD, SATAN, AND THE OPPOSERS

While the Lord was preparing both Himself and His disciples for His death, the opposers--the leaders in the Jewish community--were busy looking for an opportunity

to arrest Him and put Him to death. The Lord's sovereignty was exercised here, for this was the year in which Messiah had to be cut off, that is, the year in which the preordained Savior had to die. Furthermore, the exact month and day had been prophesied in the Old Testament. It was crucial, therefore, that the Savior be put to death on the exact day prophesied and typified in the Old Testament.

It was not easy for everything to be arranged so that the Man-Savior would be put to death at the exact time and place. This certainly required the exercise of the sovereignty of the Triune God. The Son prepared Himself to die. The Spirit and the Father were also working to prepare the environment so that the Son would die on the cross exactly according to what was prophesied and typified in the old Testament.

In Luke 22 we see that while the Man-Savior was preparing Himself to die, the opposers were busy with their plot, their conspiracy At the same time, the enemy of God, Satan, also was busy. Whenever God is busy, Satan is busy as well. Hence, in chapter twenty-two both the Triune God and Satan were busy. In particular, Satan was actively using Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles appointed by the Man-Savior. Satan instigated Judas' betrayal of the Lord Jesus. Satan injected into Judas the thought of finding an opportunity to deliver the Lord into the hand of those who wanted to kill Him. Therefore, in this chapter we see both the plotting of the opposers and the working of Satan. On the one hand, "the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might do away with Him" (v. 2). On the other hand, "Satan entered into Judas, who was called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went away and conversed with the chief priests and officers as to how he might deliver Him up to them" (vv. 3-4).

PASSOVER REPLACED BY THE LORD'S SUPPER

In 22:7-23 the Man-Savior instituted His supper as a replacement of the Old Testament Passover. In the Old Testament the Passover was a great matter, a matter that

may be considered equal to God's creation. In the Old Testament we first have the record of God's creation. Then we see that the man created by God fell and eventually went down into Egypt. When God was about to save His people from bondage in Egypt, He ordained the feast of Passover. The Passover was the time when God's people were saved and brought back to their right, which had been lost.. The observance of the Passover lasted for more than fifteen hundred years, from the time of Exodus 12 until the night in which the Man-Savior had the last Passover with His disciples.

Luke 22:7-23 is a crucial section of the Word, for it marks the ending of the Old Testament Passover. Here we see that the Man-Savior instituted His supper, the Lord's table, to replace the Old Testament Passover. From this we see that the night in which the Lord instituted His supper was a time of transition. A transition was taking place from the Old Testament Passover to the New Testament supper of the Lord. This is matter of great importance.

In Luke 22 we must see the distinction between the Passover and the Lord's table. Verses 7 through 18 are concerned with the Passover, and verses 19 and 20, with the Lord's supper. Verse 7 says, "And the day of Unleavened Bread came, on which the Passover must be sacrificed." The feast of Unleavened Bread is a feast of seven days (Lev. 23:6). It is also called the Passover (Mark 14:1). Actually, the feast of the Passover was the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread (Exo. 12:15-20).

Luke 22:7 speaks of the day on which the Passover was sacrificed. In the Jewish calendar, which was according to their Scripture, a day began with the evening (Gen. 1:5). In the night of the last Passover day, the Man-Savior first ate the Passover feast with His disciples and then instituted His supper for them. Following that, He went with the disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane at the Mount of Olives. There He was arrested and brought to the high priest, where He was judged by the Sanhedrin late in the night. In the morning of the same day, He was delivered to Pilate to be judged by him and was sentenced

to death. Then He was brought to Golgotha and crucified there at the third hour (today's nine o'clock) in the morning, remaining on the cross until the ninth hour (today's three o'clock) in the afternoon (Mark 15:16-41), for the fulfillment of the type of the Passover (Exo. 12:6-11).

In Luke 22:15 the Lord said to His disciples, "I have earnestly longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." The Greek words translated, "I have earnestly longed" literally mean, "with longing I have longed." The Lord longed to eat the Passover with the disciples before He suffered, that is, before He went to the cross. The eating and drinking in 21:15-18 were the keeping of the last feast of the Passover before the institution of the Lord's supper in verses 19 and 20.

ONE FEAST IN THREE STAGES

In verse 16 the Lord goes on to say, For I tell you that I shall by no means eat it anymore until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." The pronoun "it" refers to the Passover in verse 15, which will be fully fulfilled in the coming kingdom of God, when the Savior will feast with the overcoming saints (v. 30; 13:28-29).

God has a complete plan to redeem His people into His jubilee. The feast of the Passover is a sign of God's full redemption, and this full redemption is the bringing of God's chosen people into the full enjoyment of Himself. This enjoyment is a matter of the jubilee covered in the Gospel of Luke as the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah and the type in Leviticus 25. The jubilee is actually the enjoyment of God through His redemption. The feast signifying the jubilee was first the feast of the Passover in the Old Testament and then the Lord's table in the New Testament.

The feast of the Passover was not completely fulfilled in the Old Testament. The Lord's table, which also is a feast, replaces and continues the feast of the Passover. But not even this New Testament feast has been completely fulfilled; it will be fulfilled completely in the coming kingdom.

If we read the Bible carefully, we shall see that a feast is spoken of both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. This feast began in Exodus 12, and it continued for more than fifteen centuries until the night in which the Lord Jesus replaced it with His table. Today in the church life God's people are attending this New Testament feast. However, this feast will not be fulfilled completely until the feast in the coming kingdom. This means that the feast in the kingdom will be the fulfillment of both the feast of the Passover and the feast of the Lord's table.

Seemingly there are three feasts: the feast of the Passover, the feast of the Lord's table, and the feast in the kingdom. Actually, these are not three feasts. On the contrary, this is one feast in three stages. God has established one feast through His redemption for our full enjoyment of the jubilee in three stages, and these stages are the Old Testament stage, the New Testament stage, and the kingdom stage.

We may say that the Passover was the Old Testament jubilee. When the Passover was established, the oppressed Israelites were released from bondage in Egypt, released from the tyranny of Pharaoh. The Israelites had been captives in a condition of slavery. On the negative side, the Passover set them free from that bondage. On the positive side, the Passover brought them into a feast to enjoy the lamb, which is a symbol of Christ as the embodiment of God. On that day the children of Israel were brought into the enjoyment of God; they enjoyed the lamb and the Passover. Later, in the wilderness, they enjoyed manna. After they entered into the good land, they enjoyed the riches of the land, which is a type of Christ in His all-inclusiveness. Now we can see that the Passover set the Israelites free from bondage and brought them into the enjoyment of God. However, they eventually lost this enjoyment and were carried away again into captivity.

In Luke 4 the Man-Savior proclaimed a further stage of the jubilee--the New Testament jubilee. The New Testament jubilee also has a symbol or sign, and this symbol is the Lord's table. The Lord's table is a sign of the

jubilee that sets us free from bondage and brings us into the full enjoyment of the Triune God. The Lord's table is not only a replacement of the Old Testament feast of Passover; it is also a continuation of that feast.

The New Testament feast of the Lord's table will be replaced and continued by the feast in the coming kingdom. The feast in the kingdom will be the feast in the third stage. This coming feast, which will be a replacement and continuation of the Lord's table, will also be a symbol of the jubilee. At that time God's chosen and redeemed people will be freed from all occupations, bondages, and slaveries and will be brought into the enjoyment of the Triune God in the kingdom age.

THE CUP OF THE PASSOVER

Luke 22:17 and 18 say, "And having received a cup, when He had given thanks, He said, Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you, I shall by no means drink from now on of the produce of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Certain readers of this chapter may think that this is the cup of the Lord's table. However, this is the cup of the feast of the Passover, not the cup of the Lord's table. In verse 16 the Lord and His disciples ate the Passover feast, and in verse 17 they drank the cup of that feast. Verses 19 and 20 speak of the Lord's table. We need to make a clear distinction between the two feasts in 22:7-23. It may be helpful to mark our Bibles to indicate that the feast of Passover ends with verse 18 and the Lord's supper begins with verse 19.

THE LOAF AND CUP OF THE LORD'S TABLE

Luke 22:19 says, "And having taken a loaf, when He had given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; do this unto the remembrance of Me." The loaf in verse 19 is not the loaf of the Passover; it is the loaf of the Lord's table. Furthermore, in this verse the Lord said, "Do this unto the remembrance of Me." Thus, it was not a remembrance of

what took place in Exodus 12. Taking the bread of the Lord's table is done in remembrance of the Man-Savior.

Verse 20 says, "And similarly the cup after they had dined, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is being poured out for you." Once again, this is not the cup of the Passover; rather, this cup is the new covenant in the Lord's blood.

God made a covenant with redeemed Israel in Exodus 24:3-8 (Heb. 9:18-21), which became the old testament, as a base for Him to deal with His redeemed people in the dispensation of law. The Man-Savior came to accomplish God's eternal redemption for God's chosen people by His death, according to God's will (Heb. 10:7, 9-10), and with His blood instituted a new covenant, a better covenant (Heb. 8:6-13), which became the new testament after His resurrection (Heb. 9:16-17), as a base for God to be one with His redeemed and regenerated people in the dispensation of grace. This new covenant replaced the old covenant and simultaneously changed God's old dispensation to His new dispensation. The Man-Savior wanted His disciples to know this and live a life based on it and according to it after His resurrection.

REMEMBERING THE MAN-SAVIOR

We have emphasized the fact that the Man-Savior instituted His supper, the Lord's table, after He and the disciples ate the Passover feast. He initiated His supper for His believers' remembrance of Him to continue and replace the Passover feast, the Old Testament practice of the elect's remembrance of the Lord's salvation (Exo. 12:14; 13:3). This new practice of the New Testament is to remember the Man-Savior by eating the bread, which signifies His body given for His believers (1 Cor. 11:24), and drinking the cup, which signifies His blood shed for their sins (Matt. 26:28). The bread denotes life (John 6:35), the life of God, the eternal life, and the cup denotes blessing (1 Cor. 10:16), which is God Himself as their portion (Psa. 16:5). As sinners, their portion should have

been the cup of God's wrath (Rev. 14:10). But the Man-Savior drank that cup for them (John 18:11), and His salvation has become their portion, the cup of salvation (Psa. 116:13) that runs over (Psa. 23:5), the content of which is God as their all-inclusive blessing. Such bread and such a cup are the constituents of the Man-Savior's supper, which is a table (1 Cor. 10:21), a feast, set up by Him so that His believers may remember Him by enjoying Him as such a feast. Thus they testify of His rich and marvelous salvation to the entire universe and display His redeeming and life-imparting death (1 Cor. 11:26).

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PRESENTATION OF HIMSELF TO DEATH FOR REDEMPTION

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:7-46

In the foregoing message we pointed out that in 22:7-20 we have both the Passover and the Lord's supper. In verses 7 through 18 there is a record concerning the eating of the Passover, and in verses 19 and 20, a record concerning the Lord's instituting His supper so that the disciples may participate in His death. In the Passover the main thing enjoyed by God's chosen people was the lamb. The meat of the lamb was for them to eat. But in the Lord's table the main item for us to enjoy as New Testament believers is not a lamb; the main item for our enjoyment is bread. This is very significant, and in this message we need to consider this in more detail than we have done previously.

When the Lord Jesus was offered to God for our redemption, He was offered not as bread but as a Lamb. However, the outcome is not the Lamb but bread. The Lamb was a single entity, but bread is something corporate. It is not possible for a single grain of wheat to form a loaf of bread. A loaf is a corporate entity, something composed and constituted of many grains. With the feast of the Passover there is not the concept of feasting on something that is corporate in nature. But with the Lord's table the symbols, especially the loaf, bear a very significant characteristic, and this characteristic is that of a corporate entity, a corporate body. It is very important that we realize this.

The loaf in the Lord's table points to something that comes after the Lord's death; it signifies something that

issues from the Lord in His resurrection. What is signified by the loaf is not something before the Lord's death, but something after His death and in His resurrection. Before His death, the Lord Jesus was a single, individual Lamb. But what issues out of His death in resurrection is a corporate entity. This entity is the loaf, the bread. which signifies a corporate body.

In the Gospel of Luke, of course, we do not see much development concerning the bread of the Lord's table. We need to remember, however, that Luke's impression of this came from Paul's revelation. Regarding the bread, we should go from Luke 22 to Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 10:17: "Seeing that we who are many are one bread, one Body; for we all partake of the one bread." Here we see that the bread signifies not only the physical body of the Savior; it also signifies His mystical Body, which is the church. This is not a matter of an individual: it is a matter of a corporate Body.

We are all one bread, one Body, because we all partake of the one bread. Our joint partaking of the one bread testifies that we all are one. This indicates that our partaking of Christ makes us all His one Body. The very Christ of whom we all partake constitutes us into His one Body.

In the Gospel of Luke the word "church" is not used. Nevertheless, there are certain hints, or indications, of the church in this Gospel. For instance, in chapter ten the inn refers to the church. Likewise, the house of the father in chapter fifteen indicates the church. Furthermore, there is a hint concerning the church in the parable of the vineyard in chapter twenty. The Jewish leaders are likened to vinedressers. According to 20:16, the vinedressers are destroyed, and the vineyard is given to others. These "others" are the New Testament believers, who are the components of the church. In 20:17 and 18 the Lord went on to refer to Himself as the cornerstone: "What then is this that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner?" This cornerstone surely is for the building up of the church. This is another strong indication that the church is referred to in this

Gospel. Now in chapter twenty-two the loaf is related to the church. According to the development elsewhere in the New Testament, the loaf, the bread, signifies the Body of Christ, the church. Therefore, the loaf in 22:19 points to the church.

Before His death the Man-Savior was a Lamb. But after His death and in His resurrection, He became a loaf. In the Old Testament feast of the Passover the enjoyment was of the lamb, but in the New Testament feast the enjoyment is of the loaf. The Lamb has become a loaf through the process of death and resurrection.

At the Lord's table we display, exhibit, the Lord's death. But we display His death in His resurrection. Whenever we come to the Lord's table, we should keep in mind that we are not in His death but in His resurrection. Because we are now participating in the loaf, in the Lord's resurrection we are displaying His death. This loaf includes not only the Lord Himself; it includes the Lord with us. Therefore, the loaf is no longer the individual Christ; it is now the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), including the Lord Jesus and the believers.

In the institution of the Lord's table the loaf is the main element. On the cross we see the Lamb, but on the table we see the loaf. When we are at the Lord's table, we need to realize that the loaf includes the Head and the Body; that is, it includes Christ and all the believers. Hence, it is a complete loaf, a corporate entity. Praise the Lord that the Lamb has become the loaf! Through His death and in His resurrection, the Lamb has become the loaf. According to John 12:24, the Lord fell into the earth and died as a grain of wheat and then in resurrection became a loaf composed of many grains. This loaf is inexhaustible!

After considering the Lord's table again and again for many years, I can testify that the bread and the cup are inexhaustible. Before the Lord Jesus went to the cross, He was the Lamb individually. But after passing through death and coming forth in resurrection, He became a loaf that includes both Him and us. Furthermore, the blood He

shed on the cross has become a covenant, and this covenant has become a cup, a portion that is God Himself as a blessing for our enjoyment. God is allotted to us in this cup; He is our portion for us to enjoy. In this we see the significance of the Lord's supper instituted in chapter twenty-two. We thank the Lord for giving us such an understanding of His supper.

THE DISCIPLES' LACK OF UNDERSTANDING

It is not likely that Peter, James, John and the other disciples understood the significance of the Lord's supper when it was instituted. Peter might have said to himself, "The Lord speaks of a loaf and then of His body? What does this mean? How can a loaf be a body? A loaf is of the vegetable life, and a body is of the animal life. How can the vegetable life become the animal life? I don't understand this." Furthermore, James and John may not have cared for the loaf, but only for sitting on the Lord's right and left. James may have said to himself, "I don't care for this loaf. I care for the throne and for whether or not I shall sit at the Lord's right or left." The disciples had neither the heart nor the ears for the Lord's word concerning the loaf and the cup.

We should learn of the disciples and be different. We should not care for the throne or for sitting at the Lord's right or left hand. Rather, we should care for the loaf, the Body, the church life, and we should also care for the cup, for the Triune God being our portion for us to enjoy for eternity.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

In His ministry, whether in Galilee or on the way to Jerusalem, the Man-Savior emphasized His death and resurrection. Three times He unveiled His death and resurrection to His disciples (9:21-22, 44-45; 18:31-34). Now with the institution of His supper the most important matter emphasized by Him was again His death and resurrection. It was through His death and resurrection that He terminated the disciples, buried them, redeemed

them, and germinated them. By germinating them He made them one with Himself to be the loaf. Furthermore through His death and resurrection He has brought us all into the Triune God as our blessing. Therefore, by His death and resurrection the Man-Savior has brought us into oneness with Himself as His Body and also into the enjoyment of the Triune God and all that He has been doing for us.

A SIGN OF THE JUBILEE

To be one with the Lord as the Body is a matter of life, and to enjoy the Triune God is a matter of blessing. At the Lord's table we have the loaf signifying the Body in life, and we have the cup signifying the blessing of the Triune God. At the table we have life and blessing. Here we are free from bondage, and we are in the enjoyment of the Triune God. This is the significance of the Lord's table as a sign of the jubilee.

EXPOSING JUDAS

In 22:21-23 we see that the Lord pointed out that one of the disciples would betray Him: "But behold, the hand of the one delivering Me up is with Me on the table. For the Son of Man indeed is going according to what has been determined; but woe to that man through whom He is delivered up! And they began to discuss among themselves who then of them it might be who was about to do this." The one who was about to betray the Lord Jesus was, of course, Judas. After being exposed, Judas left (John 13:21-30) before the Man-Savior's supper (Matt. 26:20-26). He did not participate in the Man-Savior's body and blood, because he was not a real believer in Him but a son of destruction (John 17:12), considered by the Man-Savior even a devil (John 6:70-71).

Luke 22:21-23 seems to indicate that Judas left after the Lord's supper, mentioned in 22:19 and 20. However, Mark's record, as Matthew's, shows that Judas was pointed out by the Lord Jesus as His betrayer in Mark 14:18-21 before He instituted His supper in verses 22-24.

Mark's record is according to historical sequence, whereas Luke's record is according to the sequence of morality.

Do you know why the Lord Jesus exposed Judas? The Lord's exposing him hastened the time when He would be delivered to the opposers. Knowing that the time was near for Him to be crucified, the Lord caused Judas to hasten to betray Him.

TEACHING THE DISCIPLES ABOUT HUMILITY AND FORETELLING THEIR STUMBLING

In Luke 22:24-38 the Man-Savior teaches the disciples about humility and foretells their stumbling. Verse 24 says, "And there was also a contention among them as to which of them was considered to be greater." The Greek word rendered "contention" signifies a love of strife, an eagerness to contend. This verse indicates that the disciples did not have the heart or the ears to care for what the Lord was saying. While He was speaking about His body and blood, they were considering which of them was greater. Concerning this, there was a contention among them.

In verses 25 through 27 the Lord said to the disciples, "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called benefactors. But you are not so, but let the greater among you become as the younger, and the one who leads as the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am in your midst as the one who serves." The Lord's word concerning serving is absolutely contrary to the natural self-seeking mind.

In verse 28 the Lord went on to say, "But you are those who have remained with Me in My trials." Here the Lord seemed to be saying, "Do not think about the throne--think about My trials. I am about to be crucified. You need to forget about greatness and remember that you are now with Me in My trials, in My sufferings."

In verses 29 and 30 the Lord continues, "And I appoint to you, even as My Father appointed to Me, a kingdom,

that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom; and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The table here is the feast in the parable in Matthew 22:1-4 and the marriage feast in Revelation 19:9 for the overcoming saints. The Lord wanted the disciples to care not for the throne or for being great, but to care for the kingdom the jubilee. Eating and drinking at His table in His kingdom will be in the coming age. That will he the time for the disciples to think about the throne.

In 22:31-34 the Lord told Peter that he would deny Him. Verses 31 and 32 say, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you to sift you as wheat; but I have beseeched concerning you that your faith may not fail; and you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers." The pronoun "you" in verse 31 is plural, but in verse 32 it is singular. According to verse 33, Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death." The Lord replied, "I tell you, Peter, a cock will not crow today until you will deny three times that you know Me" (v. 34).

In verses 35 through 37 the Lord spoke to the disciples about buying a sword: "When I sent you without a purse and a bag and sandals, did you lack anything? And they said, Nothing. And He said to them, But now, let him who has a purse take it, likewise also a bag; and he who does not have anything, let him sell his garment and buy a sword. For I tell you that this which is written must be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned with the lawless; for indeed that which concerns Me is having a consummation." At that time people used to bring a sword just as they carried a purse and a bag for travel. The Savior's word does not mean that He wanted the disciples to arm themselves to resist the coming arrest (see vv. 49-51; Matt. 26:51-54); it indicates the change in the people's attitude toward Him.

The disciples did not understand the Lord's word about buying a sword. They thought that they were about to fight with swords. This was the reason they said to Him, "Lord, look, here are two swords" (v. 38a). When He heard this, He said to them, "It is enough" (v. 38b). This indicates

not that the two swords were sufficient, but that their conversation was enough (see 1 Kings 19:4).

Some readers of the New Testament have trouble understanding Luke 22:38. Neglecting grammar, these readers may think that the Lord is saying that the two swords were enough, when actually He was saying that the disciples' conversation was enough, that it was sufficient. Here the Lord seemed to be saying, "Do not talk further about this. I don't want to talk to you anymore because I have not been able to get through. When I spoke with you about My table, you did not understand anything. When I talked about your denial of Me and about your need to humble yourselves, you could not understand. Now you are telling Me that you have two swords here. Your conversation is enough. Let us go to a place so that we may pray."

PRAYING ABOUT THE SUFFERINGS OF HIS DEATH AND CHARGING THE, DISCIPLES TO PRAY

In 22:39-46 the Man-Savior prayed about the sufferings of His death and charged the disciples to pray. Verses 39 and 40 say, "And He came out and went according to His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. And when He came to the place, He said to them, Pray that you may not enter into temptation." The place mentioned in verse 40 was Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36). The Man-Savior charged the disciples to pray so that they might be prepared to receive His death.

According to verse 42, the Lord Jesus prayed, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; however, not My will, but Yours be done." The "cup" here refers to the Savior's death on the cross.

In verse 42 the Man-Savior prayed that the Father's will would be done. The Triune God determined in His divine plan in eternity past that the Second of the divine Trinity should be incarnated and die on the cross to accomplish His eternal redemption for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose (Eph. 1:7-9). Hence, the Second of the Trinity was ordained to be the Lamb of God (John 1:29)

before the foundation of the world, that is in eternity past (1 Pet. 1:19-20), and in the sight of God as the Lamb of God, He was slain from the foundation of the world, that is, from the existence of God's fallen creatures (Rev. 13:8). After man's fall, lambs, sheep, calves, and bulls were used for God's chosen people as types (Gen. 3:21; 4:4; 8:20; 22:13; Exo. 12:3-8; Lev. 1:2), pointing to Him who was to come as the real Lamb foreordained by God. In the fullness of time, the Triune God sent the Second of the divine Trinity, the Son of God, to come in incarnation to take a human body (Heb. 10:5) so that He might be offered to God on the cross (Heb. 9:14; 10:12) to do the will of the Triune God (Heb. 10:7), that is, to replace the sacrifices and offerings, which were types, with Himself in His humanity as the unique sacrifice and offering for the sanctification of God's chosen people (Heb. 10:9-10). In His prayer here, immediately before His crucifixion, He prepared Himself to take the cup of the cross. He was willing to do this unique will of the Father for the accomplishment of the eternal plan of the Triune God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-ONE

THE DEATH OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

(1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 22:47--23:25

Up to this point in the LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE we have covered four main sections of this Gospel: the introduction (1:1-4), the preparation of the Man-Savior in His humanity with His divinity (1:5--4:13), the ministry of the Man-Savior in His human virtues with His divine attributes (4:14--19:27), and the Man-Savior's presentation of Himself to death for redemption (19:28--22:46). In this message we come to the fifth main section of Luke--the death of the Man-Savior (22:47--23:56). In this section we see that the Lord was arrested (22:47-66), judged (22:66--23:25), crucified (23:26-49), and buried (23:50-56).

After 22:46 everything was prepared for the death of the Man-Savior. Both the place and the time were right. It was the exact year, month, and even day for Him to die.

ARRESTED

The death of the Man-Savior began with His being arrested. When the Lord Jesus came to the Garden of Gethsemane, He realized that He would be arrested there. Nevertheless, just as He took the initiative to go from Galilee to Jerusalem, He took the initiative to go to the Garden of Gethsemane. Of course, the eleven disciples did not know what was happening. However, the Man-Savior knew what He was doing and what steps He was taking. He went to the place where He would be delivered to those who were coming to arrest Him and put Him to death.

When the Lord Jesus was arrested, three categories of people were around Him: those who arrested Him, His

disciples, and those who judged Him. The ones who arrested the Man-Savior were evil religionists. They were religious, hut they were false. hypocritical. and filled with deceit. They were not worthy to be categorized with those who are merely natural or in the old creation. They were actually evil, false, and deceitful.

The second category of people around the Lord Jesus when He was arrested consisted of His followers. The disciples had a good intention, but they were altogether in the natural realm. Here we do not see any sign that they were in the spiritual realm; rather, they were in the old creation. In a sense, they partook of the loaf and the cup. But even after doing so they contended which of them was the greatest. By this we see how natural they were. Furthermore, when the Lord Jesus told them that they would be stumbled, Peter rose up to deny it: "Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death" (22:33). Moreover, when the Lord told the disciples to be prepared to face the situation, they thought that it was necessary for them to buy swords to fight. Therefore, the Lord said to them, "It is enough" (22:38).

Because the disciples were in the natural life, they were not able to understand what the Man-Savior was telling them. When the Lord was about to be arrested, "those around Him, seeing what was about to happen, said, Lord, shall we strike with a sword? And a certain one of them struck the slave of the high priest and took off his right ear" (22:49-60). Here we see that the disciples immediately resisted. Peter took the lead to take up a sword, but the Lord stopped them, saying, "Let them go this far! And touching the ear, He healed him" (v. 51). The words, "Let them go this far," may mean, "Let them arrest Me at this time."

After the Man-Savior was arrested, "Peter was following at a distance" (v. 54b). This is an indication that Peter would deny the Lord. Peter then sat with a number of others by the fire that was kindled in the middle of the courtyard (v. 55). This is another indication that he was about to deny the Lord. Verses 56 and 57 say, "And a

certain servant girl, seeing him seated facing the light of the fire, and looking intently at him, said, This man also was with him. But he denied saying. I do not know Him, woman!" After Peter denied the Lord two more times, a cock crowed, and "the Lord turned and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him that before a cock crows today, you will deny Me three times" (vv. 60-61). Then Peter went outside and wept bitterly (v. 62).

We know from the other Gospels that the other disciples were scattered. From this we see that the Man-Savior's followers were natural; they were in the old creation. It is no wonder it was necessary for them to be brought to the cross, terminated, and replaced. Because they were in the old creation, they could not enjoy the jubilee. Knowing what they needed, the Lord brought them with Him to the cross so that they could be terminated and replaced.

Let us consider more fully those who arrested the Man-Savior. While He was still speaking to His disciples, Judas drew near to Him to kiss Him (v. 47). "But Jesus said to him, Judas, are you delivering up the Son of Man with a kiss?" (v. 48). After pointing out to Judas that he was delivering up the Son of Man by kissing Him in a false way, the Lord said to the chief priests, officers of the temple, and elders who had come up against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as against a robber? While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not stretch out your hands against Me; but this is your hour and the authority of darkness" (vv. 52-53). The God-forsaking and God-offending opposers, afraid of the people who had warmly welcomed the Man-Savior and were gladdened by His speaking (Mark 12:37), dared not arrest Him in the daytime or in a public place like the temple. Instead, they arrested Him subtly in the deep night, as though arresting a robber (Luke 22:52). Here the Lord seemed to be saying to them, "Why didn't you arrest Me while I was teaching in the temple? Why do you come at night instead of in the day, and why do you arrest Me in a private place? You arrest Me in this way because you are

afraid of the people. You know that if you tried to arrest Me in the temple, the people would stone you. Nevertheless, now is your hour and the authority of darkness."

The Man-Savior was not afraid of being arrested. On the contrary, He was bold to face the situation, and He even rebuked the falsehood of those who arrested Him. Actually, the Lord was not arrested; He gave Himself over to those who arrested Him. If He had not done this, who could have arrested Him? According to John 18:4, the Lord Jesus asked them whom they were seeking. When they answered Him that they were seeking Jesus the Nazarene, "He said to them, I am" (v. 5). The record in John goes on to tell us that when "He said to them, I am, they drew back and fell to the ground" (v. 6). This indicates that they did not actually arrest the Man-Savior, but that He willingly allowed them to arrest Him.

As we read Luke 22:47--23:56, we need to realize who it was who was arrested, judged, and crucified. The One arrested was the very God, God in a man. This means that God was arrested by His creatures, and even arrested in a way of falsehood. Should not the just and righteous God have judged them immediately? But instead of judging them, He tolerated them. He accepted being arrested in order to accomplish redemption both for His followers and for those who arrested Him.

In 22:63 we are told that the men who were holding the Man-Savior "mocked Him, beating Him." Then we see that "blindfolding Him, they questioned Him, saying, Prophesy! Who is it that hit you? And they said many other things against Him, blaspheming" (vv. 64-65). The One they were mocking, beating, and blaspheming was the God-man; the One who suffered this was God in a man. If we keep this point in mind as we read this chapter, we shall be deeply impressed that it was the God-man who was blindfolded and blasphemed.

JUDGED

By the Jewish Sanhedrin

In 22:66--23:25 the Man-Savior was judged by the

Jewish Sanhedrin (22:66-71) and by the Roman rulers (23:1-25). "When day came, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, were gathered together, and they led Him away to their Sanhedrin, saying, If you are the Christ, tell us" (22:66-67a). The Sanhedrin was a council composed of the chief priests, the elders, the lawyers, and the scribes. It was the highest court of the Jews (Acts 4:5-6, 15; 5:27, 34, 41).

When the Man-Savior was asked if He was the Christ, "He said to them, If I tell you, you will by no means believe; and if I ask you, you will by no means answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God" (Luke 22:67b-69). The Lord's answer indicates that He not only was the Son of Man on earth before His crucifixion, but also indicates that He will be the Son of Man in the heavens on the right hand of God after His resurrection (Acts 7:56) and also at His coming back on the clouds. His answer also indicates that He is God's Christ, His anointed. Otherwise, He could not be seated at the right hand of the power of God.

Luke 22:70 says, "And they all said, Are you then the Son of God? And He said to them, You say that I am." The question the Man-Savior was asked here is the same question the Devil used in tempting Him (4:3, 9).

The Greek words rendered, "You say that I am," may also be translated, "You say it, because I am." When the ones judging the Lord heard His answer, they said, "What further need do we have of testimony, for we have heard it ourselves from his mouth?" (v. 71). They were excited and, thinking that He was blaspheming God in saying that He was the Son of God, they condemned Him.

By the Roman Rulers

Realizing that according to Roman law they did not have the power to execute anyone, the religious leaders transferred the Man-Savior to Pilate: "And the entire multitude of them rose up and led Him before Pilate" (23:1). Pilate was a Roman procurator, an agent of Caesar Tiberius in Judea, A.D. 26-35. Not long after he unjustly

delivered the Lord Jesus up to be crucified, his government ended abruptly. He was banished and later committed suicide.

Under God's sovereignty the Man-Savior was judged not only by the Jewish leaders as a sheep before the shearers (Isa. 53:7), but also by the Roman governor as a criminal before the accusers. He was judged in this way so that He might die to save sinners with His life as a ransom (Mark 10:45). not only for the Jews represented by the Jewish leaders, but also for the Gentiles, represented by the Roman governor.

The Jewish leaders accused the Lord before Pilate, saying, "We found this man perverting our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar. and saving that he himself is Christ, a king" (23:2). The Greek word translated "perverting" may also be rendered "turning away" or "misleading" (v. 14). Pilate then asked Him saying, "Are you the King of the Jews? And answering him, He said, You are saying it" (v. 3). The Lord's answer, according to Alford, is to be understood as a strong affirmative.

Pilate was not able to find any fault in the Man-Savior. "And Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, I find not one fault in this man" (v. 4). Nevertheless, "they were insisting, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee even unto here" (v. 5). This indicates that the whole of Judea comprises Galilee and the region in which Jerusalem was. Galilee was a part of the country of the Jews which was commonly called Judea.

Pilate was a politician. As an officer working for the Roman Empire, he was afraid to offend the Jewish people among whom he was working. It was not easy for any Roman ruler to handle the Jews, and Caesar often complained about the way his officers in Judea handled them. Because he did not want to offend the Jews, Pilate acted in a subtle way. When Pilate realized that the Lord Jesus was of the jurisdiction of Herod, "he sent Him up to Herod, who also himself was in Jerusalem in those days" (v. 7). Pilate must have been glad to learn that the Lord

was from Galilee, which was under the jurisdiction of Herod. Pilate, therefore, transferred this problem to Herod.

Luke 23:8 says, "And when Herod saw Jesus. he rejoiced greatly, for he was wanting to see Him for a considerable time, because he had heard concerning Him, and was hoping to see some sign done by Him." Herod questioned the Lord "with many words; but He answered him nothing" (v. 9). The Greek word rendered "many" also means "considerable," "sufficient." The Lord's not answering Herod was a fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7.

Herod may have been disappointed when the Man-Savior did not answer his questions. "Herod with his soldiers, despising Him and mocking, threw around Him splendid clothing and sent Him back to Pilate" (v. 11). We need to be impressed with the fact that the One who was despised and mocked, the One who was sent from Pilate to Herod and back again, was God Himself in a man. The Lord Jesus was not merely a man; He was the God-man, the complete God and a perfect man. Nevertheless, this One was mocked. Pilate, Herod, and the soldiers played with Him like children playing with a toy.

Luke 23:13 and 14 say, "And Pilate, calling together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said to them, You brought this man to me as one who turns away the people, and behold, I have examined him before you and found not one fault in this man regarding the accusations you bring against him." Here "turns away" implies turning away the people from their civil and religious allegiance. Pilate went on to tell the people that neither did Herod find anything in the Lord Jesus worthy of death. Then Pilate declared, "I will therefore discipline him and release him" (v. 16). When Pilate said this, "they cried out all together, saying, Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas!" (v. 18).

Wanting to release the Lord Jesus, Pilate again called the people (v. 20). "But they were shouting, saying, Crucify, crucify him! But he said to them a third time, Why, what evil has this man done? I have found no cause of death in him; I will therefore discipline him and release

him. But they were urgent with loud voices, asking that He be crucified; and their voices prevailed" (vv. 21-23). The Jewish death penalty was by stoning (Lev. 20:2, 27; 24:14; Deut. 13:10; 17:5). Crucifixion was a heathen practice (Ezra 6:11), adopted by the Romans for the execution of slaves and heinous criminals only. To crucify the Lord Jesus was not only a fulfillment of the Old Testament (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13; Num. 21:8-9); it was also a fulfillment of the Lord's own word concerning the mode of His death (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32), which could not be fulfilled by stoning.

Luke 23:24 and 25 say, "And Pilate gave sentence that their demand be carried out. And he released him who, because of insurrection and murder, had been thrown into prison, whom they were asking for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will." The sentence given by Pilate exposed to the uttermost the darkness and injustice of man's politics. This was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 53:5, 8 concerning the Man-Savior's suffering.

The accusations of the Jewish religious leaders exposed their falsehood and deceitfulness in their religion, and the judgment of the Roman rulers exposed their darkness and corruption in their politics. At the same time, they both vindicated the Man-Savior in His highest standard of human perfection with His all-surpassing divine splendor. This was the strongest sign that He was fully qualified to be the Substitute for the sinners for whom He intended to die.

The judgments by the Jewish leaders and the Roman rulers were the last step of the examination of the Man-Savior. The first part of this examination was accomplished in the temple, and the last part was accomplished before the Jewish Sanhedrin and before the Roman government. After all the steps of this examination, the Man-Savior was found to be without fault. Therefore, He was vindicated. He was proved to be the One qualified to die as the unique Substitute for sinners.

FOUR PICTURES

The Portrait of the Man-Savior

In 22:47--23:25 we need to be impressed with four

pictures. The first picture is the portrait of the Man-Savior, the portrait of the God-man. Due to the surrounding persons, the portrait of the Man-Savior is very clear. In this portrait we see the God-man, the One who is perfect, dignified, and full of divine splendor and of human virtues. As we consider the picture presented by Luke of the Man-Savior from the time He was arrested until He was sentenced to death by Pilate, we see the portrait of the Lord Jesus as the perfect and complete God-man.

Often we have pointed out that as the God-man the Lord Jesus is the complete God and a perfect man. However, perhaps we have not appreciated before the portrait of the God-man that is presented in this portion of the Word. I hope that in reading this section of the Gospel of Luke all the saints, especially the young people, will have a clear view of this portrait of the God-man.

The Lord Jesus in 22:47--23:25 is portrayed as the true God and a real man. This God-man was arrested, mocked, blasphemed, despised, and judged. But as He passed through all this, He was fully portrayed as having the highest standard of morality, as possessing the human virtues with the all-surpassing divine splendor. Here we see not only the Man-Savior's divine attributes; we also see His divine splendor. In this One we see the true God and a proper man. He was fully qualified to be the Substitute for the sinners for whom He intended to die. According to Luke's record here, He was ready to die for sinners.

The Portrait of the Disciples

The second picture we see in this portion of Luke is that of the Man-Savior's followers. From what we see in this picture, we cannot give any credit to the eleven disciples, especially to Peter, John, and James, in their natural life. If credit can be given, it should be to the sisters. The eleven were altogether natural; they acted as if they did not have a spirit. Peter, for example, said that he would never deny the Lord. It was he who took up a sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's slave. It was he who denied the Lord three times. How natural he was! However, as we view the picture

presented here of the Lord's disciples, we need to realize that this is a picture of us as well. Here we have a portrait of what we all are in the natural life.

The Picture of the Religious People

The third picture we see is the picture of the religious people. They were false, deceitful, and full of pretense. They worshipped God, taught people about God, and apparently tried to keep the Ten Commandments. But they came to arrest the Lord not in the daytime but at night, and not in a public place but in a private place. Knowing that they would arrest Him in this way, the Lord deliberately went to the Garden of Gethsemane, a private place, so that they might arrest Him in their deceitful way. Actually, they did not arrest Him; He gave Himself over to them to be arrested by them. With these religious people we see nothing but falsehood and deceit.

The Picture of the Roman Rulers

Finally we have a picture of the Roman government and its rulers. With these Roman rulers there was no justice. In this picture we see the darkness and corruption of Roman politics.

DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND JUBILEE

As we consider these pictures, we can understand the situation in the midst of which the God-man went to the cross. We need to realize that He was not brought to the cross--He went to the cross. On the cross He laid down His soul life purposely to accomplish an all-inclusive death. This death ushered Him into resurrection. Through His death and resurrection the jubilee is accomplished. Furthermore, the Man-Savior brought His followers with Him into death. In this way He terminated them so that they could be replaced and germinated. Then in His resurrection they could enjoy Him as their jubilee. Moreover, in His resurrection the Lord's followers become His Body as His continuation, His reproduction. In resurrection they are one with Him to enjoy the Triune God.

We cannot receive such an understanding of the Lord's death simply by reading the Gospel of Luke itself. Luke we should remember, received his impression regarding the Lord's death and resurrection from Paul. Therefore, in order to have a fuller understanding of the Man-Savior's death and resurrection, we need Paul's Epistles. When we read the Gospel of Luke in the light of the Epistles of Paul, especially the book of Hebrews, we shall see that a fuller enjoyment of the jubilee, the Sabbath rest, will be in the coming age. As we have pointed out in previous messages the enjoyment of the jubilee in the coming age depends on our enjoyment of the jubilee in this age.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-TWO

THE DEATH OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

(2)

Scripture Reading: Luke 23:26-56

In this message we shall consider the crucifixion of the Man-Savior (23:26-49). Throughout the last nineteen centuries there have been many studies of the Lord's death. For what purpose did the Lord Jesus die, and who actually put Him to death? In other words, why did He die, and who killed Him? Even certain Jewish scholars have been seeking answers to these questions. Even genuine and faithful Christians, those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, may not have a full knowledge of the purpose of His death and of who killed Him. I am concerned that some among us, both young and old, do not know who killed the Lord Jesus.

How would you answer the question concerning who killed the Man-Savior? Some may say that we killed Him and others, that God killed Him. Others may say that the Lord was put to death by religion and politics, or that He was killed by our sin. We should not try to answer this question by our imagination. Instead, we need to come to the honest and accurate record of the Scriptures, especially the record in the Gospel of Luke. As Luke himself says, he "followed all things accurately from the first" (1:3). Therefore, Luke's account may be regarded as reliable.

As we read the record in this Gospel, we see that the Lord Jesus was put on the cross by man. He was accused by the religious leaders, sentenced to death by Roman rulers, especially Pilate, and then put on the cross by the Roman soldiers.

SUFFERING THE PERSECUTION OF MEN

In 23:26-43 we see that on the cross the Man-Savior suffered the persecution of men. He was mocked and ridiculed by both the Jewish leaders and the Roman soldiers. "And the people stood by, looking on. And the rulers were even sneering and saying, He saved others, let him save himself if this is the Christ of God, the Chosen One! And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him and offering Him vinegar" (vv. 35-36).

The Lord Jesus was put on the cross at nine o'clock in the morning and remained there until three o'clock in the afternoon. This means that He was on the cross for six hours. These six hours may be divided into two groups of three hours each: the first from nine o'clock until noon, and the second from noon until three o'clock in the afternoon. During the first three hours, the Man-Savior suffered the persecution of men. The religious people ridiculed Him, and the Roman soldiers mocked Him. Even "one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" (v. 39). Therefore, during the first three hours on the cross, the Lord was a victim of human persecution, and He suffered this persecution as a martyr.

SUFFERING THE JUDGMENT OF GOD FOR SINNERS TO ACCOMPLISH THE VICARIOUS DEATH FOR THEM

In 23:44-49 we see that, during the second period of the six hours on the cross, the Man-Savior suffered the judgment of God for sinners to accomplish the vicarious death for them. Therefore, in 23:26-49 we see two aspects of the Lord's death: the aspect of man's persecution and the aspect of God's judgment. First the Lord Jesus suffered man's persecution, and He suffered this as a martyr, not as the Redeemer. Then, as the Redeemer, no longer as a martyr suffering persecution, He suffered God's judgment for us, the sinners.

Darkness Coming over the Whole Land

Luke 23:44 and 45a say, "And it was already about the

sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing." Instead of "The sun's light failing," some manuscripts read, "And the sun was darkened." The sixth hour mentioned in verse 44 was, according to our way of reckoning time, twelve o'clock noon.

According to Matthew 27:45, darkness was over all the land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, that is, from twelve o'clock noon until three o'clock in the afternoon. Who caused darkness to come over the land? Of course, the high priest, Pilate, and the Roman soldiers were not able to do this. The only one who could cause darkness to come at noon was God.

This darkness was an indication that the righteous God had come in to judge the Lord Jesus as our Substitute and Redeemer. He was the unique, universal Substitute for mankind. From nine o'clock until noon, He was persecuted by the Jews and Romans as a martyr. But from noon until three o'clock He was dying not as a martyr, but as the Substitute for sinners. Because God recognized Him as our Redeemer, God came in to judge Him. This means that during the last three hours the Lord was on the cross, He was judged by God for the accomplishment of our redemption. It was during this time that God counted Him as our suffering Substitute for sin (Isa. 53:10). Darkness came over all the land because our sin and sins and all negative things were being dealt with. God even forsook Him (Matt. 27:46) because of our sin.

Actually the Lord's persecutors did not kill Him. While He was under their persecution, He was still alive. After the Lord suffered this persecution for three hours, God came in to put Him to death. The darkness that came over the land was a sign of God's coming in. Luke tells us that the darkness came over the whole land, not merely over Jerusalem or Mount Zion. God caused the sun's light to fail.

The Veil of the Temple Torn down the Middle

Furthermore, 23:45 says, "The veil of the temple was

torn down the middle." Matthew 27:51 tells us that the veil of the temple was torn in two "from the top to the bottom." This tearing of the veil signifies that the separation between God and man was abolished, because the flesh (signified by the veil) of sin, of which Christ had taken on the likeness (Rom. 8:3) had been crucified (Heb. 10:20). "From the top to the bottom" indicates that the rending of the veil was God's doing from above.

In Luke 23:44 and 45 we see two matters accomplished by God: darkness coming over the whole land and the veil of the temple being torn. These are signs proving that from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, that is, from noon until three o'clock in the afternoon. God came in to judge the Redeemer, who was dying as our Substitute. His death was not for Himself; it was for us. Therefore, we may call His death a vicarious death. This death was accomplished by Him for us on the cross and under God's judgment.

The Man-Savior Forsaken by God

During the hours from noon until three o'clock, God put all our sins upon the Lord Jesus. In the words of Isaiah 53:6, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." The darkness signifies that God had put our sins upon Him. Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that God made Him to be sin for us. Hence, God not only put our sins upon Him; He even made Him to be sin on our behalf. This took place during the second period of three hours.

It was also during these hours that God forsook the Man-Savior (Mark 15:34). Because the Lord is God's beloved Son, God always delighted in Him. But because God regarded Him as our Substitute, as the One who bore our sins and was made sin for us in God's sight, God forsook Him. In the sight of God during those hours the Lord was a totality of sin.

This understanding of the Lord's death is not guesswork. On the contrary, this understanding is according to the study of the accurate record in the Bible.

All our sins were put on the Man-Savior. The root of

our sins is the sin that came into mankind from Satan. This sin indwells us. When our sins were put on the Lord Jesus, He was made the very sin that indwells us. Therefore, both the root--indwelling sin--and the fruit--our sins--were put upon Him. As such a One, He was judged by God according to His righteousness.

First Corinthians 15:3 says, "Christ died for our sins." First Peter 2:24 tells us that He Himself "carried up our sins in His body onto the tree." These verses indicate that Christ bore our sins and died for them. Hebrews 9:28 says that Christ was "once offered to bear the sins of many," and verse 26 in the same chapter says, "He has been manifested for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice." Both sin and sins were dealt with by His death once for all. Therefore, we may call His death an eternal death, a once for-all death.

When the Lord Jesus was bearing our sins and was made sin on the cross, He was considered by God to be the Lamb of God. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). In this verse the "world" refers to mankind, to the human race. The Lamb of God took away the sin of mankind. The problem of sin has been solved by His vicarious death for us.

One with God Essentially, but Forsaken by God Economically

When the Lord Jesus, the God-man, died on the cross under God's judgment, He had God within Him essentially as His divine being. Nevertheless, He was forsaken by the righteous and judging God economically. We have seen that Christ was conceived and born of the Holy Spirit essentially. The Holy Spirit was one of the essences of His being. As the Lord Jesus grew up and lived on earth, He had the Holy Spirit within Him essentially. Later, when He was baptized, He had the Holy Spirit as an essential part of His being. However, when He was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him economically. This means that the Lord Jesus had the Holy Spirit as one of the

essences of His being essentially, and also that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him economically. This does not mean, of course, that there are two Holy Spirits. It means that the one Holy Spirit has two aspects--the essential and the economical. The essential aspect was for the being, the existence, of the Lord Jesus, and the economical aspect was for His work, His ministry.

Now we need to see that when the Lord Jesus was on the cross dying for our sins, God was in Him essentially. Therefore, the One who died for our sin was the God-man. But at a certain point the righteous God, while judging this God-man, left Him economically. God's forsaking of Christ was an economical matter related to the carrying out of God's judgment.

SOME DETAILS RELATED TO THE MAN-SAVIOR'S CRUCIFIXION

Let us now consider a few other matters covered in 23:26-49. Luke 23:26 says, "And as they led Him away, they laid hold of Simon, a certain Cyrenian, coming from the country, and they placed the cross upon him to carry it behind Jesus." Cyrene was a Greek colonial city, the capital of Cyrenaica in North Africa. It seems that Simon was a Cyrenian Jew.

A great multitude of people followed the Man-Savior, and the women were mourning and lamenting Him (v. 27). "But Jesus turned to them and said, Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep over Me, but weep over yourselves and over your children. For behold the days are coming in which they will say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs which did not bare, and the breasts which did not nourish. Then they will begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us! And to the hills, Cover us! For if they do these things in a green tree, what will happen in the dry?" (vv. 28-31). A "green tree" refers to wet wood, full of sap. This signifies the Man-Savior, who is living and full of life. The dry wood signifies the dead people of Jerusalem, the people who were devoid of life juice.

Verses 32 and 33 say, "And two others also, who were criminals, were led away with Him to be executed. And when they came to the place called Skull. there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left." In Matthew 27:33 this place is called Golgotha, a Hebrew name (John 19:17) which means skull (Mark 15:22). Its equivalent in Latin is *Calvaria,* anglicized into Calvary. It does not mean a place of dead men's skulls, but simply skull.

When one of the criminals blasphemed the Man-Savior, "the other answering rebuked him and said, Do you not even fear God, since you are in the same judgment? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for what we did; but this Man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:40-41). The Greek word for "wrong" also means "out of place." This criminal then said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (v. 42). The Lord said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (v. 43). This record of salvation, from verse 40, is unique to this Gospel. It shows the effectiveness of the Man-Savior's vicarious death and the highest standard of morality of His salvation.

In 23:43 "Paradise" denotes the pleasant section in Hades, where the spirits of Abraham and all the just are, awaiting the resurrection (Luke 16:22-23, 25-26). The Lord Jesus went to Paradise after His death and stayed until His resurrection (Acts 2:24, 27, 31; Eph. 4:9; Matt. 12:40). It differs from the paradise in Revelation 2:7, which will be the New Jerusalem in the millennium.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-THREE

THE DEATH OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

(3)

Scripture Reading: Luke 23:26-56

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S ALL-INCLUSIVE DEATH

We have seen in the foregoing message that the Man-Savior was put to death as our Substitute, as our Redeemer, by God. Now we need to see that the Lord Jesus died an all-inclusive death. His death on the cross was not merely vicarious; it was also all-inclusive. Because the Man-Savior is an all-inclusive Person, on the cross He died an all-inclusive death. Let us now go on to consider different aspects of the Lord's all-inclusive death.

The Lamb of God

According to the record of the entire New Testament, when the Man-Savior died on the cross, He died as seven items. First, He died as the Lamb of God to deal with sin and sins. John 1:29 says, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Here the world denotes mankind. From 1 Corinthians 15:3, 1 Peter 2:24, and Hebrews 9:28 we see that as the Lamb of God the Lord Jesus died for our sins. Furthermore, according to 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Hebrews 9:26, His death dealt with sin. Therefore, both sin and sins were dealt with by the Lamb of God, who was under God's judgment on the cross.

A Man in the Flesh

When the Man-Savior died on the cross, He also died as a man in the flesh. As the Word which was with God and which is God, He became flesh (John 1:1, 14). First

Peter 3:18 tells us that He was "put to death in flesh." As a man in the flesh, He had only the likeness, the form. of a fallen man; He did not have the nature of a fallen man. This means that He was in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3), but He did not have the actual nature of sin. Because the Man-Savior died as a man in the flesh, His death dealt with the fallen flesh. Praise the Lord that sin, sins, and the fallen flesh have been dealt with by the death of the Man-Savior!

A Man in the Old Creation

The Lord Jesus also died as a man in the old creation. This is the reason Romans 6:6 says that our old man was crucified with Him. Because the Lord died on the cross as a man in the old creation, our old man was dealt with through His death.

The Serpent

It may come as a great surprise to hear that the Man-Savior died on the cross even as the serpent. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). Here the Lord Jesus applies to Himself the type of the brass serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness (Num. 21:4-9).

No doubt, the Lord Jesus was crucified as a serpent in form in order to deal with Satan, the Devil, the old serpent. As fallen human beings, we all have been bitten by this serpent. Do you know when we were bitten? We were bitten in the Garden of Eden when Adam was bitten by the serpent and poisoned by him. Therefore, it was necessary for our Savior to be crucified as the serpent in form in order to deal with the old serpent.

It was through being crucified as the serpent that the Lord Jesus crushed the head of the old serpent, the Devil (Gen. 3:15). In this way, He judged the ruler of this world. Concerning this, John 12:31 says, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out." By His death on the cross, the Man-Savior destroyed the

Devil, who had the power of death (Heb. 2:14). Therefore as the One who died as a serpent under God's judgment the Man-Savior dealt with the Devil and with his world the satanic system.

The Firstborn of All Creation

When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, He died as the Firstborn of all creation (Col. 1:15). With respect to His humanity, Christ was the first item of God's creation. When He died on the cross, He died as this first item of the old creation. Hence, through His death on the cross the entire old creation was dealt with.

The Peacemaker

In Ephesians 2:14 and 15 we see that Christ died as the Peacemaker, as the One who makes peace: "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity, having abolished in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, making peace." Here we see that Christ died on the cross to abolish all the ordinances among mankind. In particular, He died to take away the partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. Not only was there a partition between Jews and Gentiles; there were also partitions between every nationality and race. Without the removal of these partitions, there would be no way for us to be one in the Lord Jesus as His Body. Praise the Lord that all the ordinances were abolished by the Man-Savior on the cross! Now in the church life we have people of all races, colors, and nationalities.

A Grain of Wheat

Finally, Christ died on the cross as a grain of wheat: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). The Lord died on the cross as a grain of wheat in order to release the divine life from within Him.

The New Testament reveals that the Lord Jesus died on the cross as seven items: the Lamb of God, a man in the

flesh, a man of the old creation, the serpent, the Firstborn of creation, the Peacemaker, and a grain of wheat. This is not merely our word; this is what the Bible reveals. We need to proclaim the fact that, according to the Word of God, the Man-Savior died as these seven items.

The Death of an All-inclusive Person

Christ died an all-inclusive death because He is an all-inclusive Person. For example, if the king of a certain country were to die, a person with a twofold status--a man and a king--would die. As our Substitute, the Lord Jesus had a sevenfold status and therefore died as the Lamb of God, a man in the flesh, a man of the old creation, the serpent, the Firstborn of all creation, the Peacemaker, and a grain of wheat. Such an all-inclusive Person died an all-inclusive death.

Because the Lord's death was all-inclusive, when He died on the cross many things were dealt with. Sin, sins, the flesh, the old man, Satan, the world, the old creation, and the ordinances were all dealt with. Furthermore, the divine life with the divine riches was released from within the Lord Jesus. His all-inclusive death took away all the negative things and released all the positive things.

Luke 23:44 and 45 say, "And it was already about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing; and the veil of the temple was torn down the middle." The darkness here is related to sin, and the veil is a type of the flesh of the Lord Jesus. Hebrews 10:20 speaks of "a new and living way, which He dedicated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh." On the veil that was rent when Christ died cherubim were embroidered. These cherubim represent the living creatures. This indicates that in His flesh Christ bore all the creatures. When the veil in the temple was torn, the cherubim embroidered on it were also torn. This means that when the flesh of Christ was crucified, all the creatures borne by Him were crucified as well Through the death of Christ sin, sins, the flesh, and all the creatures were all dealt with.

Accomplished Once for All

The all-inclusive death of Christ was accomplished once for all. There is no need for Him to die again. The Lord's all-inclusive death is eternal. If we see this, we shall praise the Lord that sin, sins, the flesh, the old man, Satan, the world, the old creation, and the ordinances have been dealt with, and the divine riches have been released and imparted to us. Now through the Lord's all-inclusive death we are people of the jubilee.

BURIED

In a Dignified Way

Luke 23:50-56 speaks of the burial of the Man-Savior. Verses 50 through 52 say, "And behold! a man named Joseph, being a member of the Council, a good and righteous man (This man had not agreed with their counsel and action), from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was expecting the kingdom of God; this man came to Pilate and requested the body of Jesus." After the Lord accomplished His all-inclusive death, His situation of suffering immediately changed into an honorable one. He was buried by Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man of high rank (Matt. 27:57). Joseph took down the body of Jesus and "wrapped it in a linen cloth, and placed Him in a tomb hewn in the rock, where no one had ever yet been laid" (Luke 23:53). This was for the fulfillment of Isaiah 53:9. In human honor of a high standard the Lord rested on the Sabbath day, waiting for the time to resurrect from among the dead.

The Man-Savior was buried in linen with a mixture of myrrh and aloes (John 19:39-40). He was despised on the cross, but He was honored in His burial. The Lord Jesus was buried in a very dignified way.

As the All-inclusive One

When the Lord Jesus was buried, He was buried as the all-inclusive One. If we know the truth in the Scriptures,

we shall realize that we were buried with Him. With the Lord Jesus we were crucified and then we were also buried with Him. As those who have been crucified and buried with the Lord Jesus, we have been terminated; we have been brought to a full end. When a person is buried that is the end of him. Burial is a final termination. As fallen ones, those in the flesh and of the old creation, we have been crucified and buried. We have been buried with the Lord and we have been terminated in His burial. In His tomb all problems are gone because sin, sins, the flesh the old man, Satan, the world, the old creation, and the ordinances have been dealt with. After dying such an all-inclusive death, the Lord was buried in a peaceful and honorable way.

We need to realize that we have been crucified with Christ. However, regarding this we still may have a struggle. But once we see that we have also been buried with Christ, there is no longer any struggle. Burial brings about a peaceful situation. Those who are buried do not struggle any longer. Since we have been buried with Christ, we should simply remain at rest.

Luke 23:54-56 says, "And it was a day of preparation and the Sabbath was dawning. And the women who had come together with Him out of Galilee followed after, and beheld the tomb and how His body was placed. And they returned and prepared spices and ointment. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment." This was a real rest to all God's chosen people and even to the entire universe; the Savior had fully accomplished redemption for them all.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-FOUR

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

(1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:1-53

In this message we shall begin to consider 24:1-53. This portion of the Gospel of Luke covers the crucial matters of the resurrection and ascension of the Man-Savior. Concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, each of the four Gospels has its own point of view. Writing from his viewpoint, Luke speaks in particular of the Man-Savior's walking and talking with two disciples on the way to Emmaus (vv. 13-35).

ASPECTS OF THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

Before coming to Luke 24, I would like to give a word concerning Christ's resurrection. After the Lord lived on the earth for thirty-three and a half years, working in His ministry for three and a half years, He was crucified and buried. If He had remained in the tomb, that would have meant that God did not justify what the Man-Savior was and what He did. However, the Man-Savior was resurrected.

Two Ways of Speaking of Christ's Resurrection

According to the New Testament, the Lord's resurrection is mentioned in two ways. First, we are told that the Lord Jesus resurrected Himself, that is, that He raised Himself up. Speaking of His life, He said, "No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again" (John 10:18). In John 2:19 the Lord said that He would raise up His body in three days. The Lord Jesus had

the power to die and to rise up from among the dead. Therefore, in one sense He raised Himself up from the dead. On the other hand, the New Testament tells us that He was raised up by God. Concerning this, the Lord Jesus told the disciples that He would "be raised on the third day" (Matt. 16:21). Elsewhere the Lord said of Himself, "On the third day He shall be raised up" (Matt. 17:23). Acts 2:32 says, "This Jesus God raised up," and Acts 3:15 speaks of the Lord as the Author of life, "whom God raised from the dead." Furthermore, in Romans 6:4 Paul says, "Christ was raised from among the dead through the glory of the Father." On the one hand, the Lord raised up Himself; on the other hand, He was raised from the dead by God.

The Vindication of the Lord's Life and Work

The Lord's raising up Himself shows His life power, the ability in His resurrection life. But God's raising Him from among the dead was a sign that He was justified and vindicated by God. God raised Christ from the dead as a proof that He justified what the Lord was and what He did on earth.

The Man-Savior lived in a way that others thought strange. His way of living was absolutely different from religion, culture, and society. He lived and worked in a very unusual way. If God had not come in to raise Him up from the dead, this would have meant that God did not justify Him. But God's raising Christ up from the dead was a sign of God's justification and vindication.

Romans 4:25 says that Christ "was delivered because of our offenses and was raised because of our justification." The death of Christ fulfilled and satisfied God's righteous requirements so that we may be justified by God through His death (Rom. 3:24). Christ's resurrection is a proof that God was satisfied with His death for us.

If Christ had died on the cross, having been judged there by God, but had not been raised from among the dead, there would have been no justification or vindication rendered to Him by God. That would have affected our salvation because, in such a case, His death would not

have been followed by God's vindication. But God judged Christ in death and then raised Him up from the dead. God's raising up Christ from the dead was His justification and vindication of what Christ was and did. From this we may have the assurance that God has accepted what Christ did for us on the cross. We are justified by God because of Christ's death, and in Christ, the resurrected One, we are accepted before God.

A Sign of His Success

Christ's resurrection was also a sign of the success of His achievement. Suppose Christ had remained in the tomb after He died. If such had been the case, then what Christ did would not have been a success. But the Man-Savior's resurrection from the dead is a strong sign of His great success in His universal achievement.

His Victory

Christ's resurrection was also His victory over the world, Satan, death, Hades, and the tomb. These five things caused the Lord Jesus to be put into the tomb. But when He came forth from the tomb in resurrection, this was His victory over the world, Satan, death, Hades, and the tomb. As Peter says in Acts 2:24, "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it." Because Christ is resurrection (John 11:25), death could not hold Him. It is impossible for death to hold resurrection; resurrection overcomes death.

His Glorification

Christ's resurrection was also His glorification. Christ's resurrection brought Him into glory (Luke 24:26; 1 Cor. 15:43a; Acts 3:13a, 15a).

The Lord's divine nature, His divine being, was concealed and confined within His flesh. Through death the confinement of His humanity, His flesh, was broken, and then in resurrection He was released as the very God with His nature and riches. Because He was released from the confinement of His flesh in resurrection He was glorified. This was the reason the Lord said to the disciples

on the way to Emmaus that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and enter into His glory (Luke 24:26). It was through His resurrection that He entered into glory.

His Transfiguration

Furthermore, Christ's resurrection was His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). He was Christ in the flesh, but He has been transfigured into the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who essentially is the life-giving Spirit. Resurrection was His actual transfiguration. Before His death and resurrection, He was transfigured on the Mount of Transfiguration. However, that transfiguration was only temporary. His actual transfiguration was His resurrection, for in resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit who imparts life into us.

The Germination of the New Creation

Christ's resurrection was also the germination of the new creation. Just as His death was the termination of the old creation, so His resurrection was the germination of the new creation. What He terminated in His death He germinated in His resurrection. This germination includes us; we were regenerated through His resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3). Hence, His resurrection is our germination and regeneration. In this way we have become the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). We are regenerated people in His new creation.

Producing the Church

Furthermore, Christ's resurrection produced the church as His Body, even as His reproduction (John 12:24; 1 Cor. 10:17). Therefore, the church is Christ's reproduction in resurrection. When the Lord Jesus was incarnated, He was an individual. But when He was resurrected, He became corporate, a corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), the Christ who is both the Head and the Body.

We need to understand these seven aspects of Christ's resurrection. Resurrection was God's vindication of the Lord's life and work, resurrection was the Lord's great success in His universal achievement, resurrection was

His victory over all enemies, resurrection was His glorification, resurrection was His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit essentially, resurrection was the germination of the new creation, and resurrection produced the church, the Body, as Christ's reproduction. These matters are clearly revealed in the Acts and Epistles. We all need to know Christ's resurrection to such an extent.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

In chapter twenty-four of his Gospel Luke gives us a record of Christ's resurrection and, in particular, of His action in resurrection. Verse 1 says, "Now on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared." Christ resurrected on the first day of the week. This signifies His resurrection brought a new start with a new age for God's kingdom. In this verse "they" refers to the women mentioned in verse 10 and in 23:55. The Lord's resurrection had been accomplished, but the discovery of it required the disciples' seeking in love toward the Lord. We know from 24:10 that the women who came to the tomb at early dawn included Mary the Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, who was the mother of the Man-Savior.

According to verses 4 through 7, "two men stood by them in shining clothing" and said to them, "Why are you seeking the living One among the dead? He is not here, but was raised. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise up." The Man-Savior's resurrection was the proof that God was satisfied with what He accomplished through death and was a confirmation of the effectiveness of His redeeming and life-imparting death (Acts 2:24; 3:15).

Returning from the tomb, the women "reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest" (v. 9). But "these words appeared to them as nonsense and they did not believe them." The Greek word rendered "nonsense" is used in medical language of the wild talk of delirium (M.

R. Vincent). Nevertheless, Christ's resurrection was investigated and confirmed by Peter: "But Peter rose up and ran to the tomb; and stooping to look, he saw the linen cloths alone, and went away marveling in himself at what had happened" (v. 12).

THE RESURRECTED MAN-SAVIOR APPEARING TO TWO DISCIPLES

On the Way from Jerusalem to Emmaus

In 24:13-35 we have an account of the Man-Savior's appearing to two disciples. "And behold two of them were going on the same day to a village named Emmaus, sixty stadia away from Jerusalem. And they were talking to one another concerning all these things which had occurred." One stadion equals about six hundred feet; therefore sixty stadia would equal about seven miles. These two disciples were fully disappointed, deeply discouraged. Because they were discouraged, they did not stay in Jerusalem. Instead, they left Jerusalem for Emmaus.

Luke 24:15 and 16 say, "And it came about as they were talking and discussing, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him." Here the Man-Savior was in resurrection walking with the two disciples. This differs from His walking with His disciples before His death (19:28).

Verse 15 simply tells us that Jesus drew near and went with the two disciples. We are not told where He came from. After the Man-Savior entered into resurrection, He became omnipresent. Since He is omnipresent, we cannot stay away from Him. When the disciples were in Jerusalem, He was with them. When they left Jerusalem for Emmaus, He walked with them. It is a fact that the resurrected Christ is with us wherever we may be. If we walk in a downward direction, we bring Him with us. In Luke 24 the two disciples brought the Lord with them on the way from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

The Disciples Not Recognizing the Man-Savior

In 24:17 the Man-Savior said to the two disciples, "What are these words which you are exchanging with one another while you are walking? And they stood still, looking sad." Then one of the disciples said to Him, "Are you a stranger dwelling alone in Jerusalem and do not know the things which took place in it in these days? And He said to them, What things? And they said to Him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who became a Man, a Prophet, powerful in work and word before God and all the people" (vv. 18-19). Here we see that in their blindness they thought that they knew more than the resurrected Savior. The two disciples knew the Savior in the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16), not in His resurrection. They knew His power in work and word, not the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10).

The Man-Savior Opening the Scriptures and the Eyes of the Disciples

In 24:13-35 the Man-Savior opened the Scriptures and also the eyes of the disciples. He said to them, "O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" (vv. 25-26). The Greek word translated "foolish" indicates to be dull of perception. In verse 26 "to enter into His glory" refers to the Lord's resurrection (v. 46), which brought Him into glory.

Verse 27 tells us that "beginning from Moses and from all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." "All the Scriptures" includes the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms (v. 44). The Scriptures are mentioned twice more in this chapter. Verse 32 speaks of opening the Scriptures, and verse 45 of understanding the Scriptures. In the Scriptures there is a full record, a complete revelation, concerning Christ and His death and resurrection. However, because these matters were not opened up to the Lord's followers, He came to them in order to open the holy Word to them.

The Lord also came to them for the purpose of opening their eyes. When they drew near to the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther,

"they urged Him, saying, Stay with us, because it is toward evening and the day is already nearly over. And He went in to stay with them." (vv. 28-29). The Greek words rendered "is already nearly over" literally mean "has already declined." As they were reclining at the table, the Man-Savior "took the loaf and blessed it, and having broken it, He handed it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He disappeared from them" (vv. 30-31). The Savior walked with them (v. 15) and stayed with them (v. 29), but it was not until they offered the loaf to Him and He broke it that their eyes were opened to recognize Him. They needed Him to walk and stay with them. But He needed them to offer the loaf to Him so that He might break it that He could open their eyes to see Him. Once their eyes were opened, they recognized Him.

Not only did the eyes of these two disciples need to be opened; the eyes of Peter, John, and James also needed to be opened. After the two went back to Jerusalem, He appeared to the eleven and those assembled with them (vv. 33, 36). They were shocked by His appearing. In this portion of the Word the Man-Savior opened the Scriptures and also opened the eyes of His disciples.

Disappearing from the Disciples

As soon as the eyes of the two disciples were opened and they recognized Him, "He disappeared from them." Literally the Greek here means, "He became invisible from them." The Savior was still with them. He did not leave them; He only became invisible.

Luke does not say that the Lord Jesus went away. Rather, Luke tells us that He disappeared. To disappear is not the same as to go away. Here to disappear is a way of hiding. The Lord did not leave the two disciples; He simply caused His presence to be invisible. At first, His presence was visible, and then it became invisible. When the Man-Savior's presence became invisible, He disappeared. But when His presence became visible, He appeared.

Christ is no longer in the flesh. In resurrection He has become the pneumatic Christ, the Spirit. Nevertheless, He

still has a body. We do not understand how the Spirit can have a body.

The two disciples in 24:13-35 learned a great deal on their journey. They did not want to wait until morning to return to Jerusalem. "Rising up that very hour, they returned to Jerusalem" and "related the things that occurred on the road, and how He was made known to them in the breaking of bread" (vv. 33, 35). They had left Jerusalem in disappointment, but they returned greatly encouraged.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-FIVE

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

(2)

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:1-53

In this message we shall continue to consider the resurrection of the Man-Savior, and then we shall go on to consider His ascension. We have seen that the case of the Lord's appearing to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (vv. 13-35) is helpful and practical for our experience. It is difficult to say whether the two disciples went back to Jerusalem with the Lord or He went with them. In either case, they all journeyed together. When they left Jerusalem for Emmaus, the Savior went with them. Likewise, when they went back to Jerusalem, He went back with them.

APPEARING TO THE DISCIPLES AND COMMISSIONING THEM

A Mysterious Appearing

In verses 36 through 49 we have the Man-Savior's appearing to the disciples and His commissioning of them. Luke 24:36 and 37 say, "And as they were speaking these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, Peace to you! But they were startled and became frightened and thought they beheld a spirit." The disciples, including Peter, were troubled by the Man-Savior's appearing. They could not understand how He could suddenly appear in the room. The door was closed, and no one opened it. Nevertheless, the Lord appeared with a physical body.

The Lord Jesus said to the disciples, "Why are you troubled, and why are reasonings arising in your heart?

See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you behold Me having" (vv. 38-39). Then He showed them His hands and feet. Here we see the Man-Savior's resurrected body, which is spiritual (1 Cor. 15:44) and a body of glory (Phil 3:21).

The Lord's appearing was very mysterious, and we cannot understand it fully. He came into the room as the Spirit, yet with a physical, touchable body. The prints of the nails could still be seen. The place in His side that had been pierced with a spear could still be seen and touched. Not only was the Lord's body visible and touchable, but He was able to eat food. "And while they still did not believe for joy and were marveling, He said to them, Do you have anything to eat here? And they handed Him part of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate before them" (vv. 41-43). We do not understand how the Lord Jesus as One with a spiritual body was still able to eat material food.

Opening Their Mind to Understand the Scriptures

Just as the Man-Savior had opened the Scriptures to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, He now opened the Word to those gathered in the room. He also opened their minds to understand the Scriptures: "And He said to them, These are my words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all the things must be fulfilled which have been written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and Psalms concerning Me. Then He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures" (vv. 44-45). The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms are the three sections of the entire Old Testament, that is, all the Scriptures (v. 27). The Savior's word here unveils that the entire Old Testament was a revelation of Him and that He was its center and content. The fact that He opened the mind of the disciples indicates that in order to understand the Scriptures our mind needs to be opened by the Lord Spirit through His enlightening (Eph. 1:18).

In verse 46 the Man-Savior went on to say to the disciples, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer

and rise up from the dead on the third day." Here the Lord seems to be saying, "When we were in Galilee, I told you that I would die and then be raised up on the third day. But you did not understand what I was talking about. Now I am opening up the Word to you, and I am also opening your eyes."

I believe that it was from the time of this appearing of the Lord that Peter began to be transformed. At least he began to understand the Word. Therefore, in chapter one of Acts Peter could stand up among the one hundred and twenty and interpret the Scriptures in the right way. In Acts 1 we do not see a natural Peter as we do in Luke 22. Instead, we see another Peter, a regenerated and transformed Peter. That was the situation of all the disciples in Acts l.

Commissioning Them to Proclaim the Forgiveness of Sins

The Man-Savior's meeting with the disciples in Luke 24 was the right time for Him to commission them to preach the forgiveness of sins. After pointing out to them that it was written that Christ should suffer and rise up from the dead on the third day, He told them that "repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things" (vv. 47-48). Forgiveness of sins could be proclaimed only after the Man-Savior's vicarious death for the sinners' sins had been accomplished and had been verified by His resurrection (see Rom. 4:25).

The Proclaiming of the Jubilee

To proclaim the forgiveness of sins is to proclaim the jubilee. Luke 4 speaks of the release of the captives. To proclaim the forgiveness of sins is to proclaim the release of captives from slavery and bondage. The Lord Jesus seemed to be telling the disciples, "You have been brought into My resurrection and into the jubilee. Now you must proclaim this jubilee."

The first aspect of the jubilee, an aspect on the negative side, is the forgiveness of sins. According to the following books of the New Testament, the forgiveness of sins ushers

the forgiven ones into the riches of the Triune God. Therefore, forgiveness of sins brings us into the enjoyment of the Triune God. This is the jubilee.

The Need to Be Equipped with the Spirit Economically

The Gospel of John, as one of the God-Savior, emphasizes life for fruit-bearing (John 15:5). The Gospel of Luke, as one of the Man-Savior, stresses forgiveness of sins for proclaiming. To bear fruit in life requires essentially the Spirit of life received through the breathing of the Spirit (John 20:22). To proclaim forgiveness of sins requires economically the Spirit of power received through the baptism in the Spirit (Acts 1:5, 8).

In order to proclaim forgiveness of sins, the Man-Savior's disciples needed further equipping. Essentially, they had what they needed; economically, however, there was still a lack. Hence, they were to wait in Jerusalem until the Lord poured out upon them the promise of the Father, which was the promise of the economical Spirit. That promise was fulfilled in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. After His ascension and enthronement, the Man-Savior poured out the economical Spirit upon the disciples, who had already become members of the Body of Christ essentially. What had been accomplished by the Lord in His resurrection was something essential. The disciples still needed to be equipped with the Spirit economically. This was accomplished by the Lord in His ascension.

In Luke 24:49 the Lord Jesus says, "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you, stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." The promise here is the promise of Joel 2:28 and 29, fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4, 16-18), for the outpouring as the power from on high for the believers' ministry economically. This is different from the Spirit of life, who was breathed into the disciples (John 20:22) by the resurrected Savior on the day of His resurrection for His indwelling so that He might be life to them essentially.

The Spirit in John 20:22 is the Spirit expected in John 7:39 and promised in John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-8, 13. Hence, the Lord's breathing of the Holy Spirit into the disciples was the fulfillment of His promise of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. This fulfillment differs from that in Acts 2:1-4. That was the fulfillment of the Father's promise in Luke 24:49. In Acts the Spirit as "a rushing violent wind" came as power upon the disciples for their work (Acts 1:8). In John 20:22 the Spirit as the breath was breathed as life into the disciples for their life. By breathing the Spirit into the disciples, the Lord imparted Himself as life and everything to them essentially.

As for the Spirit of life we need to breathe Him in as the breath (John 20:22). As for the Spirit of power, we need to put Him on as the uniform, typified by the mantle of Elijah (2 Kings 2:9, 13-15). The former as the water of life requires our drinking (John 7:37-39); the latter as the water for baptism requires our being immersed (Acts 1:5). These are the two aspects of the one Spirit for our experience (1 Cor. 12:13). The indwelling of the Spirit of life is essential for our life and living; the outpouring of the Spirit of power is economical for our ministry and work.

We need to be impressed with the fact that in addition to receiving the Spirit of life essentially, the disciples still needed to be "clothed with power from on high," to be empowered by the Spirit economically. What took place in John 20 was a matter of life essentially, but what happened in Acts 2 was a matter of power for ministry economically. In order to be clothed with power, we need to put on the Spirit as a uniform. This is typified by the mantle of Elijah. For this reason, some Bible teachers have called the Spirit of power the "mantle Spirit," the Spirit as an outer coat. In 2 Kings 2 Elisha was expecting to receive Elijah's mantle. When Elisha received this mantle, it was an indication that he had received the spirit of Elijah. In Luke 24:49 the Lord has a similar thought, the thought of the mantle Spirit. He told the disciples to wait until they were clothed with power from on high.

We also need to realize that the Spirit of life and the

Spirit of power are two aspects of the one Spirit for our experience. We see both aspects in 1 Corinthians 12:13. On the one hand, we have all been baptized in one Spirit into one Body; on the other hand, we have all been given to drink of the one Spirit. To be immersed in water is outward, but to drink water is inward. Furthermore, drinking the Spirit inwardly is essential, and being baptized in the Spirit outwardly is economical. The inward aspect of the Spirit is for life essentially, and the outward aspect is for ministry and work economically.

THE ASCENSION OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

Luke 24:50 and 51 say, "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came about that while He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven." This took place at the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12). While the Man-Savior was speaking to the disciples, He was carried up into heaven. He ascended to the highest point in the universe. The disciples were excited and returned to Jerusalem with great joy (v. 52), waiting to be equipped with the Holy Spirit economically.

In his Gospel Luke displays and presents to us mainly five crucial and excellent aspects concerning the Man-Savior: His birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension. The Man-Savior's birth was of and with the Spirit of God essentially. This birth made Him a God-man to be the Man-Savior (1:35). His ministry was by and through the Spirit of God economically to carry out God's economy in His jubilee (4:18-19). His death was by the God-man to accomplish God's redemption for man (23:42-43) and to release Himself into man as the fire of life to burn on the earth (12:49-50). His resurrection was God's vindication of Him and of His work, His success in all His achievements, and His victory over the universal enemy of God. His ascension was God's exaltation of Him. In ascension He was made the Christ of God and the Lord of all (Acts 2:36) to carry out His heavenly ministry on earth

as the all-inclusive Spirit poured out from the heavens upon His Body composed of His believers (Acts 2:4, 17-18), as recorded by Luke in his further writing, the Acts.

Crowned with Glory and Honor

In the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation the various aspects of Christ's ascension are revealed. The ascension of Christ was for Him to be crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9). When He ascended to the heavens, God gave Him a crown, and this crown is His divine glory and honor.

Enthroned

In His ascension Christ was seated on the throne of God's government. In His ascension He was enthroned. Concerning this, Hebrews 12:2 says that Christ is now "seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Made Lord and Christ

In His ascension the Man-Savior was made the Lord of all and the Christ of God. This is revealed in Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."

Made the Head of All Things

In His ascension Christ also was made the Head of all things to the church. Ephesians 1:22 tells us that God "subjected all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church."

Made Our High Priest

In His ascension, Christ was made our High Priest to minister the heavenly life and the heavenly supply of the divine riches to all the believers on earth. Concerning this, Hebrews 8:1 and 2 say, "Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this: we have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man."

In His ascension the Man-Savior was crowned, enthroned, and made the Lord of all and the Christ of God,

the Head over all things to the church, and the High Priest in the heavens ministering the heavenly life and life supply of the divine riches into all His believers. These are the major aspects of Christ's ascension revealed in the Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation.

Experiencing Christ as Life and Power

As those who believe in Christ, we are in His resurrection and ascension. In resurrection we have life, and in ascension we have power and authority. In resurrection we receive the essential Spirit for life, and in ascension we enjoy the economical Spirit for power.

When some hear that as believers we are in Christ's resurrection and ascension, they may say, "I don't feel that I am in the resurrection and ascension of Christ." If this is your situation, you need the Lord to open up His Word to you and also to open your eyes. When the Lord opens His Word and our eyes, we see that we are in Christ, and Christ is no longer in the tomb but is in resurrection and ascension. In resurrection He is our life, and in ascension He is our power. The resurrected Christ, that is, the pneumatic Christ, is our life essentially; and the ascended Christ, that is, the enthroned Christ, is our power economically. We do not need to feel this or sense it--we simply need to see it. Seeing produces believing. When we see, we believe.

But how can we see? We see through the Lord's opening the Word and opening our eyes. Praise the Lord that He has opened His Word and our eyes! Now we believe not only in His death, but also in His resurrection and ascension. More and more, let us experience life in His resurrection and power in His ascension.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-SIX

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S INCARNATION FULFILLING THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S CREATION OF MAN

(1)

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 4:4b; Gen. 1:26a, 27a; Phil. 2:7b; Gen. 2:8-9; John 1:1, 14; Heb. 2:16-17; 1 Tim. 3:16

At this point in the LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE we need some messages that will provide a further development of four subjects: first, Christ's becoming a God-man, a man with God living in Him; second, the jubilee; third, Christ's resurrection; and fourth, Christ's ascension. We have covered these matters in a brief way in certain of the foregoing messages, but we have not covered them adequately. First we shall consider Christ's humanity, His living as the God-man. Hence, the title of this message is "The Man-Savior's Incarnation Fulfilling the Purpose of God's Creation of Man."

It is a great thing to see that Christ's incarnation is linked to God's purpose in creating man. This is a point that we have not covered fully in the past, although we have considered it briefly. We need to be impressed with the fact that the incarnation of Christ is closely related to the purpose of God in creating man. As we shall see, God's purpose in the creation of man in His image and after His likeness was that man would receive Him as life and express Him in all His attributes. We shall also see that the Man-Savior's incarnation brought God into man to restore and to recover the damaged and lost humanity and to express God in His attributes through human virtues. These matters are deep, profound, divine, and mysterious, and our words are limited in speaking of them.

MAN DESIGNED TO BE ONE WITH GOD

If we have an all-inclusive view of the entire revelation in the Scriptures, both of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, we shall see that God designed man to be one with Him. God made this design in eternity past. It is a great matter that God designed man to be one with Him. Of course, in the Bible we cannot find the word "design" used with respect to man's being one with God. Nevertheless, if we have an all-inclusive view of the revelation in the holy Word, we shall see that in eternity past God designed man to be one with Him.

We may use the designing and building of a house as an illustration of God's design concerning man. Before we build a house, we first need a design. Likewise, in the Bible we have both God's design and His building. Throughout the Scriptures we have a complete revelation of God's building. For His building God had a design. He designed to have man and that man should be one with Him.

MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE AND AFTER HIS LIKENESS

Based upon His design, God created man in His image and after His likeness. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him" (Gen. 1:26a, 27a). Two phrases in these verses have troubled teachers of the Bible: "in his own image" and "after our likeness." What is God's image? What is God's likeness? What is the difference between image and likeness? Why are different prepositions used in relation to image and likeness? In other words, why does the Bible say that man was made *in* God's image but *after* God's likeness? Why does it not say that man was made after God's image and in His likeness? If we study the Scriptures carefully, we shall be concerned with the difference between image and likeness and also realize that it is difficult to explain this difference.

Inward Being and Outward Form

Some Bible teachers say that in Genesis 1 image refers

to something inward, and likeness, to something outward. This is the distinction made by Mary E. McDonough in *God's Plan of Redemption.* Asking what is meant by image and likeness, she says, "These two words are not synonymous; the former word refers more especially to the invisible part of man--the inner-man--while the latter indicates the visible part, i.e., the outer-man or body. The inner-man was in some way created like God; we may reverently say, patterned after Him...."

In the Life-study of Genesis we pointed out that man was created in the image of God inwardly and after the likeness of God outwardly (see Life-study of Genesis, Message 6, pp. 65-70). In that Life-study we said, "Man was created not only in the image of God inwardly, but also after the likeness of God outwardly. All the other items in creation are after 'their kind.' Man, however, is not after man's kind, but after God's likeness. As image indicates the inward being of God, so likeness must indicate the outward form of God" (pp. 69-70). We may say that in Genesis 1:26 and 27 image refers to the inward being and likeness to the outward expression. In this message, without departing from what we have said in the past, we shall go on to consider in more detail the meaning of God's creating man in His own image.

God's Embodiment in Christ

In the Scriptures the word "image" is used to refer to God's being. This can be proved by certain New Testament verses. Second Corinthians 4:4 says that Christ is the image of God, Colossians 1:15 tells us that Christ is "the image of the invisible God," and Hebrews 1:3 reveals that Christ is "the effulgence of His glory and the express image of His substance." Christ is the very embodiment of God. As God's embodiment, Christ is God's image.

Containing God and Becoming His Duplication

Furthermore, according to the Bible the image of God is related to His duplication. In Genesis 1 "image" is for God to be duplicated, to be "copied" in man. This means that man was created in such a way that he could become God's

duplication, His copy. God created man in His own image with the intention that man would become His duplication.

Since God created man for the purpose of man's becoming His duplication, and since this purpose is indicated by the use of the word image, we may go on to say that the word image implies the capacity to contain God. If man did not have the capacity to contain God, how could he become God's duplication, His copy? In order for man to be a copy of God, man must have the capacity or ability to contain what God is.

This understanding of the image of God does not contradict the definition given in the Life-study of Genesis. To be sure, the image of God does refer to the inward being of God. It is no contradiction of this to go on to say that for God to create man in His image means that God created man with the intention that man would become a duplicate of God, and that the word image implies that man has the capacity and ability to take God into him and to contain Him. The man created in God's image was created to be God's container. Since man was made to be such a container, there was the need for him to have the capacity to receive God as his content and to contain this content.

The Appearance of God for His Expression

We have emphasized the fact that man was created not only in God's image but also after God's likeness. The word "likeness" refers to outward form, outward fashion, outward appearance. Hence, "likeness" here is a matter of expression. First, man was made in God's image to be a duplicate of God, and then man was made after God's likeness to have the appearance of God for His expression.

If man had only the likeness of God but not the image of God, this would mean that man would have only the outward appearance but not the inward reality. In such a case, the appearance, the expression, would be empty. The image is the inward reality of the outward expression, and the likeness is the expression, or the outward appearance, of the image.

Philippians 2:7 is a New Testament verse related to

this. In this verse we see that in His incarnation Christ became "in the likeness of men." This verse tells us not that Christ had the likeness of God but that He had the likeness of men. When He became a man, He had the appearance, the expression, of man. However, this certainly was not an empty expression, an expression devoid of reality, an expression without content. On the contrary, Christ had both the reality of humanity and the expression, the appearance, of humanity. The reality of humanity was the content of the likeness of man that Christ had.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATING MAN

We thank the Lord for leading us into a further understanding of God's image and God's likeness. Man was created in God's image and after God's likeness in order to be God's duplication that he may express God. The duplication is in God's image, and the expression is after God's likeness.

We have seen that, according to the Bible, God designed man to be one with Him. In order to be one with God, man must have God's image inwardly and His likeness outwardly. This is God's design, and in this design we see God's purpose. What was God's purpose in creating man? God's purpose was to make man His duplication for His expression so that man may actually and fully be one with God.

GOD'S INTENTION TO BE MAN'S LIFE AND CONTENT

In Genesis 1:26 and 27 we have the container but not the content. The content is found in Genesis 2. According to the record in Genesis 2, after God created man, He prepared a garden and placed man in it. Two trees are mentioned by name: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's intention was that the man created by Him would take of the tree of life and live. But if man took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would die. Man ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and he died.

We cannot understand the significance of the tree of

life simply by Genesis 2. By reading the entire Bible we see that the tree of life is a symbol of God as life. For example, Psalm 36:9 says, "With thee is the fountain of life." In the Gospel of John we see that when Jesus, the Son of God, came, life was in Him (John 1:4). The Lord Jesus said that He was life (John 11:25) and that He came that we may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). In Colossians 3:4 Paul says that Christ is our life. Furthermore, 1 John 5:11 and 12 say, "And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life." Finally, the book of Revelation speaks clearly of the tree of life, with which the entire city of New Jerusalem will be nourished in eternity (Rev. 22:1-2, 14). Therefore, by considering the whole Bible we see that the tree of life symbolizes God as man's life. God's intention was that the man created by Him as a container would take Him in as his life and content.

THE IMAGE OF GOD AND THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Let us now consider further what God's image is. The New Testament tells us that God's image is Christ. But still we need to ask how we should describe the image of God.

The Bible tells us that God is love and that He is light (1 John 4:8; 1:5). Love is the nature of God's essence, and light is the nature of God's expression. The Bible also reveals that God is righteous and holy. The adjective "righteous" used with respect to God refers to God's way. God's way of doing things is always righteous; He never does anything unrighteously. The adjective "holy" refers to God's inward nature. God is righteous in His doings and holy in His nature. Therefore, God is love and light, and God is righteous and holy. This is a description of God's image.

In describing the image of a person, it would not be accurate to speak of his height, weight, and hair color. If you would describe a person's image, you need to say what kind of person he is. This means that you need to describe his

attributes as a person, the characteristics of his personality and temperament. In a similar way, if we would describe the image of God, we need to describe His attributes.

God's image is depicted by these four words: love, light, righteous, and holy. These are God's attributes. Hence, when we use the term "divine attributes" we are referring to God's love, light, righteousness, and holiness. Our God is love and light, and our God is righteous and holy. This is not a description of God's likeness; it is a description of God's very being. God *is* love; that is, love is His being. God *is* light; that is, light is His being. Furthermore, the being of God is righteous in His act and holy in His nature. This is the image, the description, of our God. The four main features of this description are God's attributes.

MAN CREATED WITH THE CAPACITY TO CONTAIN THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

Man was made in God's image. The man created by God, therefore, has love, light, and the capacity to be righteous and holy. Even though we are fallen, we still have in our fallen condition love, light, and the capacity to be right and to be holy like God. For God to create man in His own image means that God created man with the capacity to have His love, light, righteousness, and holiness. Human love, light, righteousness, and holiness are what we call the human virtues. These virtues were created by God.

God created man in His own image in such a way that man has the capacity to contain God's love, light, righteousness, and holiness. The human virtues were created by God to contain His attributes. Human love, light, righteousness, and holiness are created capacities to contain the divine love, light, righteousness, and holiness.

People everywhere agree that hating others is contrary to our conscience. Furthermore, it is also contrary to our conscience to lie, steal, and do things in darkness. Even an unsaved person may have the sense that it would be unrighteous to keep extra change given to him by mistake in a restaurant or store.

The point here is that man was made by God to have love and light and to walk righteously and to be holy. Man has these virtues because he was created in God's image, in the image of God's love, light, righteousness, and holiness. The human virtues created by God are the capacity to contain God's attributes. God created man in this way with the intention that man would take Him as the tree of life to be his life and content.

ADAM'S FAILURE TO BECOME A GOD-MAN

If Adam had eaten of the tree of life and thereby had taken God into him as life, he would have been filled with God, and his human virtues would have been filled with God's attributes. Then man's virtues would have expressed God's attributes. If Adam had done this, he certainly would have become a God-man. There would not have been the need to wait thousands of years for a God-man to be born in Bethlehem. If Adam in the garden had partaken of the tree of life, he would have become not only a man made by God in His own image and after His own likeness, but also a man filled with God as his life and with the divine attributes filling his human virtues. If Adam had become such a person, a God-man, he would have been a man living God.

As we know, Adam failed to fulfill God's purpose, and he spoiled God's design. God had made Adam according to His design. But because Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil instead of the tree of life, he spoiled God's design. The humanity created by God was damaged and, in a sense, lost. However, as we shall see in the following message, the Man-Savior's incarnation fulfilled God's purpose in the creation of man.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-SEVEN

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S INCARNATION FULFILLING THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S CREATION OF MAN

(2)

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 4:4b; Gen. 1:26a, 27a; Phil. 2:7b; Gen. 2:8-9; John 1:1, 14; Heb. 2:16-17; 1 Tim. 3:16

In this message we shall continue to consider the Man-Savior's incarnation fulfilling the purpose of God's creation of man.

GOD'S INTENTION IN THE CREATION OF MAN

In the foregoing message we pointed out that God designed man to be one with Him. Because God designed man this way, He created man in His image and after His likeness. Image refers to the inward being, and likeness, to the outward appearance. Actually, God created man in His own image with the intention that man would be His duplication. Furthermore, for man to become a duplication of God, he must have the capacity to contain what God is. Therefore, man was made in God's image to be His duplication and after His likeness to be His expression.

God's purpose in creating man was that man would be His duplication in order to express Him. In order for this purpose to be carried out, it is necessary for man to receive God and contain Him as the tree of life. However, Adam, the man created by God, failed in God's purpose and damaged God's design. Thousands of years later, the Man-Savior came to fulfill God's purpose in creating man.

THE SECOND MAN

Through the incarnation of Christ God in the Son

became a man. What a great matter this is! God had created man with a purpose according to His design, but man failed Him in His purpose and destroyed His design. Instead of creating another man, God Himself came to be the second Man (1 Cor. 15:47). God came to be the second Man not in the Father nor in the Spirit but in the Son.

The New Testament way of speaking about the incarnation is to say that the Word, which is God, became flesh (John 1:1, 14) and that God was manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). Since the first man failed God in His purpose and ruined His design, God Himself came to be the second Man. Hallelujah for the second Man!

Conceived of the Holy Spirit and Born of a Human Virgin

The Man-Savior as the second Man was not created: rather, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a human virgin. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in order to have the essence of God, and He was born of a human virgin in order to have the human essence. Therefore, this Man was a composition of two essences, a composition of the divine essence and the human essence. Hence, He was the mingling of God with man. Because this wonderful One was a composition of two essences, the mingling of God with man, He was a God-man.

Living a Human Life Filled With the Divine Life

A crucial matter concerning the God-man is that He lived a human life filled with the divine life as its content. Contrary to what some may think, the Gospel of Luke is not merely a book of stories. This Gospel is a revelation of the God-man who lived a human life filled with the divine life as its content. As the One who lived such a life, the Man-Savior had the divine nature with the divine attributes, that is, with the divine love, light, righteousness, and holiness. The divine nature with its attributes was expressed in the Man-Savior's human nature with all the human virtues.

The Love of the God-Man

Because the Man-Savior's divine nature with the divine attributes was expressed in His human nature with the human virtues, it is difficult to say when He was living on earth whether it was God loving others or a man loving. In the life of the Man-Savior we see a love that is the love of a God-man, the love of the One who lived a human life filled with the divine life. Because the Lord lived in this way, His love was the human virtue of love filled with the divine attribute of love.

Certain cases recorded in the Gospel of Luke illustrate the fact that the Man-Savior's love was a love in which the attribute of divine love is expressed in the virtue of human love. We see this love in the case of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), in the case of the sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee (7:36-50), and in the case of the thief on the cross who asked the Lord Jesus to remember him (23:39-43). In each case the Lord Jesus exercised a genuine human love. However, His love was not merely human; it was a human love filled with the divine love and also strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by the divine love.

In reading the Gospel of Luke, we may not see that with the Man-Savior we have human love filled, strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by the divine love. Readers of the New Testament can easily realize that the Lord Jesus loves others. Children are even taught to sing, "Jesus loves me, this I know." But what kind of love does Jesus have? Is His love human or divine? His love is not merely human love nor merely divine love; His love is human love filled, strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by and with the divine love. This wonderful love is a composition, a mingling, of the divine love with the human love. This love was the living of the Man-Savior, the living of the God-man. The Lord's living was a matter of the human virtues filled, strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by the divine attributes.

Qualified to Be the Man-Savior

It was this kind of living that qualified the Lord Jesus

to be our Man-Savior. He saved sinners by such a human-divine living, by a living that was humanly divine and divinely human. The living of the Lord Jesus was not merely human nor merely divine; it was humanly divine and divinely human. His living was the dynamic power by which He saved pitiful sinners.

If we understand this, we shall realize that the divine love merely by itself could not save us. Of course, mere human love could not save us. The love that saves us must be a composition of the human love and the divine love. The mingling of these two loves is a saving love.

A living where the human life is filled with the divine life and the human virtues are strengthened and enriched by the divine attributes is what we have called the highest standard of morality. In the Gospel of Luke we see a life filled with human virtues that are strengthened, uplifted, and enriched by divine attributes. In such a living we see the composition, the mingling, of God with man. This living is both the saving power and the qualification of the Lord Jesus to be our Savior. In His status as a God-man the Man-Savior is qualified to save us.

As sincere Christians following the Lord Jesus, we need to know Him to the extent that we know Him as the One who lived a life in which the human virtues expressed the divine attributes. Our Man-Savior is such a man. Because He lived in this way, He was able and qualified to save us.

This One, our Man-Savior, accomplished an all-inclusive death on the cross for our redemption. Then God raised Him from among the dead as God's verification of and God's sanction to His life and work. This resurrected God-man has ascended to the heavens, has been enthroned and crowned with glory and honor, and has been made the Head of all. Oh, we all need to know this wonderful Person!

THE RESTORATION OF FALLEN HUMANITY THROUGH CHRIST'S INCARNATION

The Man-Savior's incarnation was mainly to bring God into man. His incarnation was also to restore to recover, damaged humanity. God made Adam in His own image

and after His own likeness, but Adam became fallen. Now within the fallen humanity there is sin--the evil nature of the Devil (Rom. 7:17; 1 John 3:8). Nevertheless, the humanity created by God still remains. When Christ, who is the very God, was incarnated, He restored the lost and damaged humanity. God sent His own Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3), that is, in the likeness of fallen humanity.

Christ became flesh not only to save man but also to restore the fallen humanity. Yes, He came to save man. But He will not save man and then leave him unrestored. The Lord will not save a fallen person without restoring him.

Christians look forward to going to heaven. But anyone who goes to heaven will be a restored person, a transformed person. To be transformed is to be restored, recovered.

Two Kinds of Humanity

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He had a humanity that had been rescued from the state of the fall. Through incarnation, He put on a recovered, restored, humanity. As the God-man was living in such an uplifted humanity, all those around Him, including His disciples, were living in a fallen, damaged humanity. Their humanity was not the humanity originally created by God. On the contrary, it was a damaged and deformed humanity. For example, after the Lord Jesus told the disciples that He was going up to Jerusalem and would be put to death and raised up on the third day, they were debating among themselves concerning who was greater. Here we see two kinds of humanity--the uplifted, restored, and recovered humanity of the Lord Jesus and the deformed, damaged, and lost humanity of the disciples.

The Recovery of the Disciples' Humanity

Through the Man-Savior's death and resurrection, the fallen humanity of His disciples was recovered. In chapters one and two of Acts we see that the disciples had another kind of humanity, an uplifted and restored humanity. In

the Gospels they were arguing about who was greater. But in Acts 1 they could pray persistently and perseveringly in one accord for ten days. They could do this because they had another humanity. Their humanity had been uplifted, restored, and recovered. Not only had they been saved, but their humanity had been restored, recovered, through the Spirit's regeneration and transformation.

Adam should have lived in the garden of Eden the kind of life Peter and John lived in the first chapters of Acts. But because Adam failed in God's purpose, God came through incarnation to be the second Man. This second Man uplifted, restored, and recovered the deformed, damaged, and lost humanity. Through the Man-Savior's restoring, Peter, John, James and the other disciples participated in His humanity. How marvelous!

We should not think that the Lord Jesus came down from His glory merely to save us and bring us to heaven. If this is His intention, then heaven will eventually be filled with people with a deformed humanity. This, however, is not the Lord's intention. Do you think that the one thief who asked the Lord to remember him in His kingdom will be brought to heaven still with a thief's fallen nature? To be sure, no one in heaven will have the nature of the thief. Every person brought to heaven will be a restored human being. The restoration of our humanity was made possible by God's incarnation to be our Man-Savior. The Man-Savior's incarnation was for the fulfillment of God's purpose in the creation of man.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-EIGHT

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY CONSTITUTING HIS QUALIFICATION AND THE BASIC FACTOR FOR HIS DYNAMIC SALVATION

(1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:31; Matt. 5:20; Phil. 3:9

We have seen in the two foregoing messages that the Man-Savior's incarnation was for the fulfilling of God's purpose in creating man. In this message we shall go on to consider the Man-Savior's highest standard of morality. This morality constitutes the Man-Savior's qualification and the basic factor for His dynamic salvation. The Man-Savior's morality qualifies Him to save us. Furthermore, His morality is the basic factor for His dynamic salvation. These matters are very difficult to explain, and we look to the Lord for help through His unveiling Spirit.

CONCEIVED OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE WITH THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES FOR THE CONTENT AND REALITY OF THE HUMAN VIRTUES

The Man-Savior was conceived of the divine essence, which actually is God Himself with the divine attributes. In other words, the divine essence is God with all that He is. According to the Bible, what God is is revealed mainly in four aspects: love, light, righteousness, and holiness. God is love (1 John 4:8). Love is God's intrinsic nature. God is also light (1 John 1:5). Light is God's shining, His expression. Love refers to what God is intrinsically within Himself, and light refers to God's expression. Holiness refers to God's nature and righteousness to God's way of doing things. According to the full revelation of the Scriptures, God is love and light and He is also holy and

righteous. These are the divine attributes, and the Man-Savior was conceived of God with these attributes.

The divine attributes are for the human virtues. The Man-Savior was conceived of God with the divine attributes for the content and reality of His human virtues.

In understanding this, it is helpful to use the illustration of a glove. If a glove is not filled with a hand, the glove will be empty. The hand is both the content and reality of the glove. Only when the hand is put into the glove does the glove have content and reality. It is the hand in the glove that causes it to have content. Furthermore, when the hand moves, the glove also moves. The glove is designed to fit the hand, but it does not have life. It is the hand that causes the glove to move. When the hand moves, the hand within the glove will be expressed through the glove.

We may say that we are a "glove" designed to contain God as our content and reality. Christ was conceived of God with His attributes to be the content and reality of the "glove" of His human virtues.

To Fill the Empty Human Virtues

As the One who was conceived of the divine essence with the divine attributes to be the content and reality of His human virtues, Christ fills the empty human virtues. Human love, for example, is a shell that should contain the divine love. Without containing the divine love, human love is merely an empty shell. The Man-Savior was conceived of God with the divine attributes in order to fill His human virtues. With Him the human virtues are not empty. However, with us the human virtues are empty. The reason the human virtues are not empty with Jesus Christ, the Man-Savior, is that His human virtues are filled with the divine attributes.

To Strengthen and Enrich the Human Virtues

In the age of innocence, before sin had come in, Adam was clean and innocent. His virtues, however, might not

have been strong and rich. But in the Lord Jesus, the second man the human virtues are strong and rich. In Christ's human love, for instance, there is strength. Because His human love is a strengthened, enriched love, it cannot be broken or defeated. The Lord's love is rich because it has been filled with the divine attribute of love. Hence, His love is a mingled love, a composition of the human love with the divine love.

We may not have the concept that Christ's incarnation was to fill, strengthen, and enrich the human virtues. I did not realize this years ago. Through the LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE I have been deeply impressed with the fact that the Man-Savior's incarnation caused the empty human virtues to be filled, strengthened, and enriched with the divine attributes.

To Sanctify the Human Virtues

The divine attributes also sanctify the human virtues. For Christ to be incarnated means that He became flesh. Concerning this, John 1:1 and 14 say that the Word, which is God, became flesh. By the time of the Lord's incarnation, the word "flesh" signified something that was not positive. Regarding the incarnation of Christ, the Bible says that He came in the *likeness* of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3). This means that when He became flesh, He came in the likeness of the flesh of sin, but did not have the nature of the flesh of sin. This is typified by the brass serpent in Numbers 21. The brass serpent was in the form of a serpent, but it did not have the nature of a serpent. Likewise, when Christ became flesh, He had only the appearance of the flesh of sin; He did not have the nature of sinful flesh. After Christ became flesh, it was necessary for this flesh to be restored.

Luke 1:35 says, "The angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; wherefore also the holy thing which is born will be called, Son of God." Because what was conceived in Mary was of the Holy Spirit, what was born of this conception was a "holy thing," something intrinsically holy. This holy thing, however, was born into

flesh. The "thing" was holy, but the flesh was not holy. However, the holy thing that was born into the flesh would sanctify, restore, flesh. Christ was conceived of the divine essence with the divine attributes to sanctify the human virtues.

The incarnation is a mystery. Through incarnation God was born into man to produce a God-man. Not only was the Lord's conception and birth a mystery, His human living for thirty-three and a half years was a mystery as well. The One who lived in Nazareth in the home of a carpenter was not merely a man; He was also God. A man with God in Him was working as a carpenter in Nazareth. What a mystery!

The Man-Savior's life on earth was a mystery, and our Christian life is likewise a mystery. Regeneration certainly is a mystery. It surely is a great mystery that Christ lives in us. Who is able to explain this great mystery in full? Sometimes I have pondered the matter of Christ living in me. I have asked myself how it could be possible that Christ, the embodiment of God, lives in me. Nevertheless, the Bible reveals that the Triune God became incarnate, passed through human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, and now lives in us and is our life.

After studying the Scriptures thoroughly, I am convinced that it is a divine book. No other writings can compare with it. Although it is a great mystery that Christ lives in us. I believe what the Bible says concerning it.

To Express God in the Human Virtues

We have seen that the Man-Savior was conceived of the divine essence with the divine attributes so that these attributes would be the content and reality of His human virtues and that the divine attributes would fill, strengthen, enrich, and sanctify His human virtues. Now we need to see that the divine attributes are for the expression of God in the human virtues.

The divine attributes fill, strengthen, enrich, and sanctify the human virtues for the purpose of expressing God in the human virtues. According to the four Gospels, whatever the Lord Jesus did in His life on earth was the

expression of God in His human virtues. In the Man-Savior the divine attributes were brought into the human virtues for the expression of God.

BORN OF THE HUMAN ESSENCE WITH THE HUMAN VIRTUES CREATED BY GOD FOR MAN

The Lord Jesus was born of the human essence with the human virtues created by God for man (Luke 1:31). To say that He was born of the human essence means that He was born of man, that is, of mankind, of humankind. Christ was born of mankind with the human virtues created by God for man.

One of the main aspects of God's creation of man was the creation of man's virtues. If man did not have virtues, what would be the difference between man and animals?

What is the difference between man and animals? Of course, one important difference is that man has a spirit. But another vital difference is that God created man with human virtues. Animals, on the contrary, do not have virtues. For example, a dog may be very nice, but it does not have any virtues. But we human beings have human virtues. Therefore, the difference between man and animals is not only that man has a spirit but also that man has virtues.

When Christ became incarnated, He put on the human virtues. He was born of mankind with the human virtues God had created. According to Genesis 1, God created man in His image. The phrase "in His image" implies the human virtues. This means that the human virtues are actually the image of God for the expression of God. Therefore, the human virtues were created by God for man so that man may express Him.

In His incarnation the Man-Savior was born in such a way as to have the human virtues. He was conceived of God to have the divine attributes, and He was born of mankind to have the human virtues. With Him the divine attributes filled the human virtues, and the human virtues contained the divine attributes. In the Man-Savior the divine attributes and human virtues are one; that is, the

divine attributes and human virtues are mingled together as one. With the Man-Savior the divine attributes are in the human virtues, and the human virtues contain the divine attributes.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE FIFTY-NINE

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY CONSTITUTING HIS QUALIFICATION AND THE BASIC FACTOR FOR HIS DYNAMIC SALVATION

(2)

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20; Luke 1:31; Matt. 5:20; Phil. 3:9

In the previous message we saw that the Man-Savior was conceived of the divine essence with the divine attributes for the content and reality of His human virtues (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20). The Lord Jesus was conceived in this way so that the divine attributes might fill the empty human virtues, strengthen, enrich, and sanctify the human virtues, and express God in the human virtues. We have also seen that the Man-Savior was born of the human essence with the human virtues created by God for man (Luke 1:31). In Him the divine attributes and the human virtues are mingled. The divine attributes fill His human virtues, and His human virtues contain the divine attributes.

RESCUING THE HUMAN VIRTUES FROM MAN'S FALL

The Man-Savior was born of the human essence with the human virtues in order to rescue these virtues from man's fall. Before the Lord Jesus was born, man had become fallen. Therefore, with the exception of the Lord Jesus, the virtues of every human being are fallen. This was true even of the human virtues of Mary and Joseph. We do not agree with the Roman Catholic teaching that Mary did not have a sinful nature. (The doctrine of the sinlessness of Mary became an official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church in

1854). This teaching has no basis in the Scriptures, and we do not believe it.

In the Gospels, we can see the difference between the Man-Savior's human virtues and those of Mary and Joseph. For example, the record in Luke 2 indicates that the Lord's virtues are high, pure, and perfect. When the Man-Savior was twelve, He said to His parents, who had been searching for Him, "Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?" (2:49). On the other hand, "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them" (2:51). This was subjection in His humanity to His human parents. As we read this account, we see how excellent the human virtues of the Lord Jesus were. Mary's virtues, by contrast, were not that excellent. As we compare these two kinds of human virtues, we see that the Lord's virtues were uplifted, whereas Mary's virtues were not strengthened, enriched, and uplifted by the divine attributes. From this we see that it certainly is necessary for the human virtues to be rescued from the fall.

RESTORING AND RECOVERING THE HUMAN VIRTUES FROM THE DAMAGE OF MAN'S FALL

The Man-Savior was born of the human essence with the human virtues also to restore and recover man's virtues from the damage of man's fall. Because of the fall, our human virtues have been damaged. For example, the virtue of love has been damaged. A brother may love his wife very much one day, and the next day he may be unhappy with her and even think of divorcing her. This is a strong sign that his human love has been damaged.

The love a girl has for her mother is also a damaged love. A girl may be very loving toward her mother at one moment, but this love is easily broken and may suddenly change. This proves that a girl's human love for her mother is a fallen and damaged love.

The human virtues of righteousness and holiness have also been damaged by the fall. Our righteousness has so many "holes" in it that it can be compared to a beehive. Can you count how many holes you have in your righteousness?

Our love, brightness, righteousness, and holiness have all been damaged.

The Man-Savior's incarnation was not only to rescue our virtues from the fall; His incarnation was also to restore and recover our virtues from the damage of the fall. Something may be rescued without being restored, or may be restored without being recovered. Our human virtues need to be rescued, restored, and recovered.

UPLIFTING THE HUMAN VIRTUES TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD

Furthermore, the Man-Savior was incarnated in order to uplift the human virtues to the highest standard, to the standard that matches God's attributes for the expression of God. Because our virtues were damaged and deformed, they could not match God's attributes. But the uplifted human virtues can match God's attributes. The Man-Savior was born of the human essence with the human virtues in order to uplift these virtues to such a standard that they can match God's attributes for His expression.

PRODUCING THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY FOR THE SAVING POWER OF THE MAN-SAVIOR'S DYNAMIC SALVATION

The Man-Savior's being conceived of the divine essence with the divine attributes and being born of the human essence with the human virtues produced the highest standard of morality. This morality is for the saving power of the Man-Savior's dynamic salvation. The result of the divine attributes filling the empty human virtues, strengthening, enriching, and sanctifying the human virtues, and expressing God in the human virtues is the highest standard of morality. The Lord Jesus refers to this morality in Matthew 5:20: "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens." Here the Lord charges us to have a surpassing righteousness, which is not merely an objective righteousness, but a subjective righteousness, the

indwelling Christ lived out of us as our righteousness. Of course, the Man-Savior Himself had such a surpassing righteousness, and this righteousness is the highest standard of morality.

Paul in Philippians 3:9 speaks of the highest standard of morality: "And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith." Paul was endeavoring to be found in Christ not with his own righteousness, a human righteousness, but having the righteousness of God. This indicates that we Christians need to live a righteousness that is actually God Himself. Paul aspired to be found in Christ having such a surpassing righteousness, a righteousness of the highest standard, that is, the righteousness of God.

How can we have the righteousness of God? We can only have this righteousness by having God live in us. If God does not live in us, we cannot live Him. If we do not live God, we cannot live the righteousness of God. To live the righteousness of God, we must have God Himself living in us. This is the surpassing righteousness the righteousness of the highest standard. The Man-Savior's incarnation was to produce this highest standard of morality, and this morality is for the saving power of His dynamic salvation.

Due to the influence of tradition, many Christians have the wrong concept concerning the Lord's salvation. Their concept is that our Savior, Jesus Christ, came merely to save us from hell and to bring us to heaven. This understanding of salvation is very inadequate. The Man-Savior's way of saving us is much higher than this.

According to His way of saving us, the Man-Savior first brought God's attributes into man's virtues. Then He lived a life with the human virtues filled, strengthened, enriched, and sanctified by the divine attributes. In such a living there is saving power. The Lord does not save us by merely stretching out His hand to rescue us from hell. Rather, when He saves us, He comes into us as the one with the human virtues filled with the divine attributes. Such a life saves us from within and uplifts our human virtues, restoring, sanctifying, and transforming us. A person who is saved in

this way will surely not go to hell. Instead, he will go to the place where God is.

However, suppose a person could actually be saved according to the natural concept of merely being rescued from hell and brought to heaven. If Christ simply stretched forth His hand to lift us out of hell into heaven, God would not be pleased. He would say to such a person, "I am not happy with what you are. Your person is offensive to Me. I don't want you to remain here in heaven with Me."

We need to see that the Man-Savior's way of saving us is not superficial. In order to save us, He, the very God, came into man, bringing God's attributes into man's virtues. While He was on earth, He lived the life of a God-man, with the divine attributes filling His human virtues. Eventually, He died on the cross and was resurrected. In His resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Now as the life-giving Spirit He enters into us to bring God into our being and to fill our virtues with God's attributes. In this way we are being saved day by day. We are being saved in the way of the Lord's restoring, His transforming.

THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY CONSTITUTING THE QUALIFICATION AND THE BASIC FACTOR FOR THE MAN-SAVIOR'S DYNAMIC SALVATION

The highest standard of morality constitutes the qualification for the Man-Savior's dynamic salvation. Only the Man-Savior has this qualification; no other person, including Confucius and Plato, is so qualified. In the Gospel of Luke there are a number of cases illustrating that the Man-Savior's standard of morality qualifies Him for dynamic salvation. The best illustration is the parable of the good Samaritan (10:25-37). This Samaritan lived the highest standard of morality, and He saved the fallen one by His standard of morality.

The highest standard of morality also constitutes the basic factor for the Man-Savior's dynamic salvation. We see this in the case of Zaccheus (19:1-10). Because of the Man-

Savior's dynamic salvation, Zaccheus became another person immediately after coming into contact with Him.

When the Man-Savior came to the house of Zaccheus, He came with the Spirit of power (Luke 4:18) and with the indestructible eternal life (Heb. 7:16) to impart into him at his believing in Him (John 3:15). The Spirit of power and the eternal life were both conveyed in the highest standard of His morality. When He, as such a dynamic Man-Savior, looked at Zaccheus and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down; for today I must stay in your house," Zaccheus responded.

We may compare Zaccheus to an electrical toy that responds as soon as electricity flows into it. What made Zaccheus respond as he did? It was the Spirit with the eternal life, as the divine electricity, that flowed into him from the Man-Savior. Without the Spirit, there would have been no way for Him as the eternal life to get into Zaccheus. His humanity in the highest standard of morality was the "wire" conveying the "electricity" of the Spirit with the eternal life. The Spirit with the eternal life as the divine electricity was within the Lord's humanity of the highest standard. When He looked at Zaccheus and talked to him, the Spirit with His eternal life entered into him.

During the years of His ministry on earth, the Lord Jesus was like a great magnet drawing people to Himself. Attracted by Him, the disciples left everything to follow Him. We know from the four Gospels that great crowds went after Him. We also have been drawn to Him by His powerful Person. The reason we spend so much time in meetings is that we have been attracted to the Man-Savior. We have been drawn by His dynamic saving power. The Man-Savior's dynamic saving power is constituted of His highest standard of morality in which His powerful Spirit and eternal life are.

The Triune God is a mystery, and the incarnation of Christ is also a great mystery. Furthermore, the Man-Savior's living on earth was mysterious. First, He was a magnet attracting His followers. Eventually, He came into His followers and made each one of them a mystery. This

is the reason that, as believers, we are a mystery to our relatives and friends. They do not understand what we are doing day by day and why we are doing it. Actually, we are all living a mysterious life.

Our being a mystery is altogether due to the Man-Savior, the God-man, whose divine attributes fill His human virtues to produce the highest standard of morality. As we have emphasized in this message, the Man-Savior's highest standard of morality constitutes the qualification for His dynamic salvation; it also constitutes the basic factor for this salvation. How marvelous!

What we have been covering in this message is not merely a doctrine. We have been considering a living Person, the God-man with the highest standard of morality as His saving power. We should not be content with teachings--we need the Man-Savior with His dynamic salvation. I encourage you to bring to the Lord this matter of the Man-Savior's highest standard of morality constituting His qualification and the basic factor for His dynamic salvation. If you bring this to the Lord in prayer, I believe that He as the Spirit will speak more to you concerning His highest standard of morality.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S GOD-MAN LIVING

(1)

Scripture Reading: Heb. 2:14a, 16-17a; Phil. 2:6-8; John 1:1, 14; 5:30; 6:38

The title of this message is "The Man-Savior's God-man Living." Have you ever considered this matter? Have you ever realized that when the Lord Jesus was on earth, His living was a God-man living? His living was not merely that of a man; rather, His living was the living of a God-man.

SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING GOD'S SALVATION

The Need for God's Incarnation

In order to save us, God had to live in a man for thirty-three and a half years. Have you ever thought about this? In creating the universe God used only six days, and on the seventh day He rested. Why, then, did God need to live on earth in a man for so many years in order to save us? Not only did the Lord become a man; He lived on earth as a man for thirty-three and a half years.

Shortly after I was saved, I began to consider God's way of saving us. I said to myself, "God is almighty. If He wanted to, He could save us by snatching us out of hell and bringing us to heaven. Why did He become a man and live on earth?"

The Lord's human living was genuine. Genuine human living is found not with the upper class but with the middle and lower classes. The Lord Jesus did not live His human life as part of the upper class of society. Instead, He was a member of a poor family and worked as a carpenter, living in the lower class of society. Even though

He was a royal descendant of the family of David, He was born into a poor family and lived among the lower class for thirty years. At the age of thirty, He came forth to minister and ministered for three and a half years.

Since God is almighty, why did He not save us in the same way He created the universe? In His creation, God simply had to speak, and a certain matter came into being. For example, He said, "Let there be light," and there was light (Gen. 1:3). Concerning creation, Psalm 33:9 says, "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Since God created the heavens and the earth in this way, why was it necessary for Him to live on earth for thirty-three and a half years in order to save us?

The Application of Christ's Redemption

Another question we have concerns the application of Christ's redemption. The Man-Savior accomplished redemption more than nineteen hundred years ago. Why did He not immediately apply this accomplished redemption to all His chosen people and thereby not give the enemy the opportunity to do so many evil things?

Consider the situation from the time Christ accomplished redemption until now. Yes, Christianity has spread throughout the world, but actually there is little life. It seems that during the past nineteen centuries God has not accomplished very much. God has been working throughout the years, but there has been a great deal of opposition and attack. Satan, God's enemy, has attacked God's chosen people again and again. Why does this happen? Why did the Lord not apply His redemption immediately? If He did this, there might not be the need even for the millennium. After the application of redemption, everything would become new. There would be a new heaven, a new earth, and the New Jerusalem, where all God's redeemed ones would be.

Have you ever considered matters such as these? Have you ever wondered why there is such a gap between the accomplishment of redemption and the application of

redemption? I can testify that I have been thinking about these things for more than fifty years.

The Lord's Human Living

At the beginning of my Christian life, I wondered why God did not save us in a fast way, in a way like His work in creation. When I asked my pastor about this, he told me that because we are human beings it was necessary for our Savior to become a man. In creation, of course, there was no need for God to become a man. But in salvation it certainly was necessary for Him to become a man.

It was easier for God to create man than it was for Him to become a man. In creating man God had no difficulty; He simply did the work of creation. But God became involved with certain difficulties when He became a man. In His creation God merely did certain things. But in His salvation He not only did things--He became a man.

As I considered God's incarnation for our salvation, I realized that it was logical for God to become a man in order to save us. But I still did not understand why He needed to live on earth for thirty-three and a half years. Why did He not become a man, stay on earth for a short period of time, perhaps a month, and then go to the cross to accomplish redemption? Why did He need to become a baby growing day by day? Luke 2:40 says, "And the little child grew and became strong, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." Here we see that the Lord Jesus grew in a normal way; He did not grow to full stature in a short period of time. Furthermore, instead of preaching for only several days and then dying for our redemption, the Lord Jesus ministered for three and a half years before going to the cross to accomplish redemption.

In the four Gospels we have a lengthy record of the Lord's life and ministry. The Gospel of Matthew, for example, contains twenty-eight chapters. Instead of simply telling that the Lord Jesus was born and that He died for our redemption and was resurrected, Matthew records many other matters. In the Gospels we see that the Man-Savior did not grow up miraculously; on the contrary, He grew up in a normal way. But why was this necessary?

Because we were fallen and sinful. we needed the Lord Jesus to die for us. He suffered a vicarious death for our salvation. But why did He need to suffer so many things during the thirty-three and a half years of His life?

Actually, only the last three hours on the cross were hours of vicarious suffering. During the first three hours He did not suffer vicariously. During the second period of three hours, God came in to judge the Man-Savior as our Substitute, "and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour" (Luke 23:44). Why, then, did He need to suffer during His first three hours on the cross, since that suffering was not for our sins?

For years I tried to find answers to these questions in books, but I failed to do so in full. Answers in full to these questions came only as a result of more than fifty years of personal, direct study of the Word, especially during the last ten years in which we have been carrying on the Life-study of the New Testament, a study that will be completed with the book of Acts.

GOD'S WAY OF SAVING US

Let us compare two possible ways of saving people. First, suppose God simply stretches forth His hand, snatches a sinner out of hell, and brings him to heaven. This way of saving a person would be easy. The second way, the way taken by God, is much more difficult. According to His way. God became a man and lived a human life on earth.

Through His incarnation God brought the divine attributes into the human virtues, filling, restoring, recovering. sanctifying, and transforming them. Consider how much time it required for man's virtues to be uplifted and transformed in this way. In His salvation, God does not simply snatch people out of hell and bring them into heaven. Rather for our salvation the saving God became a man and lived the kind of life on earth that qualified Him to save us. This life also became the basic factor of the Man-Savior's dynamic salvation. The procedure that qualified the Man-

Savior required a long period of time.

The first step of God's salvation was to become a man, live on earth. die on the cross, and he resurrected. In the second step, the Man-Savior comes into the saved ones, lives in us, and grows in us, repeating His life in us.

Not only does the Lord grow gradually in the believers; He has also been spreading gradually throughout the world. Instead of suddenly spreading everywhere, the Lord has spread gradually from place to place. At first, His spread was only in the area of the Mediterranean Sea, and eventually He spread to North America and to China. One day, He came into me and you. Fifty-nine years ago, in 1925 the Man-Savior came into me. From that time onward, He has been living in me and growing in me.

How shall we speak of the Lord's saving us by coming into us and living in us? We may say that this is salvation in life. However. the term "salvation in life" has been damaged by some Bible teachers who actually do not know adequately what it means to be saved in life (Rom. 5:10). According to the Bible, life is God Himself coming into us to live in us. It takes time for us to be saved in this way.

THE LIVING OF A GOD-MAN

The Man-Savior went through a long process not to save us by snatching us out of hell, but to carry out His dynamic salvation. The term "dynamic salvation" means that God became a man and lived a man's life to express God. Although He lived a man's life, He did not express man--He expressed God. As the Man-Savior lived such a life on earth, the angels and demons could testify that He was man living a human life for the expression of God. This is the Man-Savior's God-man living. The four Gospels tell us of the One who lived the life of a God-man.

In Luke 2:40-62 we see the Man-Savior growing and advancing. When He became twelve years old, He went with His parents to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover according to custom (vv. 41-42). Luke also tells us that the Lord Jesus began His ministry when He was about thirty years old (3:23). Only in the Gospel of Luke are we told

what happened to the Lord Jesus at the ages of twelve and thirty. The reason is that Luke presents the Lord Jesus as a genuine and typical man. In the Gospel of Luke we see that the Lord was a real man a normal man; He was not a magical person. The Lord grew in a normal, human way. Eventually, at the age of thirty, He had come to maturity for the divine ministry. According to the Old Testament, a Levite had to be thirty years of age before he could enter fully into the priesthood. Likewise, the Man-Savior was fully grown when He entered into His ministry.

The Man-Savior's living was a God-man living. When He was on the earth, the Lord Jesus lived a God-man. This living is a fact recorded in the Bible. We thank the Lord that we can study the account of the Lord's God-man living recorded in the Gospels. The more I study the four Gospels and the more messages I give on them, the more convinced I become that the Lord Jesus truly was the God-man.

A MAN EXPRESSING GOD

We have seen that the Man-Savior did not live a life expressing man. He lived a man's life, yet this life expressed God. Hence, the Lord's living was a God-man living. He lived a life in which God was expressed through man.

We have used the illustration of a hand and a glove to show how God was expressed through the Man-Savior's humanity. A glove contains the hand and expresses the hand. When the hand in the glove moves, the glove also moves. But as the glove moves, it does not express the glove; it expresses the hand. In a similar way, the Lord Jesus lived on earth as a man, but He did not express man; He expressed God. He lived a life expressing God. When people saw Him, they saw a genuine man. Nevertheless, what they saw in Him was the expression of God. They did not see a man expressing man; they saw a man expressing God.

Concerning the expression of God in the Lord Jesus, John says, "We beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from a father" (John 1:14). Glory is the

expression of God. Therefore, when the disciples saw the Lord's glory, they saw the expression of God.

The Apostle John was one of the sons of thunder (Mark 3:17). Although he was bold and impetuous, he was attracted to the Man-Savior and followed Him. He and his brother James were the second group attracted to the Lord Jesus. (The first group was composed of Peter and Andrew.) When the Lord called John and James, they were "in the boat with Zebedee their father mending their nets" (Matt. 4:21). But they were attracted to the Lord and left the boat and their father and followed Him (Matt. 4:22). For the next three and a half years they saw the God-man's living, although they did not understand what they were seeing. But after the Man-Savior's resurrection, their eyes were opened, and they began to understand the Man-Savior's God-man living.

When John wrote his Gospel, he was very old, probably in his nineties. He testified that God became flesh and that they beheld His glory. A man was living and walking with them, and in this One they saw the glory of God. When He was with them in the flesh, they did not understand that the Lord was a man living a human life to express God. But after His resurrection they came to realize that they had seen God expressed in Jesus the Nazarene.

The Gospels record the history of the Man-Savior's God-man living. Now this history needs to be written into our being. In a forthcoming message we shall see that God's desire is to reproduce in us the Man-Savior and His God-man living.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-ONE

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S GOD-MAN LIVING

(2)

Scripture Reading: Heb. 2:14a, 16-17a; Phil. 2:6-8; John 1:1, 14; 5:30; 6:38

In this message we shall continue to consider the Man-Savior's God-man living.

THE MAN-SAVIOR

A Genuine Man with a Real Human Nature and the Perfect Human Virtues for the Qualification to Be Man's Savior

The Man-Savior is a genuine man with the real human nature and the perfect human virtues. Here we use three adjectives to describe the Man-Savior in His humanity: genuine, real, and perfect. As a man, the Man-Savior is genuine. His nature is real; that is, He was a real human being, not a phantom. Furthermore, the Man-Savior's human virtues are perfect. In order to be qualified to be man's Savior, the Lord Jesus had to be a genuine man with a real human nature and the perfect human virtues. Because He is genuine as a man, real in His human nature, and perfect in His human virtues, He is qualified to be the Man-Savior.

The Complete God with the True Divine Nature and the Excellent Divine Attributes to Empower and Ensure His Ability to Save Man

The Man-Savior was not only a genuine man; He was also the complete God. As the complete God, He had the true divine nature and the excellent divine attributes.

Orthodox theologians and fundamental Bible teachers

agree that Christ is the complete God. However, some will not admit that this One is not only the Son of God but also the Father and the Spirit. On the one hand, they teach that Christ is the complete God; on the other hand, they teach that Christ is only part of the Trinity. Hence, with these theologians and teachers there is a contradiction. If you say that Christ is only part of the Trinity, then He is not the complete God. Rather, He is simply a part of the complete God. The complete God is not merely the Father or merely the Spirit or merely the Son. The complete God is the Triune God--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

We would emphasize the fact that the Man-Savior is both a genuine man and the complete God. He is a genuine man with the real human nature and the perfect human virtues, and He is the complete God with the true divine nature and the excellent divine attributes. We have seen that with respect to His humanity the Man-Savior is genuine, real, and perfect. Now we need to see that with respect to His divinity He is complete, true, and excellent. He is the complete God, He has the true divine nature, and He has the excellent divine attributes. His human virtues are perfect, but His divine attributes are excellent; His attributes are superior, surpassing.

The Man-Savior's divine nature and excellent divine attributes empower and ensure His ability to save man. In His humanity there is the capacity to save us, the capacity for salvation. But this capacity is empowered and ensured by His divinity. His ability to save us is guaranteed by His divinity.

When some hear that the Man-Savior's divine nature and attributes empower and ensure His ability to save us, they may say, "Is there any verse in the Bible that says this? Have you read a book that teaches this?" I must answer both questions with a no. Apparently, there is not a verse in the Bible that teaches this, and I have never read a book that uses these expressions. Perhaps you are wondering why I have the boldness to speak this way. My answer is that this kind of teaching is the result of more than a half century of the study of the Bible. In particular,

it is the result of a ten-year Life-study of the New Testament, a study that will soon be completed with the book of Acts. According to the divine revelation in the Scriptures, the Man-Savior's divine nature and divine attributes empower and ensure His saving ability. The Bible as a whole certainly reveals that the Lord's divinity empowers His saving capacity, which is in His humanity.

First John 1:7 conveys the thought that the divinity of Christ empowers and ensures the saving capacity within His humanity. This verse says, "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." Here the name "Jesus" denotes the Lord's humanity, which is needed for the shedding of the redeeming blood, and the title "His Son" denotes the Lord's divinity, which is needed for the eternal efficacy of the redeeming blood. Thus, "the blood of Jesus His Son" indicates that this blood is the proper blood of a genuine man for redeeming God's fallen creatures with divine surety for its eternal efficacy, an efficacy that is all-prevailing in space and everlasting in time.

According to 1 John 1:7, the blood shed by the Man-Savior on the cross was not only the blood of Jesus but also the blood of the Son of God. It was the blood of one with a dual status, the status of both man and God. The blood of Jesus was the genuine blood of a real man required for our redemption. The efficacy of this blood is ensured by the Man-Savior's divinity. Divinity makes the blood of Jesus eternal. Apart from the Lord's divinity, His redemption could not be eternal.

The Lord's true divinity with His excellent attributes empowers and ensures His ability to save man. Humanity qualifies Him to save us, and divinity empowers Him to save us. His divinity also ensures His ability to save man.

THE GOD-MAN

Having the Human Nature with Its Virtues to Contain and Express God

As a genuine man and the complete God, the Man-Savior is the God-man. He has the human nature with its virtues to contain God and express Him. No one has ever

contained as much of God as the Lord Jesus does. With His human virtues He contained God and expressed Him. In the Olympic games athletes try their best to display their ability. But the God-man did not need to exert Himself to display His ability to contain and express God. No one can compare with Him in having the human nature with its virtues to contain and express God.

Having the Divine Nature with Its Divine Attributes to Be His Content and Reality for the Expression of God

As the God-man the Lord Jesus has the divine nature with its divine attributes to be His content and reality for the expression of God. The God-man has the essence of God, the nature of God, and the attributes of God. He is a genuine man with the real human nature and the perfect human virtues to express God. However, in order to express God, He must have God as His content and reality. Once again we may use the illustration of a glove. A glove expresses the hand. But if a glove is to express the hand, it must have the hand as its content and reality. The God-man is both the "glove" and the "hand," for He has both humanity as the container and divinity as the content.

Today the Man-Savior is still both man and God. He is man as the container, and He is God as the content. In Him we have the real human nature and the true divine nature. In Him we have the perfect human virtues and the excellent divine attributes. These two categories meet in Him and are mingled in Him to become one composition. Hence, He is the God-man.

However, in this mingling there is not the producing of a third nature, a nature that is neither fully human nor completely divine. Furthermore, after the essences of the two natures, the divine nature and the human nature, have been mingled and have become one composition, they still remain distinct. This means that in the mingling of divinity and humanity in the Man-Savior there is no confusion of the two natures. This mingling is mysterious; this God-man is truly a mystery.

When I was young, I did not receive this kind of help in understanding the Lord Jesus as the God-man. I am thankful that the young saints are able to receive this help today. The young generation in the Lord's recovery is very blessed to hear such a word concerning the God-man, the Man-Savior, with His human nature and His divine nature.

Many books say that Jesus Christ is the God-man, but which of them interprets the God-man in the way presented in these messages on the LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE? What is the God-man? He is a genuine man with a real human nature and perfect human virtues, and He is the complete God with the true divine nature and the excellent divine attributes. He has the human nature with its virtues to contain and express God. He also has the divine nature with its attributes to be His content and reality for the expression of God. This is the God-man.

THE GOD-MAN LIVING

The Living of a Genuine Man, but Not by Man's Life to Express Man in Man's Virtues

Let us now go on to consider the Man-Savior's God-man living. This is the living of a genuine man, but not by man's life--man's mind, will, and emotion--to express man in man's virtues.

Two verses from the Gospel of John are helpful in understanding this. In John 5:30 the Lord Jesus says, "I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." In John 6:38 He goes on to say, "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." In these verses we see that the Lord Jesus did not do or seek His own will.

In a very real sense, our will represents our whole being. Yes, in one sense our being is represented by our mind. The mind, however, represents our being only in thought; the will represents our being, or our soul, in its doings. You may have thought about many things, but how many of those things have you done? Perhaps out of a

hundred matters we have thought, only two have been accomplished. The point we are making here is that our mind represents our being in thought, and our will represents our being in action, in deeds.

The fact that the Lord Jesus did not seek or do His own will indicates that while He was living as a man, He was not living by His own mind, will, and emotion. This means that He was not living by His own life. Here "life" equals our being, and our being is composed of our mind, will, and emotion. The Man-Savior, the God-man, lived as a man, but He did not live by His own mind, will, and emotion.

A Genuine Man's Living by God's Life to Express God in God's Attributes

The Lord Jesus had a genuine man's living by God's mind, will, and emotion--to express God in God's attributes. The Lord did not seek His own will but God's will. He came not to do His own will but to do God's will. This means that He came to live as a man not by man's life, but by God's life. He lived by God's mind, will, and emotion to express God in God's attributes. These attributes are contained in and mingled with His human virtues.

In the Gospel of Luke we have many examples of the Man-Savior's God-man living. Consider the case of the good Samaritan (10:25-37). In the human living of the good Samaritan God was expressed. God was there empowering Him. The love expressed was not simply the Samaritan's human love; it was a human love strengthened, empowered, and enriched by the divine love. Hence, it was a superior love, a surpassing love.

Consider also the case of Zaccheus (19:1-10). In the Man-Savior's coming to Zaccheus and His dealing with him we see something divine. It is hard to explain what we see expressed in the man Jesus. Within Him there is something more than the divine omniscience. In Him the excellent divine attributes are present strengthening His human virtues. The Lord Jesus lived in the way of having His human virtues empowered by the divine attributes.

This was true of the Lord Jesus even at the age of twelve. When the Lord Jesus was twelve, He was a human

child. But as we read the account in Luke 2 we see that in this child there was the divine element. God's attributes were expressed in His human living.

The Lord Jesus lived a genuine human life, yet in His life we see the divine element and also certain divine factors. This life did not express man; it expressed God. This is the God-man's life and living.

Man's Mind, Will, and Emotion Becoming the Organs to Contain God's Life

In the living of the Lord Jesus, man's mind, will, and emotion became the organs to contain God's life. We may compare these organs to the fingers of a glove. Just as the fingers of a glove contain the real fingers, so the Man-Savior's mind, will. and emotion contain God's life. The five fingers of a glove are not real fingers but contain the five fingers of a human hand. In a similar way, the Lord's mind, will, and emotion are organs containing God's mind, will, and emotion. This was His God-Man living.

Man's Virtues Becoming a Shell, an Image, to Express God's Attributes That God May Be Expressed in Man's Living

In the Man-Savior's God-man living man's virtues became a shell, an image, to express God's attributes so that God may be expressed in man's living. From this we see that our human virtues--our love, brightness, holiness, and righteousness--are just a shell, the image created by God in Genesis 1:26. God created man in His image so that God may be expressed in man's living.

If we see this, we shall have the answer to the question raised in the foregoing message concerning why it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to live on earth for thirty-three and a half years before He died to accomplish redemption. If He had lived on earth only a short time, there would have been only a momentary expression of the divine attributes in His living. Such a brief expression

could be compared to a rainbow, which appears for a while and then vanishes. The Man-Savior lived a full human life for thirty-three and a half years. During those years he was proved to be without defect or imperfection. He did not fail in any way. His virtues were an image for an expression of God's attributes. Therefore, God was expressed in His living.

Constituting the Man-Savior's Qualification and a Prototype to His Believers

The Lord's God-man living constituted His qualification to be the Man-Savior. At the same time, this living constituted a prototype to His believers. As we shall see in the next message, this prototype is for the "mass production," the reproduction, of the God-man in the believers. In a factory, a great deal of time may be spent to produce a prototype. Once the prototype has been produced, it is then used for mass production. In a similar way, the Man-Savior's God-man living constituted Him a prototype so that He may now be reproduced in us. Praise the Lord for the prototype and for the mass production!

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-TWO

THE REPRODUCTION OF THE GOD-MAN

(1)

Scripture Reading: John 3:6b; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Phil. 1:19b, 20b. 21a; 2:5-8; 3:9-10; 4:8, 13

In this message and in the message following we shall consider the reproduction of the God-man. As we shall see, the reproduction of the God-man requires that we be reborn of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit, that we be transformed by the pneumatic Christ in our soul, and that we live Christ as the God-man.

HOW THE LORD BECOMES THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

After living a wonderful and excellent life, the Man-Savior went to the cross and died. Then in His resurrection He became a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). How did Christ become a life-giving Spirit in His resurrection? Notice that we are not asking why He became a life-giving Spirit, but how, in what way, He became a Spirit. The answer to this question is that the Man-Savior became a life-giving Spirit with a wonderful, all-inclusive qualification. The Lord Jesus was both God and man. For thirty-three and a half years He lived the life of a God-man; that is, He lived a human life by the divine life for the expression of God. After living this kind of life, He died on the cross as the all-inclusive One.

Whenever a living thing dies, the death of that thing corresponds to its nature. For example, a dog dies a dog death Likewise, an ant dies an ant death, and a fly dies a fly death. This principle also applies to human beings. An unknown person may die an insignificant death, but a great person dies a great death. The Lord Jesus was the all-inclusive One; therefore, He died an all-inclusive death.

After His all-inclusive death, the Lord was resurrected by God. It was in this condition with such a qualification that He became a life-giving Spirit.

THE EXTRACT OF THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST

The life-giving Spirit is actually an extract of the all-inclusive Christ. As we have pointed out elsewhere (see *The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John,* p. 2), an extract may be defined as liquid extracted from a plant or other organic matter and that contains its essence in concentrated form. A synonym for extract is "spirit," which is the essence of a substance extracted in liquid form. Wine, for example, may be regarded as an extract, or spirit, of grapes. Whenever we extract the essence of a particular substance, we get the spirit of that substance. Furthermore, an extract of something will always include the essence, elements, and substance of that thing. Suppose, for instance, that we have the extract of an orange. This extract will comprise the essence, the elements, the nature, and the substance of that orange. In a similar way, the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit comprises all that Christ is, all that He went through, and all that He accomplished, attained, and obtained.

Many Christians do not realize that the Spirit is the all-inclusive Spirit. In Philippians 1:19 Paul speaks of "the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Here Paul does not speak of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of God, but of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. In Philippians 1:19 the Spirit of God has become the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This is "the Spirit" mentioned in John 7:39. This is not merely the Spirit of God before the Lord's incarnation, but the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit with divinity, after the Lord's resurrection, compounded with the Lord's humanity, human living under the cross, crucifixion, and resurrection.

What is your understanding of Jesus and of Christ? Jesus is both the complete God and a genuine man. He is the Word who became flesh. In John 1:1 and 14 we see

that the Word that was in the beginning with God and that was God became flesh. As the God-man, Jesus was the complete God with the true divine nature and with excellent divine attributes, and a genuine man with a real human nature and with perfect human virtues.

Who, then, is Christ? Christ is the God-anointed Jesus passing through the process of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. In resurrection Jesus Christ became an extract of Himself, and this extract is the life-giving Spirit. Because this life-giving Spirit is the extract of the all-inclusive Christ, this Spirit also is all-inclusive.

Christ's becoming the life-giving Spirit is related to the reproduction of the God-man. How can the God-man be reproduced? The answer to this question is that the God-man is reproduced by the all-inclusive Spirit. Seeing this, we now need to find out in what way the God-man is reproduced by the all-inclusive Spirit.

REGENERATION--THE FIRST STEP OF THE REPRODUCTION OF THE GOD-MAN BY THE ALL-INCLUSIVE SPIRIT

The first step of the reproduction of the God-man by the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit is regeneration. The Lord Jesus spoke about regeneration to Nicodemus in John 3. To this ethical, cultured, and religious gentleman, He said, "You must be born anew" (John 3:7). To be born anew, or again, is to be born of another essence, the divine essence. The Lord seemed to be saying to Nicodemus, "You were born of the human essence, and now you need to be born of another essence--the essence of God. Nicodemus, you must be born of God."

Born of the Spirit

To be born of God is to be born of the Spirit. What is the Spirit? The Spirit is the extract of God. Actually, this extract is not merely of God; it is also of Jesus Christ. The regenerating Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

If we compare John 3:6 with John 3:14 and 15, we shall

see that the Spirit here is the extract of Jesus Christ. In John 3:6 the Lord Jesus says, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." If we would have the divine life, we must be born of the Spirit. In John 3:14 and 15 the Lord Jesus goes on to say, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that every one who believes in Him may have eternal life." Here the Lord refers to Himself as the crucified and resurrected Christ. Whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. Having eternal life is equal to being reborn. In other words, to be reborn is to have the divine life.

What does it mean to be born again, to be born of the Spirit? To be born of the Spirit is to receive the divine life. In these verses from John 3 we first have the Spirit and then the crucified and resurrected Son of Man. As we compare these verses we see that here the Spirit is the extract of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of whom we are born to have eternal life is the extract of the crucified and resurrected Christ. Crucifixion is a "pressing" that produces an extract. When pressure is applied to an orange, we get the juice as the extract of the orange. We may compare the crucifixion of Christ to the pressing of an orange. When Christ was on the cross, He was "pressed." After being pressed on the cross, He came forth as the "juice" of the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. Furthermore, just as the essence, elements, nature, and substance of an orange are in the extract, so the essence, elements, nature, and substance of Christ are in the all-inclusive Spirit. It is by this Spirit that Christ, the God-man, is reproduced.

Receiving the Spirit by Calling on the Name of the Lord

In our preaching of the gospel we need to tell others that Christ is the life-giving Spirit. We need to tell them that Christ was pressed on the cross to become the Spirit. Now if sinners repent, believe in Him, and call on Him, they will receive the Spirit. Whenever a person calls on the Lord Jesus, he receives the Spirit. This Spirit is actually

the reality of Jesus Christ as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit.

In Acts 2 we have the outpouring of the Spirit. In Acts 2:17 Peter quotes Joel's word about the pouring out of God's Spirit upon all flesh and his word that "whoever calls on the name of the Lord, shall be saved" (Acts 2:21). Since God has poured out His Spirit, what people need to do in order to be saved is to call on the name of the Lord. Whoever calls on the Lord's name will be saved, and to be saved is actually to receive the Spirit.

As we have pointed out a number of times, the name denotes the person. Jesus is the name of the Lord, and the Spirit is His person. Therefore, when we call on the Lord's name, we receive His person, the Spirit. This is what it means to be saved.

Some Christians oppose this matter of calling on the Lord. They say falsely that this is mere shouting or vain repetition. However, calling on the Lord's name is not vain. When we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, we call on the name of the dear, all-inclusive One, the One who is above all. God has given this One a name that is above every name (Phil. 2:9). We can testify that when we call on the name of Jesus, the Spirit comes. Jesus is His name, and the Spirit is His person, the extract of His being.

The reality of a person's name is the person himself. For this reason, when we call the name of a particular person who is present, the person responds. The principle is the same with calling on the name of Jesus. Whenever we call on this name, we get the person. Since the person is the Spirit, when we call on the name of Jesus, we receive the Spirit. From experience we know that when we believe in Jesus and call on His name, the Spirit comes as the all-inclusive Person to be our life.

The Regenerating Spirit

In order for the Lord Jesus to come into us as the life-giving Spirit, it was necessary for Him to go through a lengthy process. In the life-giving Spirit, the all-inclusive extract of Christ, there is not only the essence of what

Christ is, but also the element of the process through which He has passed. The Lord did not merely come to dwell among man. He lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years, experiencing a great many things. He was born of a virgin and grew up in a normal, human way. Eventually, He went to the cross to be pressed in order to release the Spirit as His extract.

Today the regenerating Spirit is the extract of the all-inclusive Christ. As such an extract, this Spirit comprises the divine element with the divine attributes and the human element with all the human virtues. This Spirit includes the element of the Lord's wonderful life of expressing God. The Spirit also includes the element of the rescued, restored, recovered, improved, polished, sanctified, strengthened, empowered, and uplifted human virtues. Have you ever realized this? The all-inclusive life-giving Spirit contains the element of the Man-Savior's uplifted human virtues.

The Moving of the Spirit within Us

Believers as well as unbelievers have a natural concept concerning how the Lord Jesus saves us. For example, a Christian may say, "Oh, what a problem I have with my temper! I can't do anything about it. I have no choice except to lose my temper. Lord, help me!" After calling to the Lord for help this one may expect the Lord to stretch forth His hand from the heavens and help him.

Some Christians actually do not believe that Christ lives in us; they believe that He is merely on the throne in the third heaven. Nevertheless, even they will pray for the Lord to help them. How do they think the Lord will help them? Their understanding of the Lord's help may be not only natural but even superstitious.

The New Testament reveals that the crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ is the indwelling Spirit. We need to realize this when we are tempted to lose our temper. You may say, "Lord, help me," or you may simply say, "Lord!" If you consider your experience, you will realize that when you call on the Lord's name, something moves within you and even mingles with you. This is the

life-giving Spirit moving in you and mingling with your spirit.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with asking the Lord to help us. But this kind of prayer can distract us from the indwelling Spirit. If we pray in this way, we may expect the Lord's help to come from the third heaven and may feel that we need to wait for His help to arrive. But when we call on the Lord's name, realizing that He is the life-giving Spirit dwelling within us, we shall sense Him moving in us and mingling with us. We experience this because the One who moves in us and mingles with us is the life-giving Spirit as the extract of the all-inclusive Christ. Simply by calling on the Lord's name we can sense the mysterious, all-inclusive extract moving in us.

The Elements in the All-inclusive Spirit

The Spirit as the extract of Christ contains the element of the highest standard of morality. As the Spirit moves within us, the element of the highest human virtues also moves in us. The Lord does not rescue us from our temper by doing something miraculously as the ascended One on the throne in the heavens. Instead, He rescues us by moving in us and mingling Himself with us as the One who indwells us. If we turn to Him as the One in our spirit and call on His name, He will move in us with all His elements. In this way He saves us.

What we are saying concerning the Lord's saving us by moving in us as the Spirit is not a superstition. Just as taking medicine is not superstitious, so experiencing the moving of the Spirit in us is not superstitious. When a person takes medicine, that medicine will work in him to kill germs. This is not an outward killing, the attempt to kill the germs by doing something outwardly. On the contrary, this is an inward killing, a killing that results from taking a prescribed dose of medicine. In a similar way, the all-inclusive Spirit contains the element of the Lord's all-inclusive death, and by this element the spiritual germs in our being are terminated.

The all-inclusive life-giving Spirit also has the element

of germination. The Spirit contains this element because in the Spirit there is the element of Christ's resurrection. Resurrection overcomes every form of death. Because death cannot hold the element of resurrection, death cannot hold the Spirit. Hallelujah for the element of resurrection in the all-inclusive Spirit!

Whether or not we understand the elements in the all-inclusive Spirit, it is nonetheless a fact that these elements have been born into us through the Spirit. When we were born of our parents, we were born with the human elements. In like manner, on the day we called on the name of the dear, all-inclusive One, the all-inclusive Spirit came into us, and we were born of Him. Now He with all His elements dwells within us.

Born of the Pneumatic Christ in Our Spirit

The first step in the reproduction of the God-man is that we be reborn of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit with His divine life and nature. I like the term "pneumatic Christ." Since the Spirit in John 3:6 is the extract of the all-inclusive Christ, He is actually the pneumatic Christ. In this verse the Lord Jesus does not speak of being born of the Spirit of God or of the Holy Spirit; He speaks of being born of the Spirit. The Spirit introduces us to the pneumatic Christ.

What is the pneumatic Christ? The pneumatic Christ is Christ after resurrection being the life-giving Spirit. We have been born of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit with His divine life and nature.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-THREE

THE REPRODUCTION OF THE GOD-MAN

(2)

Scripture Reading: John 3:6b; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; Phil. 1:19b, 20b, 21a; 2:5-8; 3:9-10; 4:8, 13

We have seen that for the reproduction of the God-man we need to be reborn of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit with His divine life and nature. In this message we shall go on to see that for this reproduction we also need to be transformed by the pneumatic Christ in our soul and then live Christ as the God-man.

TRANSFORMED BY THE PNEUMATIC CHRIST IN OUR SOUL

After we have been born again, born of the Spirit in our spirit, we need to be transformed. We need to be transformed by the pneumatic Christ in our soul with His divine attributes to uplift, strengthen, enrich, and fill our human virtues for His expression in our humanity. Concerning this, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:17 and 18, "The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit." Both "the Spirit" in verse 17 and "the Lord Spirit" in verse 18 refer to the pneumatic Christ. As we behold and reflect Him, we are being transformed into His image. Furthermore, the Lord Spirit is actually the Spirit in John 3:6. The Spirit in John 3:6 is for regeneration, and the Lord the Spirit in 2 Corinthians 3:18 is for transformation. To be regenerated, reborn, is a once-for-all matter, but to be transformed is a life-long matter.

Hence, Paul says that we are "being transformed." The word "being" indicates a process. We are undergoing the process of being transformed.

A Metabolic Salvation

It is rather easy to understand the meaning of regeneration, but it is not easy to understand the meaning of transformation. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 the King James Version even uses the word "changed" instead of "transformed." The use of "changed" in this verse is not adequate. Although transformation is a change, it involves more than a mere outward change. Transformation involves a metabolic change, an inward change in life. Such a metabolic change requires the working within us of the element of the divine life. This produces a change not only in appearance and behavior, but also a change in life, nature, and intrinsic essence.

We should not think that the Lord saves us merely in an objective way. We should not expect that the more we pray, the more the Lord will save us from the heavens objectively. On the contrary, the more we call on the name of the Lord, the more He moves within us to cause a metabolic change that affects our intrinsic being. This means that the Lord's salvation is a metabolic salvation, not merely a salvation of outward activity. It is easy to do something outward, but to save us metabolically takes time. What is revealed concerning divine salvation in the New Testament is not merely a salvation of action; it is primarily a salvation of metabolism. From experience we know that this metabolic salvation is slow, gradual, and steady.

For the Lord's Expression in Our Humanity

We are reborn in our spirit, but we are transformed in our soul. Regeneration is with the divine life and nature, but transformation is with the divine attributes to uplift, strengthen, enrich, and fill our human virtues for the Lord's expression in our humanity.

Regeneration and transformation are two steps in the process to reproduce the God-man. The Man-Savior as the

God-man is the unique prototype. God intends to reproduce, or mass produce, this prototype through regeneration and transformation. This reproduction takes place by the regeneration of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit and through the transformation by this same pneumatic Christ in our soul. Through these steps we become the reproduction of the God-man. This reproduction is the mass production of the unique prototype. Praise the Lord that we have been regenerated once for all and that we are now in the process of being transformed!

LIVING CHRIST AS THE GOD-MAN

Those who are the reproduction of the God-man should also live Christ as the God-man (Phil. 1:20b, 21a). Christ lived on earth as a God-man for thirty-three and a half years. Today we, His reproduction, should live Him as the God-man.

Christians often quote Philippians 1:21a: "For to me to live is Christ." Paul's life was to live Christ. Christ was not only his life within but also his living without. He lived Christ because Christ lived in him (Gal. 2:20). He was one with Christ both in life and in living. He and Christ had one life and one living. They lived together as one person. Christ lived within him as his life, and he lived Christ without as His living.

An important matter for us to realize is that the Christ in Philippians 1:21 is the God-man. This can be proved by Paul's word in chapter two of Philippians. In 2:5 Paul says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Then Paul goes on to say in the following verses that Christ subsisted in the form of God, but did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. Instead, He emptied Himself taking the form of a slave and becoming in the likeness of men (vv. 6-7). In verse 8 Paul continues his description of this God-man: "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross." From this description we see that the Christ in Philippians 1 is the God-man in

Philippians 2. Therefore, to live Christ is to live the God-man.

By the Bountiful Spirit of Jesus Christ

We live Christ as the God-man by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19). We have seen that the Spirit of Jesus Christ is not merely the Spirit of God before the Lord's incarnation, but the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit with divinity, after the Lord's resurrection, compounded with His incarnation, humanity, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. The Spirit of Jesus is mainly for the Lord's humanity and human living; the Spirit of Christ is mainly for the Lord's resurrection. To experience the Lord's humanity, as illustrated in Philippians 2:5-8, we need the Spirit of Jesus. To experience the power of the Lord's resurrection, as mentioned in Philippians 3:10, we need the Spirit of Christ.

Taking the Mind of Jesus Christ the God-man

If we would live Christ as the God-man, we need to take His mind. In Philippians 2:5-8 Paul encourages us to take the mind of Jesus Christ, the God-man. This is the mind that was in Christ when He emptied Himself taking the form of a slave, and humbled Himself, being found in fashion as a man. To have such a mind requires us to be one with Christ in His inward parts (Phil. 1:8).

In Philippians 2:12-13 Paul goes on to say, "So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not only as in my presence, but now much rather in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure." The salvation in verse 12 is not salvation from hell. Salvation from hell is not something that can be worked out by us. The salvation here is a subjective salvation, an inward salvation that requires our cooperation with God. We cooperate through our obedience. Our obedience is our cooperation.

To work out our salvation is to carry it out, to bring it to the ultimate conclusion. We have received God's

salvation. Now we need to carry out this salvation, to bring it to its ultimate conclusion, by our constant and absolute obedience with fear and trembling. We have received this salvation by faith. Now we must carry it out by obedience. To receive salvation by faith is once for all; to carry out salvation by obedience is life long.

The word "for" in verse 13 gives the reason we need to obey always. We should obey because God operates in us. We have God operating in us both the willing and the working to carry out our salvation. It is not that we by ourselves work out our salvation, but that God operates in us to do it. The only thing we need to do is to obey God as the One who operates in us the willing and the working for His good pleasure.

In Philippians 2:14 Paul says, "Do all things without murmurings and reasonings." Murmurings are of our emotion and reasonings are of our mind. Both frustrate us from experiencing and enjoying Christ. Can you say that in your daily living you have no murmurings or reasonings? Perhaps you have experienced a considerable change in life, but you still need to be saved from your murmurings and reasonings. We certainly need to be saved from murmurings and reasonings by the living Christ, by the living God-man.

Paul was an experiential person, and he wrote the Epistle to the Philippians according to his experience. From experience Paul knew that we may be saved from many things but not yet from murmurings and reasonings. We are not saved from murmurings and reasonings by a divine arm that reaches us from the third heaven. What, then, is effective to save us from murmurings and reasonings? We are saved from these things by the indwelling Christ, by the indwelling God-man. Today this indwelling God-man is the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit with the bountiful supply. By the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ we are saved inwardly from our murmurings and reasonings. This is related to living Christ. To live Christ is to live the God-man, who is now the pneumatic Christ.

Shining the Word of Life as Luminaries Reflecting the Brightness of Jesus Christ, the God-man

As we live Christ as the God-man, we should "shine as

lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:15b-16a). This is to shine as luminaries reflecting the brightness of Jesus Christ, the God-man. When we cooperate with the operating God within us by obeying Him, the God-man as the pneumatic Christ with His bountiful supply will enable us to shine the word of life as luminaries. Instead of merely teaching or preaching, we shall be shining the word of life. We shall be luminaries reflecting the brightness of the God-man.

Found in Christ

If we live Christ as the God-man, we shall be found in Christ (Phil. 3:9). As one who was the reproduction of the God-man. Paul desired to be found in Christ by all his observers. He aspired to have his whole being immersed in Christ and saturated with Christ so that all His believers would discover him fully in Christ.

With Him as Our Subjective Righteousness

A condition for being found in Christ is that we have Christ as our subjective righteousness, as our surpassing righteousness. This is the righteousness referred to by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5:20: "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens." Righteousness here does not refer to the objective righteousness, which is the Christ we receive when we believe in Him so that we may be justified before God (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 3:26). Instead, it refers to the subjective righteousness which is the indwelling Christ lived out of us as our righteousness. In Philippians 3:9 Paul calls this the "righteousness which is of God." The Greek word for "of" means "out of" or "out from." This righteousness is actually God Himself lived out of us to be our righteousness through our faith in Christ. Such righteousness is the expression of God, who lives in us. Therefore, the surpassing righteousness is God Himself living out of us. This is not our own righteousness; it is God as our righteousness.

In the Power of His Resurrection

In Philippians 3:10 Paul said, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." This verse indicates that Paul lived Christ in the power of His resurrection. Paul had been terminated and buried. Then in the resurrection of Christ he enjoyed the power of Christ's resurrection.

The power of Christ's resurrection is His resurrection life which raised Him from among the dead (Eph. 1:19-20). The reality of the power of Christ's resurrection is the Spirit (Rom. 1:4). To know this power requires identification with Christ's death. Death is the base of resurrection. If we would experience the power of Christ's resurrection, we need to live a crucified life as He did. Being identified with Christ's death affords a base for the power of His resurrection to rise up so that His divine life may be expressed in us.

Conformed to His Death

In Philippians 3:10 Paul also speaks of being conformed to Christ's death. To be conformed to Christ's death is to take His death as the mold of our life. The mold of Christ's death refers to His continual putting to death of His human life so that He might live by the life of God (John 6:57). Our life should be conformed to such a mold--dying to our human life to live the divine life. If we would be found in Christ and live Him as the God-man, we must be conformed to His death.

Expressed in Our Human Virtues

When we are found in Christ living Him as the God-man, He will be expressed in our human virtues. Paul's word in Philippians 4:8 indicates this: "For the rest, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is well-spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things." All the items listed here are human virtues. Here to be true is to

be true ethically, not in matter of fact. To be honorable is to be venerable, worthy of reverence; it is also to be noble and grave (1 Tim. 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2). The word implies the idea of dignity, which inspires and invites reverence. To be righteous is to be right (not just) before God and man. To be pure is to be single in intention and action, without any mixture. The word "lovely" here means to be lovable, agreeable, endearing. The words "well-spoken of" are the translation of the Greek word that means sounding well. As used here, the word implies being of good repute, renowned, attractive, winning, gracious. In this verse "virtue" is excellence, that is, ethical energy exhibited in vigorous action. The word "praise" indicates things worthy of praise, as the companion of virtue.

The first six of these items are categorized as "whatever is"; the last two are categorized as "if any." This indicates that the last two are a summing up of the six foregoing items, in all of which are some virtue or excellence and something worthy of praise. The point we would emphasize here is that these are human virtues in which Christ is expressed.

In Doing All Things

In Philippians 4:13 Paul says, "I can do all things in Him who empowers me." Paul was a person in Christ (2 Cor. 12:2), and he desired to be found in Christ by others. Here he declares that he could do all things in Christ, the One who empowered him.

For Christ to empower us means that He makes us dynamic inwardly. Christ dwells in us (Col. 1:27). He empowers us, makes us dynamic, from within, not from without. By such an inward empowering Paul could do all things in Christ. In particular, Paul could have all the virtues in verse 8. Here Paul seems to be saying, "I can do all these things in the One who empowers me. This means that I can be truthful and honorable. I am able to be right with God and man, to be pure, and to be a person who is lovable and well spoken of. In Christ I can have all the virtues that are praised by others."

The book of Philippians speaks of the reproduction of the God-man. Whoever lives Christ, the God-man, is His reproduction. Whoever lives Christ is a duplicate of the unique God-man, a reproduction of the prototype.

In Luke we see how Christ was incarnated and lived the life of a God-man. In Philippians we see how Christ is lived out from us in order to have many duplicates of Himself. All Christians should be duplicates of the unique God-man.

How can we be such duplicates, such reproductions? First, we need to be reborn of the pneumatic Christ in our spirit, and then we need to be gradually transformed by the pneumatic Christ in our soul. Then spontaneously we shall live Christ, the God-man, by the bountiful supply of His Spirit, taking His mind and shining the word of life as luminaries reflecting His brightness. We shall also be found in Christ with Him as our surpassing righteousness, in the power of His resurrection, and conformed to His death. Then we shall express Him in all the human virtues created by God for man. With the divine attributes of the God-man these virtues are strengthened, enriched, and filled. I trust that the Spirit will speak more to you concerning this.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-FOUR

JUBILEE

(1)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:8-13, 23-24, 28, 39-41

In 4:14-30 we see that the Man-Savior began His ministry by proclaiming the jubilee of grace. On the Sabbath day in the synagogue at Nazareth, He read from the book of Isaiah and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord (4:16-21). This acceptable year is the New Testament age of grace typified by the year of jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17), the fiftieth year in which all the slaves were liberated and every man's inheritance was restored to him. Beginning with this message, we shall consider further the jubilee. In this message and in the message following we shall give a definition of the jubilee.

THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S REDEMPTION

The word "jubilee" is anglicized from the Hebrew word *yobel*. This Hebrew word denotes the blast of a horn, specifically the signal of a silver trumpet. Hence, the word came to signify the instrument itself and the festival thus introduced. Concerning this, Leviticus 25:9 says, "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land."

We have seen that *yobel* refers specifically to the blasting of a silver trumpet. In typology silver signifies redemption. Hence, the blasting of a silver trumpet indicates the trumpeting of God's redemption. The Hebrew word *yobel,* anglicized jubilee, refers to the blast of a horn, the instrument itself, and finally to the festival introduced by the blasting of a silver trumpet.

The basic thought concerning the jubilee is that it is the sounding out of God's redemption. The blasting of the silver trumpet was a proclamation of redemption. It was a proclamation based on God's redemption and also a sounding out of this redemption.

THE RELEASE OF PEOPLE AND POSSESSIONS

This sounding out, this proclamation, of God's redemption was not the proclaiming of any commandment or requirement. On the contrary, it was a proclamation of freedom, of release. Leviticus 25:10 says, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." Here we see that the proclamation of release or liberty was related to people and to their possessions. Regarding every human being we need to consider the person himself and his possessions. Therefore, the release proclaimed for the jubilee affected the Israelites and their possessions.

Man's Economic Needs

The study of political methods has been going on for thousands of years. Those who study politics know that if someone is to rule others. the first thing he must do is take care of feeding them. In other words, a ruler must manage the economy well. If the people do not have food, they will rise up against those ruling them.

An important issue in the election of any president of the United Sates is whether a particular candidate can provide jobs and insure a proper standard of living. A good president must be able to meet this need. For example, Roosevelt became president during the great depression. Because he changed the economic situation of the country, he is regarded by many as a great president. Some claim that Roosevelt was great not merely in political affairs but in uplifting the living standard of the American people.

The point we are making here is that if any politician

or statesman is to be successful he must find a way to improve the living of the people. The more successful a political leader is in this, the longer he will be able to remain in office. The political leaders who are respected most by the people are those who have the ability to improve the level of daily life.

Because of man's economic needs, especially the need for food, certain isms have developed. These isms include communism, capitalism, and socialism. According to communism, economic resources should be held in common, land should not belong to certain property owners, and social wealth should not belong to the capitalists. Communism teaches that something should be done to balance the wealth. In some countries taxation is used as a means of balancing wealth. In these countries a person may earn a great deal of money, but much of it must be given to the government in taxes. Socialism is also concerned with man's economic needs. Statesmen and philosophers have tried their best to find ways to meet man's need for food. However, the more isms they have invented, the more the people have suffered.

The Basic Concern in the Jubilee

In the jubilee portrayed in Leviticus 25 the main thought is how to take care of people's living. In other words, the basic concern is man's enjoyment. The primary enjoyment in human life is to be filled with good food. A person whose stomach is empty will not appreciate money or material riches. He would rather have food to fill his stomach. Suppose a rich man who owns a luxury car is starving. Do you think he will be able to enjoy his car? No, he would gladly trade his car for food. Humanly speaking, the jubilee is concerned with taking care of our eating, with filling our stomach.

Although God is very different from worldly politicians and has not taught man any isms, we may say that He is a "great statesman." The jubilee was ordained by God as the divine statesman.

God ordained that His people be given the good land of Canaan. This land was allotted to the twelve tribes of Israel. Eventually, each family received an allotment of land as a possession. The land was not mainly to be for their living or their lodging; the land was primarily for their eating.

The need for food is greater than the need for lodging. One may live in the wilderness for a long time without a house. but he could not live very long without eating. The good land, therefore, was given to God's people for their eating. This is the reason the Bible refers to this land as "a land flowing with milk and honey."

The good land was not called a land of gold. What good would it be to have a land that could provide gold but could not provide food? God created the land not for man to have gold but for man to have food. The land is for food.

Milk and honey signify that the good land is rich in food. Some countries may have wheat and corn but no milk and honey. The good land is a land flowing with milk and honey. Both milk and honey are produced by the mingling of two lives--the vegetable life and the animal life. This mingling of the animal life with the vegetable life signifies the riches of the land.

The Loss and Return of the Land

Because God brought His people into the good land and allotted a portion of the land to every family, each family was rich in its possession of the land. But suppose the members of a particular family did not labor on the land. Because they did not work on the land, they became very poor. Little by little they sold the land until their entire allotment was sold. In this way they lost their portion of the good land.

When land was sold in a country other than Israel, the land was sold forever. But God's ordination did not allow the land in Israel to be sold permanently. At most, the land could be sold only for fifty years. Leviticus 25:23 and 24 say, "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption

for the land." Here we see that the land was not sold forever; land that had been sold could be redeemed. The one who bought the land did not have the right to keep it indefinitely. After fifty years at the latest, the land could be redeemed.

In Leviticus 25 we are told not that the land was returned to its original owner, but that the person returned to the land. Concerning this, verse 28 says, "In the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession." Actually, one did not sell the land--he sold himself. Eventually, it was not the land that was returned to the seller; it was the seller that returned to the land, to his possession.

After the children of Israel received their portions of the land, some became poor and sold their allotment of the land, and others became landlords. Was there the need of some kind of ism in order for the land to be redistributed? No, God's ordination concerning the land allowed that in the fiftieth year, the year of jubilee, those who lost their possession of land could return to it. This means that in the fiftieth year every family could become rich again. Here we see that the principle of balancing the amount of land among the people was written in the Bible thirty-five centuries ago. What we find in Leviticus 25 is much better than the theories of statesmen, politicians, and philosophers.

The Release of Those Who Sold Themselves

We have seen that with every human being the most important matters are the person himself and his possession. From Leviticus 25 we see that it was possible for an Israelite to sell his possession and thereby lose his portion of the land. Now we need to see that some became so poor that they even sold themselves: "And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: but as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee: and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children

with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return" (vv. 39-41). These verses indicate that in the year of jubilee one who had sold himself to serve another would be released. Therefore, in the fiftieth year there was no one without land and no one in slavery. Everyone had his freedom and his own possession. This means that both the land and those who had sold themselves were released. The proclamation of the jubilee was a proclamation of the release of people's possessions and of the people themselves. This is the jubilee.

If all the Israelites had been diligent to labor on the land, no one would have been in poverty, and no one would have had to sell his land or himself. However, many lost both their possessions and themselves. They had no way to return to their possessions or to their families. But when the year of jubilee came, there was release both of the possession and of the people. Those who had lost their land could return to it, and those who had sold themselves could go back to their families.

FALLEN MAN'S NEED OF THE JUBILEE

Before we consider further the definition of the jubilee, I would like to apply what we have already covered to today's situation. When man was created, he received a possession. Man's possession by creation was actually God Himself. God created man to be His vessel for His expression. Thus, God intended to give Himself to man as his possession. But man became fallen, and in the fall man lost God as his possession.

Through the fall man also sold himself. In Romans 7:14 Paul says, "I am fleshly, sold under sin." To be sold in this way is to be held in slavery. Anyone who sells himself to be a slave enters into a condition of slavery. Today all of mankind is in slavery, mainly the slavery of sin. Man has sold himself into the slavery of sin, Satan, and the world. Therefore, fallen man has lost both God and himself.

Before we were saved, we were those who had lost God as our possession and who had also lost ourselves.

Ephesians 2:12 indicates that fallen man is without God. Instead of God as his possession, man has sin and has sold himself into the slavery of sin.

Apart from God's preserving grace, even Christians may lose God as their possession in a practical way and may also sell themselves into the slavery of sin. In their daily living some Christians have sin instead of God. Like unbelievers, they have lost God as their possession, and they have sold themselves to sin, pleasures, and worldly amusements. All such believers, as well as all unbelievers, need a jubilee.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, the entire human race had lost God as their possession and had sold themselves into the slavery of sin. This was true of Jews as well as Gentiles. The Lord Jesus did not live in the Gentile world; He lived in the Jewish land among God's chosen people. According to the four Gospels, not even those in the Jewish land, the so-called holy land, had God as their possession. Who among the people in the Jewish land had God as his possession? In the record of the Gospels we see that even Israel had lost God. Furthermore, all the Jews, including the Pharisees and rabbis, had sold themselves into sin. This was the reason the Lord Jesus rebuked the Pharisees 80 strongly in Matthew 23. Because they were in the slavery of sin, He pronounced woes upon them. He seemed to be saying, "You Pharisees, scribes, elders, and high priests have sold yourselves to sin. You have lost God as your possession, and you have lost yourselves."

A WONDERFUL RELEASE

In Luke 4 the Lord Jesus read a portion from Isaiah that was a prophecy not of the jubilee in type, but of the actual jubilee: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (vv. 18-19). Then He declared, "Today this Scripture has been

fulfilled in your ears" (v. 21). By reading that portion of the Scripture the Lord sounded the trumpet; He proclaimed the jubilee.

Do you know what the preaching of the gospel is? The preaching of the gospel is the sounding of the jubilee, the trumpeting of the jubilee. The preaching of the gospel is the proclamation of our release. Actually, this release is not the release of our possession to us; it is the release of us to our possession and to our family. Once we were in the wrong family, the family of slavery. The sounding of the jubilee tells us to return to our own family, to the family of God.

Now we can understand what the jubilee is. The jubilee is the proclaiming of a wonderful release--a release of our possession to us and the release of ourselves so that we may return to God, to our family, and to our possession.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-FIVE

JUBILEE

(2)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:8-13, 23-24, 28, 39-41

In the foregoing message we began to consider the definition of the jubilee. We saw that the word "jubilee" is an anglicized form of the Hebrew word *yobel*. This Hebrew word signifies the blast of a horn, specifically the signal of a silver trumpet; hence, it came to signify the instrument itself and the festival thus introduced. In this message we shall consider further the definition of the jubilee.

THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPET ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

In understanding the jubilee, we need to carefully read Leviticus 25:8-10. The blast of the trumpet proclaimed the jubilee. But in what year and on what day of the year was the trumpet of the jubilee sounded? Some may answer this question by saying, "Since the jubilee was the fiftieth year, the trumpet of the jubilee must have been sounded on the first day of the fiftieth year." This answer may be reasonable, but it is according to the natural concept. We should not bring our natural thought into our reading of the Bible.

If we read the book of Leviticus carefully, we shall see that every seventh year was to be a sabbatical year. In a sabbatical year there was to be no sowing, reaping, or harvesting. The people were not allowed to work, and neither was the land allowed to work. Both the people and the land were to enjoy rest. This rest, this sabbath, was to be every seven years. Concerning the sabbaths Leviticus 25:8 says, "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years

unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years." Leviticus 25:9 says, "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." Notice that this verse begins with the word "then." It is difficult to explain the time indicated by this "then." When was "then"? Was it in the forty-ninth year or in the fiftieth year?

According to Leviticus 25:9, the jubilee was sounded on the day of atonement, which was on the tenth day of the seventh month. It was necessary for the trumpet of the jubilee to be sounded on the day of atonement because the jubilee is based on redemption. Without redemption there cannot be the jubilee. Therefore, the proclamation of the jubilee must be from the time of redemption. In typology, the day, or time, of redemption was signified by the day of atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month. The seventh month was the first month of the second half of the year. Concerning the sounding of the trumpet of jubilee, we need to ask if this was the seventh month of the forty-ninth year or of the fiftieth year.

Leviticus 25:10 tells us, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." To hallow the fiftieth year is to sanctify that year, and to proclaim liberty throughout the land is to proclaim release. Here we see that this liberty, this release, involves the returning of every man to his possession and of every man to his family. This verse does not speak of the return of a man's possession, but of the return of a man to his possession.

Now that we have read these important verses, let us study the relationship between the sounding of the trumpet of the jubilee on the tenth day of the seventh month and the sanctifying of the fiftieth year as the year of jubilee. Leviticus 25:9 indicates that the forty-ninth year is divided into two sections of six months each. In the

middle of the forty-ninth year the trumpet of the jubilee was sounded on the day of atonement. The fiftieth year began six months later. If the trumpet of the jubilee was sounded in the fiftieth year and not in the forty-ninth year, then the jubilee would have begun six months after the start of the fiftieth year. That, however, was not the situation. Contrary to our natural concept, the trumpet of the jubilee was not sounded on the first day of the first month of the fiftieth year. Rather, it was sounded on the tenth day of the seventh month of the forty-ninth year. Verse 8 speaks of the forty-nine years; verse 9, of the sounding of the trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month; and verse 10, of the hallowing of the fiftieth year. From this we see that the sounding was in the forty-ninth year, and the sanctifying, the hallowing, was not from the seventh month of the forty-ninth year, but from the beginning of the fiftieth year. This means that the sounding of the trumpet was a preparation, a preliminary step, for the jubilee.

We have pointed out that the day of atonement typifies the time of redemption. The fact that the trumpet of the jubilee was sounded on the day of atonement and that the fiftieth year was sanctified and liberty was proclaimed throughout the land indicates that it was necessary first for Christ to die and then for there to be the proclamation of the release of the people. In other words, first Christ died, and then there was the genuine preaching of the gospel. The gospel could not be preached unless Christ had already died. Therefore, the proclamation, the preaching, of the gospel is based on the death of Christ. The sounding out of the gospel depends on Christ's redemption. Without the redemption of Christ, there would be no basis for the proclamation of the jubilee.

According to Leviticus 25, the sounding of the trumpet of the jubilee took place six months before the actual beginning of the year of jubilee. The jubilee began from the first month of the fiftieth year, but the sounding of the trumpet of the jubilee was in the middle of the forty-ninth year, six months earlier. When applied to our spiritual experience, this indicates that the preaching of the gospel comes first and

the jubilee follows. Many of us can testify that in our experience of salvation we heard the preaching of the gospel long before we were saved. The preaching of the gospel came to us a considerable time before we entered into the jubilee.

If we read carefully Leviticus 25:8-10, we shall see that the sounding of the trumpet always took place before the year of jubilee. This means that the sounding of the jubilee took place in the seventh month of the forty-ninth year as a preparation for the jubilee, which began at the start of the next year. Beginning with the first month of the year, the fiftieth year was hallowed, sanctified, as the year of jubilee.

I can testify that in my case the sounding of the gospel came to me at least eight years before I entered into the jubilee. When I was a child, I heard the preaching of the gospel. But I did not experience the jubilee until I was nineteen.

Many of us passed through a period of preparation for salvation before we actually received salvation. Did you go through such a period of preparation before you entered into the enjoyment of salvation, that is, before you entered into the jubilee? Some cases, however, are extraordinary. These are cases of saints who entered into the jubilee at the time they first heard the gospel and learned of the Lord Jesus. But there are not many cases like this. Most Christians had a time of preparation first and experienced the jubilee sometime after they first heard the gospel.

Most of us first heard the gospel sounding of the jubilee. Then some time later we received God's salvation at a time that was hallowed, sanctified, and we entered into the jubilee. When we entered into the jubilee, we returned to our possession and to our family; we returned to God as our possession and to the family, the house, of God.

PROCLAIMING RELEASE

The Release of the Sold Land to Its Own Owner

If we would understand the definition of the jubilee, we need to see that the jubilee means the proclaiming of release and freedom. First, the jubilee was the proclamation of the release of sold land to its owner. Concerning this, Leviticus 25:13 says, "In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every

man unto his possession." In this verse we see that actually the release is not that of the land to its owner, but of the owner to his land. According to the Lord's ordination, land was not to be sold forever but could be redeemed: "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land" (Lev. 25:23-24). Concerning the release of sold land, Leviticus 25:28 goes on to say, "But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubilee: and in the jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession."

The Freedom of the Sold Slave from His Slavery

The year of jubilee was a proclamation not only of the release of sold land, but also of the freedom of one who had sold himself into slavery. Leviticus 25:39-41 speaks about this: "And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: but as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee: and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return."

ON THE FIFTIETH YEAR

After Seven Sabbaths of Years

The jubilee was, of course, on the fiftieth year. "A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you" (Lev. 25:11a). The fiftieth year was after seven sabbaths of years, that is, after seven times seven years. In typology the sabbath refers to rest. Hence, seven sabbaths of years signify seven times seven rests.

The year of jubilee was to be on the first of a new period of seven years, or on an eighth year. Just as the day of Pentecost was on the fiftieth day, the first day after seven weeks, so the jubilee was on the fiftieth year, the first

year after seven weeks, or sabbaths, of years. In the Scriptures the eighth day signifies resurrection. The Lord Jesus was resurrected on the eighth day, which was the first day of the week. The fact that the jubilee took place on the fiftieth year indicates rest upon rest ending in resurrection. Now in the New Testament jubilee we have entered into rest upon rest ending in resurrection.

Some may claim to be in the jubilee, but they do not have much rest, and they are not in resurrection. Instead of being in resurrection, they are in the natural life. As long as we still live in the natural life, we are not in the jubilee. The jubilee comes after seven sabbaths of years and in the fiftieth year. This means that the jubilee comes after rest and is in resurrection.

If we would enjoy the jubilee, we need to he in the fiftieth year. This requires that all the things of our human life, for example, our education, need to be regarded as items of the past seven sabbaths of years. Then when we are in the fiftieth year, we shall be in the jubilee.

In the forty-nine years before the jubilee, certain Israelites sold their land and sold themselves. In a similar way, in our experience during the past seven sabbaths of years, we sold our possessions and even ourselves. But when the fiftieth year comes, there is no longer any such selling; rather, everything is in resurrection. The old things are past, and everything is new. In Paul's words "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, they have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

On the Tenth Day of the Seventh Month

We have seen that, according to Leviticus 25:9, the proclamation of the jubilee was on the tenth day of the seventh month, on the day of atonement. This indicates that the jubilee is based on God's full redemption in Christ.

No Sowing, Reaping, or Gathering, But Eating of the Increase of the Land

Concerning the year of jubilee, Leviticus 25:11b-12

says, "Ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field." Here we have the rather unusual requirement that in the year of jubilee the people were not to sow, reap, or gather, but eat the increase of the land. This does not mean that we should enjoy the riches of Christ without working at a job. Such an understanding is according to the natural thought. Here the word about not sowing, reaping, or gathering signifies that we should not labor on Christ in a natural way or by our natural strength.

In any religion people are encouraged to exercise their effort to behave themselves, to improve, and to do good. This is to "sow," to "reap," and to "gather." But according to God's ordination, in the New Testament jubilee we are to cease from our labor and not trust in it with respect to the enjoyment of Christ. Instead of laboring in a natural way by our own sowing, reaping, and gathering, we should simply enjoy the riches of Christ.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE

Leviticus 25:10 speaks of hallowing the fiftieth year. Here we see that the jubilee was a holy year, a year hallowed to God and also to us. Elsewhere, the year of jubilee is called the acceptable year of the Lord. According to Luke 4:18 and 19, the Lord Jesus in the synagogue read from Isaiah 61:1-2: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." The acceptable year was the year in which the Lord accepted His people who were lost and who came back to Him. Therefore, on the Lord's side the year of jubilee was the year of acceptance.

The year of jubilee was a holy year and also an acceptable year. It was a year of proclaiming freedom to all people, and it was a time of freedom, rest, enjoyment, and satisfaction.

We have pointed out in other messages in this Life-study that the proclamation of the jubilee by the Lord Jesus in Luke 4 governs the whole Gospel of Luke. Actually the entire New Testament age is the jubilee. The New Testament age is a time of proclaiming release to all those who have lost their possessions and who have sold themselves into slavery. Today the proclaiming of the gospel is to bring these people back to their possession and to their family--back to God and to the family, the house, of God.

In this message and in the foregoing message we have given a definition of the jubilee. The definition is based on the description given in Leviticus 25. In forthcoming messages we shall see the application of this jubilee in the New Testament.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-SIX

JUBILEE

(3)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:9-13, 39-41, 54; Psa. 16:5; 90:1; Eph. 2:12; Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:14; Col. 1:12; Luke 15:12-23; Rom. 7:14b; John 8:34, 36; Rom. 6:6-7; 8:2; Gal. 5:1

In this message we shall go on from the definition of the jubilee covered in the two previous messages to the blessings of the jubilee. For our understanding, it is good to have the definition of the jubilee. The blessings of the jubilee, however, are not for our understanding; the blessings are for our enjoyment. In addition to understanding the jubilee, we need to enjoy it. We surely need the blessings of the jubilee.

Actually, the preaching of the gospel is the sounding, the trumpeting, of the jubilee. In the preaching of the gospel, we proclaim glad tidings, good news. This good news is that we can be returned to our lost possession and that we can be freed from slavery, from bondage. In our gospel preaching, we need to trumpet the jubilee; we need to proclaim the return to the lost possession and the release from bondage.

According to the type in Leviticus 25, the jubilee has two main blessings. These blessings are the return to the lost possession and the release from slavery.

THE JUBILEE AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

In the foregoing messages we pointed out that although we are men created by God, we have lost God as our real possession. To be more exact, actually we did not lose our possession--we left it. The parable of the prodigal son illustrates this. When the prodigal son left the father's

house, he also left his inheritance. Likewise, when we left God, we left our true possession. Therefore, in the jubilee it is not that our possession is returned to us; rather, we are returned to the possession which we left. The first blessing of the jubilee is the return to our possession.

In addition to losing our possession, we also lost ourselves by selling ourselves into slavery. Therefore, we need to be set free. This is the second blessing of the jubilee. If you read Leviticus 25 carefully, you will see that, on the one hand, there is the return to one's possession, and, on the other hand, the return to one's family.

We all once were prodigals who went away from the Father and from His household. As those who went away both from the Father and from His house, we certainly went away from our inheritance. Therefore, it was necessary for us to be returned to the Father and to His household. This is the jubilee as illustrated by the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15.

The New Testament jubilee was proclaimed by the Lord Jesus in Luke 4:18 and 19. He sounded out the trumpet of the New Testament jubilee when He declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." After this jubilee was proclaimed, it was experienced by many whose cases are recorded in the Gospel of Luke. All these cases, therefore, are illustrations of the New Testament jubilee.

Among the many illustrations of the jubilee in the Gospel of Luke, the best is the case of the prodigal son being returned to his father, to his father's household, and to his inheritance. After the prodigal had spent all, a severe famine occurred, and he began to be in want (Luke 15:14). He then "went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs. And he was longing to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything" (vv. 15-16). When he came to himself, he said, "How many

of my father's hired servants have an abundance of bread, but I am perishing here with famine! I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants" (vv. 17-19). Here we see that the prodigal wanted to be as those who sowed, reaped, and harvested (things which were forbidden in the year of jubilee) by exerting his own effort. His intention was to tell his father that since he was no longer worthy of being a son, he would like to labor as a hired one. But according to the type in Leviticus 25, during the year of jubilee there was to be no sowing, reaping, or harvesting. During that year there was not to be any labor on the land. Hence, the prodigal son should not have come back to the father to be a laborer. He should be returned to the father as one being returned to enjoy his possession.

When the prodigal son was returned, he began to say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (v. 21). The father, not having an ear to hear such nonsensical talk, interrupted him and said to his slaves, "Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry" (vv. 22-23). Do you know what the fattened calf signifies? The fattened calf signifies the rich Christ as our inheritance. In the words of Colossians 1:12, this is Christ as the portion of the saints. After the prodigal son was returned, he, the father, and those in the household began to enjoy the inheritance. Here in the case of the prodigal son we have a clear picture of the New Testament jubilee. A genuine conversion should be like that of the prodigal son portrayed in this parable.

We have pointed out that the first blessing of the jubilee is the return to our lost possession. In the jubilee those who have lost their inheritance were returned to their possession. This is typified in Leviticus 25:9-13.

The first main blessing of the New Testament jubilee is to return to the possession which we had left. This

possession was not anything material--our possession was God Himself.

GOD'S INTENTION TO BE MAN'S POSSESSION

Man's true possession is God, and man was created as a vessel to contain God. Genesis 1:26 says that man was made in the image of God, and Romans 9 reveals that man was created to be a vessel. Man was created a vessel to contain God so that God might fill man and express Himself through man.

Consider a bottle, which is a vessel. In itself such a vessel is empty. What is the possession of a bottle? A bottle's possession is its content. The principle is the same with any kind of vessel: the possession of a vessel is the content of that vessel. If a vessel does not have its content, it does not have its possession. For a vessel to be without content, to be without its possession, is to be empty, and to be empty is to be poor.

Man was created as a vessel to contain God. If man does not contain God, this means that man does not have his possession. Without God as his content, man remains a poor, empty vessel. God's intention is to be man's content, his possession.

In the realm of material things, if we have the needed possessions, we shall have land for the producing of food, and we shall have a house for our lodging. Daily we need food to eat and a house in which to dwell. In brief, we need land and a house. These are the basic necessities in man's living.

The New Testament indicates that God is our real land. To His chosen people, the children of Israel, God gave a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey. For what purpose did He give them the land? God gave the land to His people so that they would have food for eating. This good land is a type of God in Christ to be the supply for our eating. Eating is a spiritual necessity, and Christ is the supply to meet this need.

In Psalm 90:1 we see that God is also our dwelling place:

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." Have you ever realized that God is your dwelling place? Even in the Old Testament we are told that God was the dwelling place of His chosen people. Therefore, God is our land and also our house, our dwelling place.

Psalm 16:5 says, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup." Here we see that the Lord is our portion for our inheritance and for our cup. He is our portion in two ways--as food for our eating and as a house for our dwelling. According to Psalm 90:1 and Psalm 16:5, God intends to be man's possession, to be man's land and lodging.

Our daily necessities in human life include four main items: clothing, food, housing, and transportation. Of these four, food and housing are the most important. We may be able to live without adequate clothing and transportation, but we cannot live without food and lodging. Even a bird needs food and a nest. The Bible reveals that Christ is our real clothing; Christ is the righteousness that covers us. Furthermore, we may say that Christ is also our real transportation. Elsewhere, we have pointed out that Christ is the real "jumbo jet" that brings us to God the Father. Christ is our clothing, transportation, food, and housing.

In the year of jubilee the concern was not with clothing or transportation; instead, the concern was with eating and housing. Therefore, a man could return to his provision, to his land for eating, and also to his family, that is, to his house. In a spiritual sense, our land is God Himself, and our house also is God. God's intention is to be our possession for food and lodging.

CHRIST AS OUR FOOD AND DWELLING PLACE

The Gospel of John reveals that the Lord Jesus is our food and our dwelling place. In John 6 we see that He is the real bread, the bread of life, the living bread that came down out of heaven (vv. 32-33, 35, 48, 50-51). Hence, He is our heavenly food. The fact that the Lord Jesus is also our dwelling place is implied by His word, "Abide in Me" (John 15:4). To abide in the Lord means to take Him as our abode,

as our dwelling place. According to the Gospel of John, we should eat the Lord and also dwell in Him, for He is our food and our lodging.

The Bible is consistent. Although the Bible speaks of many things, when we get into the depths of the Word, we see that it reveals in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament that the Triune God is our food and our lodging. He is edible, and He is our real dwelling place.

Consider the situation of the priests in the Old Testament. Concerning the priesthood, there was the tabernacle for lodging and there were the sacrifices for eating. Those who served God as priests could eat the sacrifices and dwell in the tabernacle. Both the tabernacle and the sacrifices are types of Christ. As today's priests, we should eat Christ and dwell in Him.

Certain Christians who are not knowledgeable in the Scriptures may be troubled when they hear about eating Christ. They may say, "Do you intend to eat Christ? This is blasphemy! Christ is your Redeemer, Savior, Master, Lord, and God. How can you eat Him?" Yes, the Lord Jesus is our God, Lord, Master, Savior, and Redeemer. Nevertheless, He Himself told us that He is our food. He is food for us to eat, and He is also the abode in which we dwell.

Are you in the actual experience of the jubilee? Do you know what it really means to be in the jubilee? First, to be in the jubilee is to eat the Lord Jesus. If you do not eat Him, you are not in the jubilee. No one can be in the jubilee with an empty stomach. A proclamation concerning the jubilee may be made, but if your stomach is empty, you will not care for that proclamation.

I can testify that I am truly in the jubilee because daily I eat the Lord Jesus. Through eating Him as my spiritual food, I enjoy the jubilee. To me, the jubilee is a feast, a time for eating the Lord Jesus.

If you are to be in the jubilee, you need to eat the Lord. You need to enjoy Him. When we come to Leviticus 25 in the Life-study Messages, we shall see that the main thing in the experience of the jubilee is eating.

Furthermore, in order to be in the jubilee, we need to

have Christ as our lodging, as our dwelling place. When Christ is our home, we have true rest. We enjoy a real sabbath as we lodge ourselves in Christ. Hallelujah, Christ is our food and our dwelling place!

We have pointed out that God created man with the intention that man take God as his possession. After creating man, God placed him in a garden and in front of the tree of life. The garden is for lodging, and the tree of life is for eating. Here we see that the man created by God had two important needs: he needed God to be his food, and he needed God to be his garden, his dwelling place. Perhaps you have not heard before that God should be our garden. But where did Adam live? He did not live in a house or in a city; he lived in a garden. Both the garden and the tree of life are symbols of God being man's enjoyment.

MAN LOSING GOD BECAUSE OF MAN'S FALL

Adam lived for a while in the garden, but he did not go on to enjoy the tree of life. Instead of eating of the tree of life, Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thereby became fallen. Through the fall Adam lost God. It may be better to say that through the fall Adam left God. Instead of taking God in as his life, Adam left God. When he left God, he left his possession.

In the New Testament we are told clearly that fallen man is without God. Ephesians 2:12, a verse that describes the actual condition of fallen mankind, says that man is now "without God in the world." Today all of fallen mankind is without God because man has left God.

When Adam was in the garden, he could proclaim that he had God. Yes, he had God, but he did not take God as his life. Adam left God and lost God. Therefore, all his descendants live on earth without God. This certainly was our situation before we were saved; we lived on earth without God because we had left Him.

GOD'S JUBILEE BRINGING MAN BACK TO GOD AS MAN'S INHERITANCE

God's jubilee brings man back to God as man's

inheritance. In the New Testament jubilee we all have been returned to God as our possession.

It is not easy to explain this biblical truth accurately. Actually, it is not the case that we returned to God; rather, God returned us to Himself as our possession. This is portrayed by the type in Leviticus 25. Verse 10 says, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." Here we see not that a man's possession was returned to him, but that he was returned to his possession. The same thing is declared in Leviticus 25:13: "In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession." In the type of the jubilee, all those who had sold their possession were returned to their possession so, in the real New Testament jubilee we did not return to God; on the contrary, God returned us to our possession. This means that when we were saved, God returned us to our possession.

Let us consider once again the example of the prodigal son. Apparently it was the prodigal son who returned to the father. Actually, according to Luke 15 the Father sent the Son as the Shepherd to seek out the lost prodigal son. Furthermore, it was the Father who sent the Spirit to find the lost son. Therefore, the prodigal did not return to the Father on his own. The Father sent His Son and His Spirit to cause the prodigal son to return.

Do you think that you have returned to God? You may have this concept, but your coming back to God was God's doing to return you to Himself. God has caused us to return to Him as our possession. Praise Him that He has caused us to return!

Colossians 1:12 says that the Father has qualified us for a share of the portion of the saints in the light, and Ephesians 1:14 speaks of the pledge of our inheritance. Now that we have been returned to God as our portion, we have God in Christ as our inheritance. In Acts 26:18 Paul speaks of fallen people being brought back to God as their

inheritance: "To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." The divine inheritance here is the Triune God Himself with all that He has, all He has done, and all He will do for His redeemed people. This Triune God is embodied in the all-inclusive Christ (Col. 2:9), who is the portion allotted to the saints as their inheritance. The Holy Spirit, who has been given to the saints, is the foretaste, the pledge, and the guarantee of this divine inheritance (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14), which we are sharing and enjoying today in God's New Testament jubilee as a foretaste and will share and enjoy in full in the coming age and for eternity. In the type of the jubilee in Leviticus 25:8-13 one of the main blessings was the return of every man to his own inheritance. In the fulfillment of the jubilee here in Acts 26:18, receiving the divine inheritance is also the primary blessing.

To believe in the Lord Jesus is to be returned to God as our inheritance. When a person repents to God, he will be returned to Him as his possession. To preach the gospel this way we need to have the adequate enjoyment of the New Testament jubilee. I hope that we all shall enjoy the jubilee adequately. Then as we go out to preach the gospel, we shall preach in the way of proclaiming the jubilee. We shall tell others that they have left God as their possession and that He wants them to be returned to Him. We may say to a certain one, "God is your real possession, but you have left Him and lost Him. Now He wants you to be returned to Him. Are you willing for Him to bring you back to Himself? God's way to bring you back is to put you into Christ. Christ is the 'jumbo jet' that brings us to God, and now is 'boarding time.' Are you willing to come aboard? Are you willing to believe in Christ so that He may bring you back to God? We can testify to you that as soon as you believe in the Lord Jesus and enter into Him, you will be brought back to God as your possession."

We praise the Lord that we have been brought back to God as our possession! We have also been returned to our

family. We all are like the prodigal son, who came back to the father and to his family and could then enjoy his portion, his inheritance. Now that we have been returned to God we may enjoy Him as our possession, as our portion and inheritance, and we may also enjoy the real family life in the house of God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-SEVEN

JUBILEE

(4)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:9-13, 39-41, 54; Psa. 16:5; 90:1; Eph. 2:12; Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:14; Col. 1:12; Luke 15:12-23; Rom. 7:14b; John 8:34, 36; Rom. 6:6-7; 8:2; Gal. 5:1

In this message we shall continue to consider the blessings of the jubilee. We pointed out in the foregoing message that the first of the two main blessings of the jubilee is that those who have lost their inheritance may be returned to their possession (Lev. 25:9-13). God intended to be man's possession (Psa. 16:5; 90:1), but man lost God because of man's fall (Eph. 2:12). However, God's jubilee brings man back to God as his inheritance (Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:14; Col. 1:12; Luke 15:12-23). Let us now go on to see the second main blessing of the jubilee.

FREED FROM SLAVERY

The second blessing of the jubilee is that those who have sold themselves as slaves are freed from their slavery (Lev. 25:39-41, 54). According to the type in Leviticus 25, an Israelite may become so poor that he must sell his possession. Then he may go deeper into poverty and even sell himself. Having lost himself, he becomes a slave.

The one who had sold himself into slavery could try to redeem himself. However, if he could not redeem himself before the year of jubilee, he was to be released in that year. "If he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he, and his children with him" (Lev. 25:54). This means that in the fiftieth year, in the year of jubilee, the one who had sold himself as a slave was freed from his slavery.

The picture in Leviticus 25 is very meaningful. This picture indicates that from the time of the fall man has sold himself as a slave, in particular as a slave of sin. Although man tried to redeem himself, he was not able to do so. In the dispensations of conscience, human government, promise, and law, man was not able to redeem himself. But then the dispensation of grace came, a dispensation typified by the fiftieth year. In this dispensation fallen man can be released from bondage.

The New Testament reveals that fallen man has been sold to sin as its slave. In Romans 7:14 Paul declares, "I am fleshly, sold under sin." In John 8:34 the Lord Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin." God's jubilee frees fallen man from sin. For this reason, the Lord says, "If then the Son shall set you free, you shall be really free." Furthermore, in Romans 6:6 and 7 Paul tells us, "Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him that the body of sin might be made of none effect, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves; for he who has died is justified from sin." Then in Romans 8:2 Paul goes on to say, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and of death. " Furthermore, according to Galatians 5:1, God's jubilee also frees us from the bondage of law.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE YEAR OF JUBILEE BEING THE FIFTIETH YEAR

Let us consider once again the significance of the year of jubilee being the fiftieth year. Leviticus 25:8 says, "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years." According to verse 10, the people were to "hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." We may say that the seven sabbaths of years in verse 8, the seven times seven years, are also seven "weeks" of years (see

Dan. 9:24-26). In the Bible a week, a period of seven days, signifies a complete course. For example, in a course of seven days God created the universe and everything in it and then rested. Therefore, the seven days of a week indicate a complete course.

In the sense that a week signifies a complete course, our Christian life may also be regarded as a week. The week of our Christian life is signified by the feast of unleavened bread. In Exodus 12 we see that the feast of unleavened bread lasted seven days. In the Life-study of Exodus we pointed out that the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread signify the entire course of our Christian life from the time we are saved until the time our body is redeemed.

The jubilee did not come at the end of a single week of years, but after a course of seven weeks of seven years. The year after seven weeks of seven years was, of course, the fiftieth year, the first year of the eighth week of seven years.

In the Bible the number eight signifies resurrection. The Lord Jesus was resurrected on the eighth day, on the first day of the week. In keeping with this principle, the first year of each new week, or period, of seven years was an eighth year, and this eighth year may be considered a year of resurrection. The year of jubilee was the seventh "eighth year." This means that this eighth year, which is the fiftieth year, indicates seven times resurrection.

The principle of the jubilee being on the fiftieth year is the same as that of the day of Pentecost being on the fiftieth day. The day of Pentecost was on the seventh eighth day, just as the year of jubilee was on the seventh eighth year. After seven courses of days came the day of Pentecost, and after seven courses of years came the year of jubilee.

APPRECIATING THE JUBILEE

Let us now apply this to our experience of salvation. Just as the year of jubilee came after seven complete courses of years, so many of us experienced salvation only after we had passed through several "courses" in our

human life. On the one hand, it is very good to be saved early in life, in our youth. But on the other hand, there is also a good point to being saved after passing through a number of lengthy courses in human life. For example, suppose a man is saved in his fifties. He has passed through a number of courses: youth, college, marriage, and advancement in his profession. Having passed through all these courses, he experiences a real jubilee when he is saved. For years, as indicated by the seven weeks of years before the year of jubilee, he may have tried to redeem himself, but without success. Then one day he hears the trumpeting of the jubilee through the preaching of the gospel, and he is saved. He had come to hate, to despise, all the courses in his life. Now he enjoys the release of the jubilee.

A person who is saved early in life, perhaps at the age of twelve, may not have much realization of the significance of the jubilee. To him, it may make little difference whether or not there is a jubilee, because he has not passed through many courses in life. But one who has passed through many courses will surely appreciate the jubilee.

In one sense, the earlier a person is saved, the better. We certainly should not delay the preaching of the gospel to others. My point here is that when a person is saved later in life, he has a greater enjoyment of the jubilee than one who is saved as a child. Suppose a boy is saved at the age of six. Since he has not passed through even one or two courses in human life, he cannot have much appreciation of the jubilee. But one who has gone through many courses will have much appreciation of what it is to be saved.

Do not misunderstand me and think that I would encourage someone to wait to be saved. Those who are saved at an early age have the opportunity to learn more of the Bible and to experience and enjoy more of the Lord. From this point of view, it is better for a person to be saved at an early age. Nevertheless, those who are saved later in life have the opportunity to have a greater enjoyment of the jubilee.

Suppose a certain person has never sold his possession

or sold himself into slavery. When such a person hears the sounding of the jubilee, he will not have any joy, because the jubilee does not mean anything to him. However, a person who has lost his possession and himself will rejoice in the year of jubilee. The more a person has lost, the more he will enjoy the sounding of the jubilee.

Years ago, I met a brother whose experience illustrates the point we are making concerning the enjoyment of the jubilee. This brother had been an opium smoker for over forty years before he was saved. One day he was saved and was released from smoking opium. That was a real jubilee to him.

This brother always carried two pictures of himself: a picture of himself as an opium smoker and a picture of himself as a Christian. The opium smoker was sickly and undernourished; the Christian was healthy and strong. In testifying he would display these two pictures and ask people which they liked better. Of course, they always preferred the picture of the Christian. Then this brother would explain the meaning of these two pictures, that the one was a picture of him before he was saved and that the other was a picture of him after he had become a Christian. He was happy in giving a real testimony of the jubilee.

Someone who is saved as a very young child cannot testify of the jubilee as did the brother who was once an opium smoker. Because a young child has not passed through complete courses in life during which he has tried to redeem himself, he does not have much to say about the joy of the jubilee. Therefore, being saved later in life does have a good point, and this point is the enjoyment of the jubilee.

The year of jubilee, the fiftieth year, can only come after seven weeks of years. It can only come after the completion of the courses of human life. This means that the jubilee has a blessing which no one can reach by his own effort. Someone may try in course after course to return to his possession and to redeem himself from slavery. But of himself he cannot return or be redeemed.

The jubilee comes only from God. God returns us to our possession, and God releases us from bondage.

I was saved at the age of nineteen. Before I received the Lord Jesus, I tried to be good. I was raised in Christianity, and I had been taught the Bible. I knew I should be good, but no matter how hard I tried, I could not be good. I even tried to turn to God but I was not able to turn to Him. But one day I experienced the jubilee. God came in and brought me into the enjoyment of the jubilee. On that day I had a rich enjoyment of the jubilee. I was returned by God to Him as my possession, and I was freed from my slavery.

TWO GREAT BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL

We have seen that the two main blessings of the jubilee are being returned to our possession and being released from slavery. In the New Testament these are two great blessings of the gospel. The gospel declares that God has returned us to Himself as our possession and that He has set us free from bondage, from slavery, especially from the slavery of sin. The bondage of sin is the worst kind of bondage. Those who live in sin are bound in many ways. But when a person is set free from sin, he is also set free from many things. When we were set free from sin, we were also set free from the slavery of the law.

By the Lord's mercy I can testify that I enjoy God as my possession, as my food, house, clothing, and transportation. I can also testify that I have been released from bondage. I am free from the slavery of sin and from the bondage of law and religion. Praise the Lord for the blessings of the jubilee!

We need to apply this understanding in our reading of the Gospel of Luke. If we read Luke with such an understanding, this Gospel will become a new book to us. In the parables and cases recorded in the Gospel of Luke we shall see the blessings of the jubilee. We shall realize that the jubilee proclaimed by the Man-Savior in chapter four of Luke is a principle that governs all the following chapters.

We all need to learn how to enjoy the jubilee. When we enjoy the jubilee, we shall be able to go out to proclaim the jubilee. We shall sound the trumpet of the gospel and tell others that now is the time for God to accept them, that now is the time for them to be returned to God as their possession and to be freed from every kind of slavery, bondage, and entanglement. Those who have been returned to God and who have been released from bondage are free to enjoy God. To proclaim this is to sound the trumpet of the jubilee, to announce the jubilee of God's New Testament economy. May we all enjoy the blessings of the jubilee and then sound forth the jubilee as the gospel.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-EIGHT

JUBILEE

(5)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:10-12, 19-22; Matt. 11:28; Phil. 4:5-7, 9; Luke 15:23; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:19; 2 Cor. 12:9; 13:14

In the foregoing messages we have covered the definition of the jubilee and the blessings of the jubilee. Now we shall begin to consider the living of the jubilee. By the living of the jubilee we mean the kind of life that lives in the jubilee. As we shall see, this is a life of resting in the good land (Lev. 25:10-12; Matt. 11:28; Phil. 4:5-7, 9) and of enjoying the riches of the good land (Lev. 25:19-22; Luke 15:23; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:19; 2 Cor. 12:9; 13:14).

THE RESULT OF MAN'S FALL

Before we consider these two aspects of living in the jubilee, I would like to give a further word concerning man's fall. The Bible reveals clearly that man has become fallen. According to God's purpose, man was made to contain God and express Him. In order for man to fulfill this purpose, it was necessary for man to take God in as his life and then continue to enjoy God as his life supply. Only by taking God as life and enjoying God as his life supply can man live a life to express God. As we have often pointed out in other messages, this is the clear revelation in the Bible as a whole.

Instead of fulfilling God's purpose, the man created by God was seduced by God's enemy and carried away from God's purpose. Man sinned against God and became fallen.

Unbelievers, of course, do not have a clear understanding of man's fall and its result. Even many

Christians who are clear about man's fall do not have an adequate understanding of the issue, or the result, of the fall. Therefore, we need to be impressed with the fact that the issue of man's fall involves two things: first, man's losing of God; second, man's falling into bondage, slavery, captivity. Throughout the history of mankind, man has been without God and has been in bondage. For thousands of years man has been in slavery, having lost God as his possession. This is true of every people, race, country, and nation.

The Sufferings in Human Life

Those, especially young people, who are struggling to enjoy life may dream that one day there will be heaven on earth, that a time is coming when there will be a utopia. I once had this kind of dream, but I woke up from it and realized that human life is filled with all kinds of suffering. Those who are married have problems, but those who are not married may have just as many problems, if not more. As far as problems and sufferings are concerned, it is difficult to say whether it is better to be married or unmarried. Because believers are eager to learn how to have a happy married life, books on marriage are popular in Christian book stores. Surely any married person, knowing the problems of married life, would like to know how to have a happy marriage. The young people, however, do not know how many problems there can be in married life. I mention this to give one example of the sufferings in human life.

Another example is the problem caused by riches. Those who desire to be rich may not realize that riches can cause trouble. I know of a certain brother who has become quite rich in the past twenty years, but his riches have caused him great suffering. Because of the trouble and sufferings brought about by wealth, many rich people do not have a long life. They are exhausted and weakened by their riches.

Recently I read an article in the newspaper about a Chinese man who was once the president of a college in China. This man is now one hundred years of age. When

he reached the age of one hundred, many of his former students held a feast in honor of his birthday. During the feast he said that he thanked God that he was not a rich man, because if he had been wealthy, he would never have lived to reach the age of one hundred. According to his understanding, the lack of riches was an important factor in his living to the age of one hundred.

The point we are making is that human life is a life of suffering. Both riches and poverty are causes of suffering. Those who are poor may have anxiety, but those who are rich may have even more anxiety.

Another kind of human suffering is that experienced by those who are the leaders of countries. The president or head of a country must bear a very heavy burden, a burden much greater than that borne by an ordinary person. Anyone who is not in good health should not seek a high political office because the pressure on him will be great. This is another illustration of the fact that human life is a life of suffering.

Seeking Rest and Enjoyment

Do you know what it means to suffer? Do you know the significance of suffering? The real significance of suffering is twofold: to suffer is to have no rest, and to suffer is to have no enjoyment.

God created man with the appetite, the aspiration, for rest and enjoyment. God created man with such an aspiration because God's intention was that man would continually seek after Him. Therefore, every human being is seeking rest and enjoyment.

Rest requires satisfaction. If a person does not have satisfaction, he cannot have rest. From experience we know that we can rest only when we are satisfied. Furthermore, satisfaction comes from enjoyment. Hence, if we do not have enjoyment, we do not have satisfaction; and if we do not have satisfaction, we do not have rest. Everyone is hungering and thirsting for rest and enjoyment. To be without rest and enjoyment is to suffer.

The reason a brother desires to get married is that he

is seeking rest and enjoyment. He thinks that he cannot find rest in anyone other than a wife. He regards marriage as something that will provide rest and enjoyment. Likewise, a sister desires a husband because she thinks that married life will be a "couch" on which she may rest.

Why do we need marriage? We need marriage because we want rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment. However, how much real rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment do you experience in your married life? Many can testify that in married life the suffering may be greater than the rest and satisfaction and that the troubles may be greater than the enjoyment. Suffering in married life may be caused even by the issue of whether the bedroom window should be open or closed. A husband and wife may argue over a matter such as this. Although people get married because they need rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment, the real rest, satisfaction. and enjoyment are not found in married life.

We have seen that the rich, as well as the poor, have their sufferings in life. For example, someone with a large savings account may worry about inflation. Even though he has thousands of dollars in the bank, he may still he anxious about money.

In every area of human life the "debit" side may be greater than the "credit" side. This means that whatever choice we make regarding a particular matter, the result may be more debit than credit. Whether we are married or unmarried, rich or poor, the debit may be larger than the credit.

The destiny of every unsaved person whether married or unmarried, rich or poor, is hell. This is why people need God's salvation; this is why they need the gospel. Without God's salvation, a person is going downward to hell, no matter what his situation may be. Those who are educated and cultured and those who are uneducated and uncultured are all going downward to hell. Because they are on this downward way, they cannot have any rest. How they need to hear the preaching of the gospel, the sounding out of the jubilee!

Fallen mankind has lost God and is in bondage.

Consider the situation of the children of Israel in Egypt. All the Israelites were under bondage. It may seem that Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, was superior, but he also was in bondage. Both the Israelites and the Egyptians had lost God and were in bondage. Likewise, today fallen mankind is in bondage. The rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the married and the unmarried--all are in bondage. Only when we have God are we no longer in bondage, for God is our release, our liberty, even our liberation.

Because fallen man has lost God and is in bondage, he does not have the real rest or enjoyment. This is the result, the issue, of man's fall.

A PICTURE OF HOW GOD SAVES MAN FROM THE ISSUE OF MAN'S FALL

Certain types in the Old Testament show how God saves man from the issue of the fall. The first of these types is the feast of the Passover.

The Feast of the Passover

When the children of Israel were in Egypt, they were in bondage. They had no rest, no satisfaction, and no enjoyment. But God came in to rescue them, to save them from their fallen situation. God saved His people by the Passover.

In the Bible the Passover is called a feast. The feast of the Passover was the first of the seven annual feasts observed by the children of Israel (Lev. 23). The word "feast" implies a holiday, a time of rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment. A holiday is a day without labor, a day of enjoyment. In all nations, when a holiday comes, people cease from work and have a time of rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment. The feast of Passover was such a time for the children of Israel. It was a time for God's chosen people to rest from their labor and to enjoy God as their satisfaction.

Life in the Wilderness

God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt,

through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness. During the years in the wilderness, the people did not have any industry or employment. What, then, did they do for forty years? We may say that they had a very long holiday. For forty years, they did not labor; instead, they rested with God. They did not sow or reap but simply gathered the manna. Furthermore, what they gathered was not the result of their labor but was something of God's gift. Therefore, the children of Israel rested with God and enjoyed His gift. It is unique in history that a people numbering more than two million spent forty years without industry or farming. During these forty years, the children of Israel rested with God day by day.

As we consider the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness, we see that actually they did not know how to rest with God or enjoy His gifts. They still tried to labor. that is, to do something for themselves. This labor was offensive to God. After coming into the wilderness, the children of Israel should have done nothing except praise the Lord, enjoy Him, and rest with Him. However, they still struggled to do something for themselves. Whenever they labored in this way, they caused problems.

The Good Land

After the forty-year holiday in the wilderness, the children of Israel were brought into the good land. God gave a portion of the land to each family, and the people rested on their portion of the land. They lived on that portion, enjoyed it, and received satisfaction from it.

The good land is a type of God as our portion. Concerning God being our portion, Psalm 16:5 says, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup." Therefore, the real portion of the land on which we rest, which we enjoy, and with which we are satisfied is God Himself. God is the real land flowing with milk and honey. Of course, eventually this God is Jesus Christ and ultimately, the life-giving Spirit. The very God who is Jesus Christ and the life-giving Spirit is our good land flowing with milk and honey. I can testify that my Christ

is flowing with milk and honey. Christ is our portion; He is our rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment.

The Need for the Jubilee as a Repetition of the Passover

However, many of the children of Israel did not live on the land in the way of rest and enjoyment. On the contrary, they lived in such a way that they became poor. First they sold their land; eventually they sold themselves. Once again they experienced the two results of man's fall: the loss of enjoyment, and bondage. This made it necessary for God to set up the year of jubilee, according to the type in Leviticus 25.

Actually the jubilee was a repetition of the Passover. By the Passover the children of Israel were delivered from bondage into rest and enjoyment. But some, after entering into the enjoyment of God, became poor again and lost everything. Hence, there was the need for the jubilee as the repetition of the Passover.

In the year of jubilee there was the proclamation of liberty: "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family" (Lev. 25:10). This liberty was a release; it denoted freedom, liberation from bondage.

According to Leviticus 25:10, in the year of jubilee a person could be returned to his own possession and to his own family. What does this signify? This signifies a return to rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment, a return to the condition and the state into which the people had been brought by the Passover. The Passover had brought them into a condition and state where they could possess God as their good land for their rest and enjoyment. But they lost this possession and fell into bondage again. Their condition became like that of the children of Israel in Egypt. Therefore, there was the need of the jubilee as the repetition of the Passover to proclaim liberty to all those who had lost their possession and who were in bondage. In the year of jubilee the people could be returned to their

possession and to their family in order to have rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment. This is the picture portrayed in the type in Leviticus 25.

As we shall see more fully in the following message, this type is a picture of what the Christian life should be. The Christian life is a life of liberty, freedom, and release, a life full of rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SIXTY-NINE

JUBILEE

(6)

Scripture Reading: Lev. 25:10-12, 19-22; Matt. 11:28; Phil. 4:6-7, 9; Luke 15:23; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:19; 2 Cor. 12:9; 13:14

Let us continue to consider the living of the jubilee, that is, the kind of life that lives in the jubilee. We pointed out in the foregoing message that this is a life of resting in the good land and of enjoying the riches of the good land. Our Christian life should be a life full of liberty, freedom, and release, a life full of rest, satisfaction, and enjoyment.

A LIFE OF ENJOYMENT

Luke 15:23 indicates that the Christian life should be a life of enjoyment: "And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry." The result of the prodigal son's coming back to his father's house was that he and all those in the house could eat, drink, and be merry. This indicates that we should eat Christ as the fattened calf, drink the life-giving Spirit, and be merry in the enjoyment of the Triune God and in the riches of the Father's house. As we go on to 1 Corinthians 5:8 we see that the Christian life is a feast: "Let us therefore keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and evil, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The feast here refers to the feast of unleavened bread as the continuation of the Passover (Exo. 12:15-20). This feast lasted for seven days, the period of a complete course, signifying the entire period of our Christian life, from the day of our conversion to the day of rapture. This is a long feast which we should keep with unleavened bread, which is Christ as our

nourishment and enjoyment. Only He is the life supply of sincerity and truth, absolutely pure, without mixture, and full of reality. Such a feast is a time for enjoyment. The entire Christian life should be a feast and an enjoyment of Christ as the rich supply of life. Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 5:8 Paul charges us to keep the feast with Christ as unleavened bread.

A feast is not a time for working; rather, it is a time for eating, enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest. In the Christian life Christ should be our food, enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest.

In Ephesians 3:8 Paul says, "To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel." Paul preached not the doctrines but the riches of Christ. The riches of Christ are what He is to us, such as light, life, righteousness, and holiness, for our experience and enjoyment. These riches are unsearchable and untraceable. The Christian life is a life of enjoying the unsearchable riches of Christ.

In Philippians 1:19 Paul speaks of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Christian life is a life of enjoying this bountiful supply.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9 we see that Paul experienced and enjoyed the grace of Christ: "And He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness." Then in 2 Corinthians 13:14 Paul goes on to say, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." To be sure, the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit are for our enjoyment. The grace of the Lord is the Lord Himself as life to us for our enjoyment, the love of God is God Himself as the source of the grace of the Lord, and the fellowship of the Spirit is the Spirit Himself as the transmission of the grace of the Lord with the love of God for our participation. The result of the enjoyment of the grace of the Lord, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit is satisfaction, and the issue of this enjoyment and satisfaction is rest. All Christians should have this enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest.

However, only a small minority of Christians daily are enjoying the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit. Where are we with respect to this enjoyment? Many of us are laboring and are full of anxiety and worry. Furthermore, we have many expectations or dreams. Eventually, because these dreams are not fulfilled, we are disappointed and have suffering. Many among us daily are laboring, worrying, dreaming, and suffering. Someone may dream of becoming rich, but this dream leads to disappointment and suffering. Human life is a life of laboring, worrying, dreaming, and suffering.

Some believers who are still laboring, worrying, dreaming, and suffering may say, "I thought that life would be better after I became a Christian, but it's about the same. What, then, is the purpose of being a Christian?" Because of questions such as this, a number of Christians have been attracted to the teaching concerning prosperity, the teaching which claims that Christians can become rich and successful. Nevertheless, it is a fact that most Christians are laboring, worrying, dreaming, and suffering. Furthermore, most, whether they are a success or a failure, are going in a downward direction.

THE THREE KINDS OF LABOR IN HUMAN LIFE

If we read the Bible carefully, we shall see that there are three kinds of labor in human life, not including working at a job to earn a living. The first kind of labor is the labor to be a good person, to have good behavior, and to improve one's character. In this labor people struggle to be humble, patient, and loving. In the Bible, especially in the New Testament, to work means to do such things. But no one can be saved by works (Eph. 2:8-9). This means that no one can be saved by the works of trying to improve one's behavior and character, to keep the law, and to be good, patient, kind, and honest. This kind of effort is a real labor, and in the New Testament this is called work.

According to the Bible, the second kind of labor is to worry, to be anxious. What a hard job it is to labor under anxiety! If you could do your job day by day without

having any anxiety, you would be a healthy person. However, you may spend more hours each day worrying than you do working. Can you say that you have not had any anxiety, any worry, so far today? Day by day, everyone is anxious. You may be anxious about your health, your job, or a great many other things. I, of course, am not an exception. I have learned from experience that the only way to escape anxiety is to enjoy the Lord. Whenever I am not enjoying Christ, I have anxiety. Christ is versus anxiety. In the Life-study of Philippians we gave a number of messages entitled "A Life Full of Forbearance but without Anxiety."

The third kind of labor revealed in the Bible is suffering. Suffering is a very hard labor. When we enjoy God in the jubilee, there should not be any suffering. Paul, for example, suffered from a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7). Concerning this thorn, he entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from him (v. 8). However, instead of removing the thorn, the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you." The Lord seemed to be telling Paul, "No, I shall not remove the thorn, for My grace is sufficient. If you enjoy Me, you will not have any suffering."

To say that we shall not have suffering when we enjoy the Lord does not mean that our environment will improve. On the contrary, in many cases the environment changes for the worse. Consider the situation of Paul and Silas in Acts 16. Paul and Silas were cast into prison in Philippi. We would expect that this imprisonment would have been a great suffering for them. However, Paul and Silas were not suffering there in prison--they were enjoying the jubilee. They were singing and praising the Lord. Although they were in prison, they had enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest.

A MISTAKEN CONCEPT

As believers, we should not have the concept that because we are saved, love the Lord Jesus, have given everything to Him, and want to do everything for Him, our

environment will be prosperous. No Christian should have this thought. If this is our philosophy of the Christian life, we need to abandon it. Such a view is absolutely wrong.

Many of those who have served the Lord were martyred. For example, John the Baptist, the forerunner of the New Testament, was beheaded. When John sent two of his disciples to ask the Lord to do something for him, He indicated that He would not do anything (Matt. 11:2-5). The Lord went on to say, "Blessed is he who shall not be stumbled in Me" (Matt. 11:6). Here the Lord was indicating to John that He would not do anything to save him from martyrdom; rather, He would leave him in prison to be put to death. Likewise, Peter and Paul were martyred.

Do you think that being a martyr is a matter of suffering? Actually, anyone who is suffering is not qualified to be a martyr. Martyrdom is an experience of jubilee. One martyr, a British missionary killed in the 1930's in China, said as he was being put to death: "Every martyr's face is like the face of an angel, and every martyr's heart is like the heart of a lion." Stephen was certainly not suffering when he was martyred. When he was about to be stoned, his face shone like that of an angel (Acts 6:15). Instead of suffering, Stephen was enjoying the Lord.

LOVING THINGS OTHER THAN GOD

If we feel that in a particular environment we are suffering, this indicates that we still love certain things other than God. If we love God uniquely and wholly, we shall not be troubled by any kind of environment. This is the reason the Lord Jesus indicated that we must love Him more than we love our parents, brothers, sisters, wife or children (Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26). If we feel that it would be a suffering to lose our parents, children, wife, or husband, this means that we do not love God solely. It means that we place our love on something or someone other than God. If we love God solely, giving our love entirely to Him, having nothing to divide our love, we shall not be bothered by whatever happens to us.

Suppose you lose your house. Would that be a suffering to you? Would you still be able to praise the Lord, praising Him even for the loss of your house? If losing your house is a suffering and if you would not praise the Lord for it, this indicates that you love your house as well as God, perhaps more than God. If you did not love your house, you would not suffer as a result of losing it. Rather, you would say, "Hallelujah! My house is gone, but my God is not gone. He is more to me now than before. When I had a good house, God was not so much to me. But now that I have lost my house, God has become much more to me."

As a father of many children and a grandfather to many more grandchildren, I know that every parent wants his children to be successful. Perhaps you would like your children to be apostles, elders, deacons, or deaconesses, or you may want them to be doctors, lawyers, or computer scientists. But how would you feel if none of your children were an apostle, elder, deacon, or deaconess, or if none of them were in a respected profession? Would you be happy or disappointed? Recently I heard someone praising the Lord that his son had become a medical doctor. But I never heard a parent praising the Lord because his child received a failing grade.

The point of these illustrations is that even seeking Christians may not live a life of jubilee. On the contrary, because they love things other than God, they have suffering instead of enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest.

We all should do our job; however, we should not labor in the sense of struggling to be good, worrying, dreaming, and suffering. We should be able to say, "I only love my God. He is my portion. Nothing and no one apart from Him is my portion. A new car, a nice house, a good promotion, the top salary--all these are not a real portion to me."

NO ANXIETY IN THE JUBILEE

If we are living in the jubilee, we shall not have any anxiety. Concerning anxiety, the Lord Jesus says, "Do not be anxious about your life, what you should eat and what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put

on... Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature?... Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own evil" (Matt. 6:25, 27, 34). There is no need for us to borrow tomorrow's anxiety and bear it today. Every day has its own evil. Nevertheless, some saints, young as well as old, borrow anxiety not only from tomorrow but from years to come. This means that some are anxious not only concerning tomorrow but concerning what will happen years from now. Some grandparents may even be anxious concerning their third generation. They actually borrow the anxiety of a future generation and labor under it today.

Do you know why we are anxious both about today and tomorrow? We are anxious because God does not have the full ground within us. We still give a "corner" of our being to other things, and that corner causes us trouble. However, if we give all the room in our heart to God, we shall not be anxious or troubled by whatever happens to us. If in our hearts there is no ground for anything or anyone other than God, He will always be our enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest. The environment may change, but He remains the same.

It is very difficult for us to give all the ground in our being to God because we are fallen and have a fallen nature. The very cells and fibers of our physical bodies and our entire soul, including our mind, will, and emotion, are fallen from God, from the enjoyment of God, and from rest in God. We have fallen into many things other than God. Anything, whether good or bad, that is not God Himself can be a source of anxiety. Only God is enjoyment; only God is satisfaction and rest. No matter how good something else may be, it cannot be our enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest.

A LIFE THAT LIVES GOD

The life of jubilee, that is, the life that lives in the jubilee, is a life that lives God. When some hear this, they may say, "Isn't this the victorious life? Isn't this a holy life,

a life of the Spirit?" Yes, the life of jubilee is a victorious and holy life, and it is a life of the Spirit. But although we have heard many messages on living in the Spirit, we still do not live very much in the jubilee. Instead, we have the labor of struggling to improve ourselves, the labor of anxiety, the labor of dreaming, and the labor of suffering. What a hard labor it is to struggle to be good! It is an even harder labor to worry, to have anxiety. It is also a labor to dream, to have expectations. Every kind of expectation is a dream. Finally, there is the labor of suffering. When we have suffering, we cannot have enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest.

How can we be released from all this labor? The only way to be released is to take the Triune God as our portion. If we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, the all-inclusive Spirit will render us His bountiful supply. Then we shall enjoy God in Christ as the good land flowing with milk and honey, and we shall have enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest. We all need this jubilee.

The Gospel of Luke leads us into the life of the jubilee. The Man-Savior saves us from bondage into the jubilee. He saves us into the liberty, enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest of God's jubilee.

The entire New Testament teaching concerning the Christian life involves the jubilee. When the kingdom comes, we shall enjoy a greater jubilee than we enjoy today. Then in eternity, in the New Jerusalem with the new heaven and new earth, we shall have the greatest jubilee. We shall enjoy God in full as our satisfaction and rest. Today we have a foretaste of this jubilee.

All day long we should enjoy God as our enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest. We should not struggle, worry, dream, or suffer. Even in the most difficult situation we can still enjoy the Lord. If we give all the ground in us to God and enjoy Him, not even martyrdom will be a suffering to us. Instead of struggle, anxiety, dreams, and suffering, we shall have the all-inclusive processed Triune God as our enjoyment, satisfaction, and rest. The grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Spirit will be ours. This is the enjoyment of the jubilee.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

(1)

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:24; 3:15; Rom. 4:25; Acts 10:41; John 10:15, 17-18; Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:52-54; John 13:31-32; 17:1; Luke 24:26; John 12:24

In the foregoing messages we have considered in detail two very important matters: the incarnation of the Man-Savior and the jubilee. Now in this Life-study we want to cover two more vital matters--the Man-Savior's resurrection and His ascension.

According to the Bible, three matters related to the Man-Savior are of particular importance. These matters are His death, resurrection, and ascension. Along with the Lord's Person, these are clearly revealed in the Bible. However, they have not been covered adequately by most Christian teachers.

The Person of Christ is, of course, a great mystery. This mystery is related to and involves the divine Trinity. This means that when we consider the Person of Christ, we cannot avoid the divine Trinity.

Christ's all-inclusive redemptive work includes His incarnation. His redemptive work began with His incarnation and was completed in His resurrection. All that Christ did during His thirty-three and a half years on the earth was part of His redemptive work. I believe that in this Life-study we have covered Christ's incarnation rather thoroughly. In the Life-study messages on both Mark and Luke we have spoken much regarding Christ's human living. Eventually, we were brought to the end of Christ's redemptive work with the three vital and crucial matters of His death, resurrection, and ascension.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S SEVENFOLD STATUS IN HIS DEATH

We have seen that when the Man-Savior died on the cross, He had a sevenfold status. This means that He died as the Lamb of God (John 1:29), a man in the flesh, a man in the old creation, the serpent (John 3:14), the Firstborn of all creation (Col. 1:15), the Peacemaker (Eph. 2:15), and a grain of wheat (John 12:24).

A simple way to remember the aspects of the Man-Savior's sevenfold status in His death is to recall the three aspects mentioned in the Gospel of John. First we are told that Christ was the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world; second, that He was typified by the brass serpent; and third, that He was the grain of wheat that fell into the ground and died. The Lamb of God took away our sin, the One typified by the brass serpent destroyed the old serpent, Satan, and the grain of wheat released the divine life. Hallelujah, sin has been taken away, Satan has been destroyed, and the divine life has been released!

Having seen these aspects from the Gospel of John, we may go on to consider the remaining four aspects. Christ died on the cross as the Firstborn of all creation. In this aspect of His status, He brought the entire old creation with Him to the cross. Christ also died as a man, the last Adam, bringing the old man to the cross. Furthermore, He was crucified as a man in the flesh. Second Corinthians 5:21 says that He was made sin for us. Sin is related to the flesh. Therefore, Romans 8:3 says that God sent His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin and concerning sin. On the cross He condemned sin in the flesh. Finally, Christ died as the Peacemaker, the One who abolished the ordinances of human culture and living. Hence, on the cross Christ was the Lamb, the serpent, the grain of wheat, a man in the flesh made sin for us, the last Adam, that is, a man in the old creation, the Firstborn of creation, and the Peacemaker. In this sevenfold status He died as our Redeemer.

Just as we have considered the Man-Savior's sevenfold status in His death, we also need to see a number of points concerning His resurrection and ascension. It is difficult to

find a book that speaks of the Lord's sevenfold status in His death. Likewise, it is also difficult to find a writing that covers all the various matters we shall see regarding the Lord's resurrection and ascension. Many of these matters are neglected in today's teachings. Hence, in the Lord's recovery we have the burden to cover them. Nothing that we share in these messages is the product of our imagination. On the contrary, every point comes from the divine Word. All that we have seen concerning Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension comes from diligent study of the Word under the divine light.

When we consider the Man-Savior's resurrection, we need to humble ourselves and empty ourselves of preoccupying thoughts. For example, we need to realize that Christ's resurrection has nothing to do with the things of Easter, such as colored eggs.

Regarding the Lord's resurrection, there are two main aspects: the objective aspect and the subjective aspect. With both the objective and subjective aspects there are a number of points. In this message and the message following we shall cover the objective aspect of Christ's resurrection. Then we shall go on to consider the subjective aspect, the aspect of the Lord's resurrection that involves something that needs to be wrought into our being.

GOD'S VINDICATION AND APPROVAL OF THE MAN-SAVIOR AND HIS ALL-INCLUSIVE REDEMPTIVE WORK

The first point of the objective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection is that it was God's vindication and approval of the Man-Savior and His all-inclusive redemptive work. By resurrection God vindicated and approved the Man-Savior; God also vindicated and approved the Lord's redemptive work. In other words, God vindicated the Person and work of the Man-Savior.

With each one of us there is the matter of both person and work. Our person is what we are, and our work is what we do. The criticism of others is always related either to their person or to their work.

This certainly was the situation with the Lord Jesus. According to the four Gospels, there was much criticism,

especially from the Jewish leaders, of Christ's Person and deeds. Concerning His Person, some said that He was a Samaritan (John 8:48), that He was beside Himself, that is, mentally ill (Mark 3:21), and that He was demon possessed (John 8:49). Furthermore, His works were condemned by the Pharisees as a blasphemy to God. The religious leaders surely denied, rejected, and condemned the Man-Savior. They sentenced Him to death and had Him crucified. This was the attitude of the leaders of the Jewish nation, those among whom Christ was born, lived, and worked.

The religious leaders regarded the Man-Savior as worse than a criminal and a murderer, as someone worse than Barabbas. They condemned both Him and His work; they rejected both His Person and His deeds. Their rejection of the Man-Savior was to such an extent that they sentenced Him to be put on the cross.

Suppose the Man-Savior had not been resurrected. Suppose His body was left in the tomb. If so, then the Jewish leaders would have won the case. However, God resurrected Christ and thereby vindicated Him. This kind of vindication was extraordinary. After the Lord was crucified and buried, God raised Him up from the dead.

Raised Up by God

In the book of Acts we are told a number of times that God raised up, resurrected, the Lord Jesus. For example, referring to the Lord Jesus, Acts 2:24 says, "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death." Acts 2:32 says, "This Jesus God raised up, of which we all are witnesses." Acts 3:15 speaks of "the Author of life...whom God raised from the dead," and 4:10 tells of "Jesus Christ the Nazarene...whom God raised from the dead." Other verses in Acts that speak of God raising up Jesus from among the dead are 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33-34, 37; 17:31 and 26:8. The reason this is repeated so often is that the entire book of Acts is a book of the testimony of the resurrection of Christ. The apostles' testimony was that of the resurrection of the Man-Savior. God vindicated Christ by raising Him up.

God's Vindication

The Man-Savior's Person and work were both rejected and condemned. The religious leaders thought that they were through with Him and that they could now joyfully be at rest. But God came in to resurrect the Lord Jesus. God did not argue with the religious leaders; He did not have a conference to negotiate with them. Instead, God seemed to say, "I don't care to talk to you foolish ones. I shall do one thing--I shall raise up the very One you crucified. My raising Him up is my vindication of Him and His work, but it is a shame to those who condemned Him."

The Lord Jesus was the turning point of human history. What He did has affected the whole world. Through resurrection, God, the supreme Judge, vindicated the Man-Savior and His redemptive work.

God's Approval

The resurrection of Christ was not only God's vindication, it was also God's approval of Him and His work. In resurrecting the Lord Jesus, God seemed to be saying to the Jewish nation with its leaders, "I approve what you condemn. You say that Jesus was blaspheming Me. But I approve what He did, what He said, and what He was. You thought that you could put Him to death. On the cross He suffered your persecution, and then He accomplished My redemption. I approve of His redeeming work. He accomplished the redemption I had planned in eternity past. I not only vindicate Him and His work--I also approve Him and His work."

According to John 10, the Lord Jesus laid down His life and took it again by God's commandment. God commanded Him to lay down His life. Therefore, God came in to vindicate and approve the Lord Jesus and His work. Again God seemed to be saying, "If I did not approve Jesus of Nazareth, I would leave Him in Hades. After He was buried in the tomb, He went to Hades. But I have raised Him both from Hades and from the tomb to declare to you that I approve what He did and that I vindicate Him." Thus, by raising up the Lord Jesus, God silenced those who condemned the Man-Savior.

A Proof of Our Justification by God

The resurrection of Christ, as God's vindication, is a proof of our justification by God. Romans 4:25 says that Christ "was delivered because of our offenses and was raised because of our justification." The death of Christ fully satisfied God's righteous requirements so that we may be justified by God through Christ's death (Rom. 3:24). His resurrection is a proof that God is satisfied with His death for us and that we are justified by God because of His death. In Him, the resurrected one, we are accepted by God. Therefore, Romans 4:25 says that Christ was raised because of our justification.

Suppose Christ died for us and our sins and was buried in the tomb, but was not resurrected by God. If this were the situation, could you still believe that His death was accepted by God? Could you believe that His death satisfied God's requirements and fulfilled His desires? We could not believe this if Christ were still in the tomb. However, the Man-Savior is not in the tomb. God raised Him up from the dead and He came back in resurrection. This is a strong proof that God has accepted His death for us, that His death satisfied God's requirements and fulfilled whatever God wanted Him to do for us.

Let us use the paying of a debt as an illustration, Suppose you owe someone a very large amount of money and are not able to pay the debt. However, a wealthy friend of yours intervenes to pay the debt for you, and then gives you the receipt as proof of payment. When you see the receipt with your creditor's signature on it indicating that the debt has been paid in full, you will be happy, knowing that you have been released from the debt.

As sinners, we were in debt to God. But Christ died on the cross for our sins. How do we know that God has forgiven us? We know it by the fact that God raised Christ from the dead. Christ's resurrection is for our justification.

How do we know that God has justified us, that He has accepted us? We know this by the fact that God has resurrected Christ from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the proof of our justification by God. The

resurrection of Christ is a strong proof that God's requirements have been satisfied by Christ's death and that God has accepted Christ as our Redeemer. Christ's resurrection is the receipt, the proof, that our debt has been paid. Praise the Lord for the "receipt" of the resurrected Christ!

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-ONE

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

(2)

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:24; 3:15; Rom. 4:25; Acts 10:41; John 10:15, 17-18; Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:52-54; John 13:31-32; 17:1; Luke 24:26; John 12:24

In this message we shall continue to consider the objective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection. We have seen that the Lord's resurrection was God's vindication and approval of the Man-Savior and His all-inclusive redemptive work. Now we need to see that Christ's resurrection was also the Man-Savior's success in all His achievements.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S SUCCESS IN ALL HIS ACHIEVEMENTS

People often boast of their success. But no matter how successful a person may be in life, he loses everything when he dies. This means that death is the end of one's success.

This certainly was the situation of the rich man in the parable in 12:16-21. This rich man said to himself, "I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and I will gather there all my wheat and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take it easy, eat, drink, be merry" (vv. 18-19). However, God said to him, "Senseless one, this night they are requiring your soul from you. Now the things which you prepared, whose will they be?" (v. 20). This rich man was successful, but when he died, his success was gone.

The Lord Rising Up from the Dead

The Man-Savior's success in His achievements was

proved by the fact that He rose from among the dead. On the one hand, the New Testament says that God raised Jesus up from the dead (Acts 3:15). On the other hand, the New Testament also tells us that Christ rose up Himself (Acts 10:41). Regarding the Lord as a man, the New Testament tells us that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 8:11). But considering Him as God, the New Testament declares that He Himself rose from the dead (Rom. 14:9). God raised up Christ as a proof of His vindication and approval of the Lord and His work. But as a proof of His success in His achievements, the Lord Jesus Himself rose from the dead.

In Acts 10:41 Peter says that the disciples ate and drank with Christ "after He rose from among the dead." After the Lord's crucifixion and burial, Peter and the other disciples were deeply disappointed. They may have said to one another, "What can we do? Now that the Lord has been crucified and has been buried, we cannot do anything. Everything is over." The reason the disciples felt this way is that nothing nullifies a person's success more than his burial. However, the Lord Jesus did not remain in the tomb. On the third day He rose up and appeared to the disciples.

When the Lord Jesus appeared to the disciples as recorded in Luke 24, He said to them, "Do you have anything to eat here? And they handed Him part of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate before them" (vv. 41-43). Here the Lord seemed to be saying, "I would like to eat with you. Do you have something to eat? I would also like to take care of your hunger."

According to the New Testament, the Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples on the day of His resurrection to do two main things: first, to breathe the Spirit into the disciples (John 20:22); second, to eat with them (Luke 24:41-43). Unable to forget what happened on the day of resurrection, Peter told those in the house of Cornelius that the Lord Jesus rose up and that the disciples ate and drank with Him. They had a feast with the resurrected Man-Savior. The Lord's resurrection was a strong evidence

of His success. Because of this, there was no need for the disciples to be disappointed.

The Lord Laying Down His Life

From chapter ten of John we see that actually the Lord Jesus was not killed; rather, He laid down His life. In John 10:15 He said, "I lay down My life on behalf of the sheep." Then in John 10:17 and 18 He continued, "Therefore the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment I received from My Father." When the Lord appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, He may have said something like this: "My resurrection is the proof of My success. I was not killed--I laid down My life. If I were not willing to lay down My life, no one would be able to do anything to Me. I laid down My life according to My Father's commandment, and after three days I took it again. The Father commanded Me to lay down My life for you, and I did this. Then He commanded Me to rise up, and I arose. Now as a proof of My success I am here with you."

A Sign of His Great Success

Indeed, the Lord Jesus was not killed; He laid down His life. Then He rose up and took His life again. Hence, His resurrection was the Man-Savior's success in all His achievements. He did nothing in vain. Everything He did was sealed and confirmed by His resurrection. If the Lord had done so many things during His lifetime but did not rise up from the dead, His remaining in the tomb would have been a sign of failure. But His rising up is the evidence of His great success in whatever He did. God raised up Christ for vindication and approval. But the Lord Himself rose up as a sign of His success.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S VICTORY OVER DEATH, INCLUDING SATAN, HADES, AND THE GRAVE

The Man-Savior's resurrection was also His victory

over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave (Acts 2:24). Satan, death, Hades, and the grave form a group. The Man-Savior was not only vindicated by God and was proved to be a success in His achievements, but He was victorious over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave, all of which are a great concern and trouble to us. The Man-Savior overcame death and destroyed Satan (Heb. 2:14). The keys of death and of Hades are now in His hand (Rev. 1:18), and He is victorious over the grave.

Second Timothy 1:10 says that Christ "nullified death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel." Christ nullified death, making it of none effect, through His Devil-destroying death (Heb. 2:14) and death-swallowing resurrection (1 Cor. 15:52-54). In the gospel the revelation is brought to us that Christ has nullified death and has brought us eternal, indestructible life.

Christ was manifested to nullify death and to bring in eternal, indestructible life. He not only defeated death--He nullified it. Through His resurrection, death has become of none effect; death has lost its power, even its taste. Christ could nullify death because He destroyed the Devil, the one who has the power of death. Of course, by overcoming Satan and nullifying death, the Lord Jesus also defeated Hades and the grave. Therefore, Christ's resurrection declares that He is victorious over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave. No longer are these a problem. Therefore, Christ's resurrection was not only God's vindication and the Lord's success, but also His victory over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave. Christ through His resurrection has made this troublesome group of none effect.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S GLORIFICATION

Furthermore, the Man-Savior's resurrection was His glorification (John 13:31-32; 17:1; Luke 24:26). Because this matter is difficult to understand and define, it is helpful to use the illustration of a grain of wheat (John 12:24). There is life in a grain of wheat. When the grain is sown into the earth, it "dies." But at the same time it grows. If a grain of wheat is not sown into the ground, it

will neither die nor grow. But a seed that is put into the ground is eventually glorified through its growth.

The principle is the same with other kinds of seeds, for example, a carnation seed. Like a grain of wheat, a carnation seed dies in the soil. But eventually it grows, rises out of the earth, and blossoms. The blossoming of a carnation flower is its glorification. Therefore, a carnation seed is fully glorified in the blossoming of a carnation flower.

According to His own word in John 12:24, the Lord Jesus was a grain of wheat that fell into the ground and died. But as He was in the ground dying, He was also growing. Eventually, in resurrection He "blossomed" and brought forth many grains. These grains are His glorification.

Wheat growing in a field is the glorification of all the grains of wheat sown into that field. Ears of ripe wheat have been described as "golden ears of grain." The time is coming when in the universe there will be a "field" full of golden ears of grain. Then God will be able to say, "Satan, look at this field. This is the glorification of My Son, Jesus Christ." Even today in the proper church life we may have a miniature of this glorification.

The Man-Savior's Shell Broken through His Death

As a grain of wheat the Lord Jesus had a human "shell." For Him to be glorified (John 12:23) required that His divine life be released from within the shell of His humanity to produce many believers in resurrection (1 Pet. 1:3). Through His death on the cross the shell of His humanity was broken.

The Man-Savior's Divine Life Being Released

When the shell of the Lord's humanity was broken on the cross, the divine life within Him was released in resurrection. The release of the divine life and nature from within the Lord as a grain of wheat was His glorification. He prayed for this glorification in John 17:1: "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You."

When the Lord Jesus was incarnated, He put on

humanity. This means that no longer was He merely God, for through incarnation He had become the God-man, having both divinity and humanity. Furthermore, it was necessary for His humanity to be brought into divinity. The bringing of the Lord's humanity into divinity was His glorification. According to the New Testament revelation, when the Lord Jesus rose up from the dead, He rose up with both His divinity and His humanity. This means He rose up as the God-man. This rising of the Lord's humanity was His glorification.

The man Jesus was glorified through His resurrection. Not only was the Son of God glorified by being released from within the shell of the Lord's humanity, but the man Jesus was also glorified. He was glorified when His humanity was brought into divinity. Hallelujah, now there is a man in the glory!

When some hear that the man Jesus is now in glory, they may understand this to mean that He is in the heavens. However, Luke 24:26 indicates that He entered into glory even before His ascension. While on the way to Emmaus, He said to the disciples, "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" This refers to His resurrection, which brought Him into glory (1 Cor. 15:43; Acts 3:13a, 15a). The Man-Savior's resurrection was His entering into glory. Therefore, glorification means not only that the Son of God was released from His human shell, but also that the Lord's humanity has been brought into divinity. Have you ever heard a message telling you that your Savior was glorified when His humanity was brought into divinity? Often Christians are told that Christ has glory mainly because He is great. However, the Bible reveals that the Lord became a man of low estate. In His resurrection His lowly humanity was brought into divinity, and this was His glorification. He not only has honor, dignity, and glory; His resurrection was His glorification.

The Birth of God's Firstborn Son

The Man-Savior's glorification was also His birth as

God's firstborn Son. Acts 13:33 reveals that to the man Jesus resurrection was a birth. He was begotten by God in His resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God among many brothers (Rom. 8:29). He was the only begotten Son of God from eternity (John 1:18; 3:16). After incarnation and through resurrection, He was begotten by God in His humanity to be God's firstborn Son.

From eternity Christ was God's only begotten Son. Nevertheless, in the New Testament we are told that on the day of His resurrection He was begotten by God. This was even prophesied in Psalm 2:7. In resurrection God begot Jesus to be His firstborn Son.

The word "firstborn" indicates that there will be other sons. Hebrews 2:10 speaks of many sons, and Romans 8:29, of many brothers. In resurrection the Lord came to His brothers, who composed His church, and declared the Father's name to them (Heb. 2:12).

Through incarnation God's only begotten Son put on humanity and became the God-man. Then in resurrection this God-man was born of God to be His Firstborn.

It is important for us to realize that, before incarnation, God's only begotten Son did not have human nature, only the divine nature. However, in resurrection, God's firstborn Son has a human nature as well as the divine nature. As believers in Christ, we all are sons of God and brothers of the firstborn Son. Through regeneration we have the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). Although we are human beings, we now have the divine nature. Although the Lord Jesus is divine, He also has the human nature. Therefore, both the Lord Jesus and we are the same in that both He and we have the human nature and the divine nature. We praise the Lord that in His resurrection He was born of God to be His firstborn Son. His resurrection was the release of the divine life and nature, and through this release He was begotten as the firstborn Son of God.

We thank the Lord for showing us all the points related to the objective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection. The Lord's resurrection was God's vindication and approval, it was the evidence of the Man-Savior's success,

it was His victory over death, Satan, Hades, and the grave, and it was His glorification. Through His resurrection death was nullified, Satan was defeated, and humanity was brought into divinity. Praise the Lord for His resurrection! May the Lord give us new hymns and songs written according to the light He has given us from the Word so that we may praise Him in a richer, higher, and fuller way.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-TWO

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

(3)

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:16-20; 12:24b; 1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 1:20-23

In the two preceding messages we covered the objective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection. With this message we come to the subjective aspect of His resurrection.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S TRANSFIGURATION INTO THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT TO ENTER INTO HIS BELIEVERS

The first point related to the subjective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection is that Christ's resurrection was His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit in order to enter into His believers (1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:16-20). Christ's resurrection as His transfiguration is a difficult matter to explain, for this involves the divine Trinity.

A Mistaken Teaching Concerning the Triune God

God is triune. Traditional teachings concerning the Trinity have given the impression that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--the three of the divine Godhead--are separate. According to this understanding, when the Son came to earth, the Father was left on the throne in heaven. We know from the Gospel of John that when the Son was about to die, He told His disciples that He would ask the Father to send the Spirit, who came on the day of Pentecost. However, it is supposed by some that when the Spirit came on Pentecost, the Son remained with the Father on the throne. Therefore, according to this teaching, which is very superficial, and far from being accurate, when the Son came as a man, He left the Father on the throne. The Son then

lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years, died, resurrected, and ascended to the heavens. Following this, the Father sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit came, He left both the Father and the Son in the heavens. This kind of teaching gives a very wrong impression concerning the Triune God.

The Son Coming with the Father

The New Testament reveals that when the Son came, He came with the Father. Concerning this, John 8:29 says, "He Who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone." When the Son was on earth, He was not alone, for the Father was always with Him: "I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16:32). The Lord Jesus even told His disciples that He was in the Father and that the Father was in Him: "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (John 14:11a). The Son's being in the Father and the Father's being in the Son is a matter of coinherence, a word we need to know for the expression of the deeper truth regarding the Triune God revealed in the Scriptures.

Since the Son came with the Father and the Father was even in the Son, it is not correct to say that the Son left the Father on the throne in heaven when He came to earth. Actually, it is heretical to teach that the Son came without the Father. In the Gospel of John we see that the Son was sent "from with" the Father, that is, not only from the Father but also with the Father. In John 6:46 the Lord Jesus said, "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except Him Who is from God, He has seen the Father." The Greek preposition translated "from" in this verse is *para,* by the side of. The sense here is from with. The Lord Jesus is not only *from* the Father, but also *with* the Father. We have the same thought in John 7:29; 16:27; and 17:8. Because the Son was sent from with the Father the Father came when the Son came. Moreover, when the Son was on earth, the Father was not only with Him but also in Him, even as the Son was in the Father.

The Son and the Spirit

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit was involved in the conceiving of the Lord Jesus. Hence, the birth of Christ was directly of the Holy Spirit, for His mother, Mary, was "with child of the Holy Spirit," for that which was begotten in her was of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18, 20). Then at the age of thirty, when the Man-Savior came forth to minister, the Spirit descended upon Him (Luke 3:22). In His ministry the Lord preached the gospel by the Spirit. In Luke 4:18 we are told that He read these words from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor...." The Son's preaching was the Spirit's work. The Son never did anything by Himself. He even cast out demons by the Spirit of God (Matt. 12:28).

Not Separation But Coinherence

If we put together all these verses concerning the Son, the Father, and the Spirit, we see that when Jesus Christ was on earth He was the Triune God. Not only was the Son there, but the Father and the Spirit were there as well. Hence, He is the embodiment of the Godhead (Col. 2:9). Therefore, we should abandon the thought that only the Son came to earth leaving the Father and the Spirit in the heavens. What we teach concerning the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is based on the pure word of the Bible, and the Bible cannot be defeated.

In John 14:8, Philip, our representative, said, "Lord, show us the Father and it suffices us." Surprised by this request, the Lord replied, "Am I so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? 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 which I speak to you, I do not speak from Myself; but the Father Who abides in Me, He does His works" (vv. 9-10). Here the Lord seems to be saying, "Why do you ask Me to show you the Father? Do you not know that if you see Me, you see the Father? You see the Father when you see Me because I am in the

Father, and the Father is in Me. Do not think that I am separate from the Father, or that the Father is far away from Me. This is a mistaken concept. Because I am in the Father and the Father is in Me, wherever I am, there the Father is also."

Philip was silenced by the Lord's answer. This gave Him the opportunity to speak further. In John 14:16-17 He went on to say, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever; even the Spirit of reality, Whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you." When the Lord spoke these words, He was among the disciples, but He was not yet in them. He seemed to be telling them, "Now I am among you and with you. But the intention of the Triune God is in that He would enter into you. It is not adequate that I be with you--I need to be in you.' Therefore, He said that He would ask the Father to give them another Comforter, the Spirit of reality, who would be in them.

At this point some might say, "Have you not told us that since the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son, the Son and the Father cannot he regarded as separate? But in John 14:16 the Son says that He would ask the Father to give them another Comforter. Does this not indicate that the Son and the Father are separate?" No, this does not indicate that the Son and the Father are separate. We have already seen that the Lord Himself said that He is in the Father and that the Father is in Him. This is a matter of coinherence. Therefore, what we have in the Son's asking of the Father is not separation but coinherence.

Another Comforter, the Spirit of Reality

It is significant that in John 14:16 the Lord speaks of another Comforter. The word "another" indicates that the Lord, the One speaking, is a Comforter. If He were not a Comforter, then He would not have said that He would ask the Father to send another Comforter. If we read

verses 16 through 20 carefully, we shall see that, eventually, the second Comforter is actually the first Comforter as the Spirit. In verse 17 the Lord says that the Spirit of reality will be in the disciples. But then in verse 18 He continues, "I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you." The "He" who is the Spirit of reality in verse 17 now becomes the "I," the Lord Himself in verse 18. This indicates that after His resurrection the Lord became the Spirit of reality, as confirmed by 1 Corinthians 15:45b. Furthermore, the Lord speaks of another Comforter in verse 16 and then says in verse 20, "In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." Here the Lord again reveals that He Himself would be in the disciples as the Spirit.

If some of us had been present when the Lord spoke these words, we might have argued with the Lord Jesus and said, "Lord, we do not know what you are talking about. You have just said that You would ask the Father to send another Comforter, the Spirit of reality, who would be in us. Why do You now say that You will be in us?" If anyone present had tried to argue with Him in this way, He might have said, "You must realize that the very Comforter whom I have called another Comforter is actually I Myself in resurrection. I have told you that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. It is the same with Me and the Spirit. The Spirit is in Me, and I am in the Spirit. When I come, the Father comes; and when the Spirit comes, I come."

The Three-one God

The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one God, the Triune God. The word "triune" means three-one. Hence, God is the three-one God. Because He is triune, three-one, we should not think that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit can be separated. We need to always remember that the Three--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--are one. However, while They are one, They are three at the same time.

The Ultimate Consummation of the Triune God

In Christ's resurrection the Spirit came as the ultimate

consummation of the Triune God. When the Son came in incarnation, He came with the Father and by the Spirit. After coming in incarnation, the Son took a further step to go through death and enter into resurrection. This is the process which we call the Man-Savior's transfiguration. By going through this process of transfiguration, the Son, who came in incarnation with the Father and by the Spirit, became the Spirit as the ultimate consummation of the Triune God. We should not think that when the Spirit came He came alone, leaving the Son and the Father on the throne in heaven. No, when the Spirit came He came as the consummation of the Triune God. This means that when the Spirit came, the Son and Father came with Him also. The three--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--came together as the Spirit.

The Elements Brought into the Life-giving Spirit through the Man-Savior's Transfiguration

Furthermore, when God came through incarnation, something was added to Him--the element of humanity. Before the incarnation, the Son of God was merely divine; He did not have the human nature. But when He came through incarnation, humanity was added to Him. In this way He became a God-man, a Person both divine and human.

This God-man experienced human living on earth for thirty-three and a half years. Then He went to the cross and died an all-inclusive death. We have seen that the Man-Savior died as One with a sevenfold status. His death was the death of the Lamb of God, a serpent in form, a grain of wheat, the last Adam, the Firstborn of all creation, a man in the likeness of the flesh of sin, and the Peacemaker. Because of the Lord's sevenfold status in His death, it was an all-inclusive death.

After this God-man passed through His all-inclusive death, He entered into resurrection. His resurrection was His transfiguration--the transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit to enter into His believers. This transfiguration included a number of elements: humanity,

human living, and Christ's all-inclusive death. All these elements were brought into the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit who became the consummation of the Triune God. Just as the incarnation added humanity to God, so the Man-Savior's resurrection brought all these elements into the life-giving Spirit.

Some may argue that nothing can be added to God. But I would ask you to look at what is portrayed in the New Testament. When God became a man, was not humanity added to Him? Incarnation was a process that brought God into humanity and added humanity to God. In like manner, resurrection as the Man-Savior's transfiguration was also a process that brought the elements of humanity, human living, and the all-inclusive death of the God-man with His sevenfold status into the life-giving Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-THREE

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

(4)

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:16-20; 12:24b; 1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 1:20-23

This message is the continuation of the foregoing message in which we began to consider the subjective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection. The first matter we saw relating to this subjective aspect is that the Man-Savior's resurrection was His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit in order to enter into His believers (1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:16-20).

THE PROCESS OF RESURRECTION

The resurrection of the Man-Savior was a process. This process began immediately after the Lord's birth. We should not think, therefore, that His resurrection began on the third day after His crucifixion.

If we consider the New Testament thoroughly, we shall realize that resurrection begins with death. For the thirty-three and a half years of the Lord's human living on earth, He experienced death--death to Himself and to all things other than God. Hence, the life He lived was a life under death.

In Luke 12:50 the Man-Savior indicated that He was very constrained and desired to be released: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!" The Greek word translated "pressed" may also be rendered "constrained." The Man-Savior was constrained in His flesh, which He had put on through incarnation. Therefore, He needed to die, to be baptized in physical death, so that His unlimited and infinite divine being with His divine life might be released from within

Him. The point here is that the Lord lived a life under death to Himself and that this kind of living is related to the process of resurrection.

As an illustration of the fact that resurrection begins with death, let us consider once again the Lord's word concerning Himself as a grain of wheat: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). When a grain of wheat is sown into the earth, it dies there. But while it is dying, it is also growing. The strange thing is this: if the grain of wheat does not die, it will not grow. Suppose a grain of wheat is placed on a table and left there. That grain of wheat will not die, and also it will not grow. In order for a grain of wheat to grow, it must be put in the ground to die. It grows by the way of dying. Without dying, a grain of wheat will never grow.

Now we need to see that the resurrection of a grain of wheat does not begin when the wheat sprouts out from the soil. When a grain of wheat sprouts in this way, someone may say, "Look! We can see the resurrection of the grain of wheat." It is not wrong to say that the sprouting of a wheat grain is a matter of resurrection. But the point we are making here is that the resurrection of a grain of wheat does not begin with the sprouting of the grain. Rather, its resurrection begins much earlier than this. The resurrection of a grain of wheat begins with the death of the grain.

From the illustration of the dying and growing of a grain of wheat we can see that while Christ was dying, He was resurrecting. When did Christ's resurrection begin? We should not say that it began three days after His crucifixion. According to the picture of a grain of wheat dying and growing, Christ's resurrection began while He was dying. He likened Himself to a grain of wheat falling into the ground to die so that many grains might be brought forth. The Lord Jesus, like the grain of wheat, was growing, sprouting, resurrecting, even while He was dying.

DYING TO LIVE

Now that we have the principle that the process of the

Man-Savior's resurrection began while He was dying, we need to ask when the Lord Jesus died. Did He die only on the day of the Passover? The New Testament indicates that He began to die immediately after He was born. Throughout His years on earth, He was dying to live. Every moment of every day, He was dying. This means that while He was living in the home of a poor carpenter, He was dying. The process of His resurrection began as He was dying.

It is significant that the Lord Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). The Lord did not say that He is the life and the resurrection; He said first that He is the resurrection and then that He is the life. Why does resurrection come first in John 11:25? Resurrection is mentioned first in this verse because throughout His life the Lord Jesus was dying and resurrecting.

When the Lord Jesus told Martha that her brother would rise again, she replied, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection in the last day" (John 11:24). Here Martha prolonged the resurrection to the distant future, to a time just before the millennium. Therefore, the Lord Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life." The Lord was indicating that He is the resurrection now, the resurrection in the present. He did not say, "I shall be the resurrection;" He said, "I *am* the resurrection." The Lord could say this because while He was living in the human life, He was resurrecting by dying.

When did the Lord's death begin? His death began immediately after He was born. When did His resurrection begin? His resurrection began with His dying. The Man-Savior was dying to live; He lived by dying.

The Lord's life on earth for thirty-three and a half years was a life of dying to live, a life of living by dying. Eventually, His death was completed on the cross, and His resurrection was completed on the third day after His crucifixion. There was a beginning of His death and also a completion of it. Likewise, there was a beginning of His resurrection and a completion of resurrection. I encourage you to bring this matter to the Lord in prayer.

Praise the Lord that He was the dying-to-live Man-Savior and also the living-by-dying Man-Savior! While He was living, He was dying, and while He was dying, He was living. We may even say that while He was dying, He was resurrecting. His thirty-three and a half years on earth were a long process of death and also of resurrection. With Him resurrection and death went together.

According to our opinion, we may think that the Lord Jesus should have said to Martha, "Do you not know that I am the life? One day I will die, and then I shall be the resurrection." However, the Lord said that He was the resurrection and the life. The fact that He was resurrection proves that He was also life. If he had not been resurrecting, He would not have been able to live.

After a person is born, does he begin to live, or does he begin to die? Actually, as soon as a human being is born, he begins to die. Death, therefore, does not come as an accident. On the contrary, death comes as a process. For some, this process is short; for others, it is very long. But whatever the case may be, all unbelievers are in the process of dying.

What is our situation as believers? Are we dying or living? Today we believers are dying to live, and we are living by dying. The unbelievers only have the process of dying, but we have both dying and living, both death and resurrection. Actually, the more we die, the more we are resurrected.

RESURRECTION AS A PROCESS OF TRANSFIGURATION

In the previous message we pointed out that through the incarnation humanity was added to God. In other words, through the process of incarnation God put humanity upon Himself. In a similar way, in the process of resurrection certain elements were put into the Spirit. In particular, these elements include the Lord's human living and His all-inclusive death. Therefore, resurrection was a process of transfiguration in which these elements were put into the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. This is the Spirit who has entered into the believers.

THE TRIUNE GOD DWELLING IN US

In order to understand the Man-Savior's resurrection as His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit, we need to read John 14:10-20 carefully again and again. In John 14 we see that when the Son came, the Father was in Him. Furthermore, when the Spirit comes, the Son is with Him. Hence, the Spirit comes as the consummation of the Triune God. This means that the Spirit comes as the Triune God. When the Spirit comes, the Triune God comes.

In the Bible the Hebrew word for Spirit is *ruach;* the Greek word is *pneuma.* Both words denote spirit, breath, air. We may say that our processed Triune God is like the air--so available for us to breathe in. Now we can understand why Romans 10:8 says that the word is not far from us but is very near, even in our mouth and in our heart. When we recognize this and respond by calling on the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus comes into us.

When the Lord is in us, the Spirit, the Son, and the Father are all in us. The spiritual air we breathe is actually the Triune God. Sometimes when I consider this, I am beside myself with joy in the Lord.

Do you know where the Triune God is? The Triune God is now in us! This is according to the Lord's word in John 14. He said that He would ask the Father to give us another Comforter, the Spirit of reality, who would be in us. But eventually the Lord went on to say that He Himself would be in us (v. 20). From the revelation in John 14 we see that the Triune God now dwells in us.

THE TRIUNE GOD DISPENSED INTO THE TRIPARTITE MAN

In our study of the Bible we need to pay close attention to portions such as John 14:10-20. We should pay much more attention to verses such as these than to verses that speak about husbands loving their wives and wives submitting to their husbands. What we have in John 14:10-20 is far beyond our natural thought, which is easily occupied with teachings concerning love, submission, and humility. In chapter fourteen of John, however, the Lord

Jesus says nothing about being humble, or about wives submitting to husbands and husbands loving their wives. Here He speaks concerning Himself, the Father, and the Comforter. Therefore, we need to pay close attention to this revelation.

Before I was saved, I studied the writings of Confucius. Confucius had much to say about a wife's submission to her husband. In fact, whereas the Bible teaches a wife to have a onefold submission, Confucius teaches a threefold submission. When I read the Bible after I was first saved, I was still under the influence of such teachings. But eventually I learned to pay attention to what the Bible reveals concerning the Triune God dispensing Himself into the tripartite man. This is the main subject of all my ministry. This is the focal point of all my messages in conferences and trainings. I encourage all the saints to pay their attention to the crucial matter of the Triune God dispensing Himself into the tripartite man and to speak of this to others.

Do you know what is revealed in John 14:10-20? Here we have a revelation of the Triune God dispensed into the tripartite man. Concerning this, John 14:20 says, "In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." In this verse the "you" is the tripartite man, and the "I" is the Triune God. Therefore, "I in you" indicates that the Triune God is in the tripartite man. Of course, in order to see this in full, we would need a thorough study of the New Testament.

In order for the Triune God to be in the tripartite man, it was necessary for Him to pass through certain processes: incarnation, human living, death, and resurrection. Having passed through all these processes, the Triune God is now not only on the throne but also in us. How wonderful! The Man-Savior's resurrection was His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit, and as this Spirit He now dwells in us.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-FOUR

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

(5)

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:16-20; 12:24b; 1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 1:20-23

In this message we shall consider further the subjective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection. We have seen that the Man-Savior's resurrection was His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit in order to enter into His believers (1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:16-20). Now we shall go on to see that His resurrection also involves both germination and propagation.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S GERMINATION OF THE NEW CREATION TO IMPART THE DIVINE LIFE INTO HIS BELIEVERS FOR THEIR REGENERATION

In John 12:24 the Lord Jesus says that if a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it bears much fruit. This is a matter of germination through resurrection. Concerning this, Peter says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3). When Christ was resurrected, we His believers, were all included in Him. Hence, we were resurrected with Him (Eph. 2:6). In His resurrection, He imparted the divine life into us and made us the same as He is in life and nature.

The Dead Hearing the Gospel and Being Germinated

In the foregoing message we pointed out that all fallen

human beings are dying. A person begins to die from the moment of birth. Although we may say that people are dying, the Bible reveals that sinners are already dead. Ephesians 2:1 and 5 say that, as sinners, we were dead in offenses and sins. Colossians 2:13 also says that we were dead in offenses. In these verses God seems to be saying, "You may think that human beings are living. You are mistaken. Fallen human beings are not living--they are dead."

In John 5:25 we see that when we preach the gospel, we are actually preaching to those who are spiritually dead: "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live." Here we see a positive point: those who are spiritually dead still have ears to hear the voice of the Son of God. This means that the dead in spirit are still able to hear the gospel. On the one hand, the Bible tells us that fallen human beings are dead. On the other hand, the Bible says that even those who are spiritually dead can hear the gospel. It is of God's mercy and sovereignty that the dead have ears to hear the gospel.

When a spiritually dead person hears the gospel, he may say, "I believe in Jesus; I love Him." Then as he calls on the name of the Lord Jesus, the divine life is imparted to him, and he is germinated to become a new creation.

Becoming a New Creation

Before we were germinated through the Man-Savior's resurrection, we were the old creation. But from the time of our germination we began to be the new creation. The old creation does not have the divine life and nature, but the new creation, which consists of believers born again of God (John 1:13; 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4), does have the divine life and nature. Therefore, we are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), not according to the old nature of flesh, but according to the new nature of the divine life.

When the old creation is germinated with the divine life it becomes the new creation. We, the believers in Christ, who have been germinated through His resurrection, are now the new creation. The old creation does not have God

in it. But the new creation begins by God coming into us in the way of germination. Praise the Lord that we have been germinated! This germination is the impartation of the divine life into the believers. Through this impartation of the divine life we were regenerated. Therefore, germination is the impartation of the divine life into the believers for their regeneration. The second point related to the subjective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection is that it is His germination of the new creation to impart the divine life into the believers for their regeneration.

Perhaps we did not realize what happened to us when we were regenerated. Now we see that when we were regenerated we were germinated. We may say that this germination was a divine injection. The divine life was "injected" into us at the time we believed in Christ and were regenerated, and that injection was our germination. Hallelujah, the divine life has been injected, infused, into our inner being! That infusion was our rebirth, our regeneration.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S PROPAGATION TO PRODUCE THE CHURCH AS HIS REPRODUCTION

The Man-Savior's resurrection was also His propagation to produce the church as His reproduction. By His resurrection the Man-Savior could be multiplied and thereby have His propagation.

As an illustration of the Lord's propagation through resurrection, consider a grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies. After a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it grows up and becomes many grains. The many grains are the multiplication of the one grain, and this multiplication is the propagation of that grain of wheat.

According to John 12:24, the Lord Jesus is the grain of wheat who fell into the ground and died in order to be multiplied. Through His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus certainly has been multiplied and propagated. This propagation is for producing His reproduction, and the reproduction of Christ is the church. Therefore, the Lord's resurrection is His propagation to produce the church as His reproduction.

FOUR MATTERS RELATED TO THE PRODUCING OF THE CHURCH

If we study carefully Ephesians 1:20-23, we shall see that these verses reveal that the propagation of Christ produces the church as His reproduction. Ephesians 1:20 and 21 say, "Which He wrought in Christ in raising Him from among the dead, and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is coming." The relative pronoun "which" at the beginning of verse 20 refers to "the surpassing greatness of His power" spoken of in verse 19. God's great power that operated in Christ first raised Him from among the dead. This power has overcome death, the grave, and Hades, where the dead are held. Due to God's resurrection power, death and Hades could not hold Christ (Acts 2:24).

Second, God's power that operated in Christ seated Him at God's right hand in the heavenlies far above all. God's right hand, where Christ has been seated by the surpassing great power of God, is the most honorable place, with the supreme authority. The "heavenlies" in verse 20 refers not only to the third heaven, the highest place in the universe, where God dwells, but also to the state and atmosphere of the heavens, in which Christ was seated by God's power.

According to verse 21, Christ has been seated far above all rule, authority, power, lordship, and every name. Rule refers to the highest office, authority to every kind of official power (Matt. 8:9), power to the might of authority, and lordship to the preeminence which power establishes. The ascended Christ has been seated by the great power of God above all rules, authorities, powers, and lordships in the entire universe.

Furthermore, Christ is seated above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is coming. Here "every name" refers not only to titles of honor but also to everything that has a name. Christ has been seated far above everything, not only the things in this age, but also in the coming age.

Ephesians 1:22 continues, "And He subjected all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church." Third, God's great power that operated in Christ has subjected all things under His feet. To he far above all is one thing; to have all things subjected under Christ's feet is another. The former is a matter of Christ's transcendency; the latter is a matter of the subjection of all things to Him.

Fourth, God's great power that operated in Christ gave Him to be Head over all things to the church. The headship of Christ over all things is a gift from God to Him. It was through God's surpassingly great power that Christ received the headship in the whole universe. It was as a man, in His humanity with His divinity, that Christ was raised up from the dead, was seated in the heavenlies, had all things subjected to Him, and was given to he Head over all things.

In verse 22 we have the significant phrase "to the church." This phrase implies a transmission. Whatever Christ, the Head, attained and obtained is transmitted to the church, His Body. In this transmission the church shares with Christ in all His attainments: the resurrection from among the dead, being seated in His transcendency, the subjection of all things under His feet, and the headship over all things.

In Ephesians 1:20-22 we see four matters related to the producing of the church: raising Christ up from the dead, seating Him in His transcendency, subjecting all things under His feet, and giving Him to be Head over all things. The result, the outcome, of these four matters is the church, as indicated by the phrase "to the church" in verse 22.

Today's Christians often talk about the church in a very elementary way, even in a childish way. Very few believers have seen that the church comes out of what the surpassing great power of God has done in and with Christ. God's power raised Christ from among the dead. Then this great power seated Christ in His transcendency, subjected all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things. The issue of this is the producing of

the church. This means that the church is the outcome of the process involving raising Christ, seating Him, subjecting all things under His feet, and giving Him to be the Head of all things.

Having a superficial understanding of the church, some Christians even speak of the church as a material building with a steep roof and a tower. However, according to the New Testament, the church that is recognized by God is the issue of four things done with Christ. As we have emphasized, these four things are the raising up of Christ, seating Him in His transcendency, subjecting all things under His feet, and making Him the Head over all things. The church is the outcome of the process involving these four things, a process that began with the Man-Savior's resurrection. Because this process began with Christ's resurrection, His resurrection is for the producing of the church as His reproduction.

THE DEEPER TRUTHS IN THE BIBLE

The points we have covered in this message involve certain of the deeper truths in the Bible. I hope that all the saints among us, especially the young ones, will not stay with the shallowness and superficiality common among Christians today. All the saints need to enter into the deeper truths in the Bible.

CHRIST'S FULLNESS FOR HIS EXPRESSION

Today the Man-Savior in His resurrection is the life-giving Spirit to make us, God's chosen people, His reproduction. This reproduction is the church, His Body, to express Him as His fullness. This is the ultimate issue of Christ's resurrection. Ephesians 1:22 and 23 speak of "the church, which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all." The Body is not an organization but an organism constituted of all the regenerated believers for the expression and activities of the Head. The Body of Christ is His fullness, which issues from the enjoyment of the riches of Christ (Eph 3:8). Through the enjoyment of Christ's riches, we become His fullness to express Him.

Christ, who is the infinite God without limitation, is so great that He fills all things in all things. Such a great Christ needs the church to be His fullness for His complete expression.

THE CRUCIAL POINT

We have considered three points related to the subjective aspect of the Man-Savior's resurrection. His resurrection is His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit to enter into His believers, His germination of the new creation to impart the divine life into His believers for their regeneration, and His propagation to produce the church as His reproduction. The crucial point here is that in resurrection Christ has become the life-giving Spirit. However, some Bible teachers oppose this truth, claiming that the life-giving Spirit in 1 Corinthians 15:45b is not the Holy Spirit. Those who deny that the life-giving Spirit in this verse is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who gives life, are twisting the Word of God. Paul does not simply say, "The last Adam became a Spirit." On the contrary, he says, "The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit." The Spirit who gives life, the divine life, must be the Spirit of God Himself. But concerning this those who are short of light even criticize what the Bible teaches. How deplorable!

We must testify that, according to the Scriptures, Christ in resurrection is the life-giving Spirit. We have been charged by the Lord with the burden to proclaim this. The more others oppose it, the more we shall proclaim the truth that Christ is now the life-giving Spirit. Praise the Lord for His transfiguration, germination, and propagation to produce the church as His reproduction! Now He is the life-giving Spirit, and we are His reproduction.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-FIVE

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 15:45b; John 14:16-20, 26; 12:24b; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2 Cor. 5:17

In the foregoing messages we have covered both the objective and the subjective aspects of the Man-Savior's resurrection. Concerning the subjective aspect, we have seen that Christ's resurrection was His transfiguration into the life-giving Spirit to enter into His believers. His germination of the new creation to impart the divine life into His believers for their regeneration, and His propagation to produce the church as His reproduction. This message is the conclusion to the series of messages on the subjective aspect of Christ's resurrection. The concluding point is that the Man-Savior's resurrection issues in His living within us. The result of the Man-Savior's transfiguration, germination, and propagation is that He lives in His believers.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S LIVING IN HIS BELIEVERS

Germinating the Believers

Through resurrection the Man-Savior was transfigured into the life-giving Spirit. Then He entered into us to germinate us, the old creation, so that we might become the new creation. This term "the new creation" is used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "So that if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, they have become new." The old creation includes the heavens, the earth, billion of items, and mankind. But the new creation includes only the chosen and redeemed people of God. God's people once were the old creation. But

when Christ as the life-giving Spirit entered into us, we were germinated with the Triune God to become the new creation.

This germination depends on a "germ," and the germ with which the resurrected Christ has germinated us is the Triune God. Although this term may not sound pleasant to your ears, it is nevertheless the truth that the Triune God is the germ with which the pneumatic Christ has germinated us. Hallelujah, we all have been germinated with the "divine germ!" It is a fact that, as those who have been germinated with the Triune God, we have this divine germ within us. Because we have been germinated through the Man-Savior's resurrection, we have been regenerated (1 Pet. 1:3).

The Reproduction of the Pneumatic Christ

The Man-Savior's germination of the new creation is His propagation, His multiplication. In the Gospels we have the one Christ, the unique Christ. But in John 20, after the breathing of the life-giving Spirit as the breath into the disciples there were at least one hundred twenty-one "Christs." According to chapter one of Acts, these one hundred twenty-one--the one hundred twenty disciples plus the Lord Jesus--had a long prayer meeting lasting ten days. In Acts 1 one hundred twenty-one Christs met together to pray. Then on the day of Pentecost, another three thousand were germinated. The one Christ first became one hundred twenty-one Christs, and then three thousand one hundred twenty-one Christs. This germination is actually the reproduction of the pneumatic Christ in His resurrection.

On the day of Pentecost Christ was living within three thousand one hundred twenty of His members. The Christ who was living in them was the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who is the life-giving Spirit. This pneumatic Christ is the very Christ in resurrection.

Here we should speak not of the resurrected Christ but of the Christ in resurrection. Christ Himself is resurrection and the reality of resurrection is the life-giving Spirit. Actually, the life-giving Spirit is the

resurrection. Christ in resurrection is the resurrection itself, and this resurrection is the life-giving Spirit.

The life-giving Spirit is the reality of resurrection. If you are not in the life-giving Spirit, you are not in resurrection. But if you are in the life-giving Spirit, you are in resurrection.

Christ in Resurrection Living In Us

John 14:16-20 reveals that the Christ in resurrection now lives in us. In verses 16 and 17 the Lord Jesus says, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever; even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you." According to verse 16, the Lord Jesus will ask the Father to give the disciples another Comforter. The Son was the first Comforter. Therefore, the first Comforter asked the Father to send another Comforter, the Spirit of reality, who will be in us. Then in verse 18 the Lord goes on to say, "I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you." When taken together the verse 17, this indicates "He" who is the Spirit of reality in verse 17 becomes the "I" who is the Lord Himself in verse 18. This indicates that after His resurrection the Lord became the Spirit of reality. Then, referring to the day of His resurrection, the Lord says in John 14:20, "In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." Here the Lord clearly says "I in you," revealing that He Himself will be in us.

As the Lord lives in us, He does not cease to be in the Father. On the one hand, in John 14:20 He says, "I am in My Father;" on the other hand, He says, "I in you." The Lord certainly is not saying, "When I come into you, I shall cease to be in the Father." On the contrary, here the Lord seems to be saying, "When I come into you, I shall come into you with the Father. Not only am I in the Father, but the Father also is in Me. Therefore, when I am in you, the Father who is in Me is also in you."

This understanding of verse 20 is proved by the Lord's

word in verse 23: "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." Here the Father and the Son making an abode with us is equal to the phrase "I in you" in verse 20. Who is in us? The "I" who is in us is not only the Son, but the Son with the Father. But what about the Spirit? In John 14:26 the Lord Jesus speaks of "the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name." The Son came in the Father's name (John 5:43) because the Son and the Father are one (John 10:30). Now we see that the Spirit is sent in the Son's name because the Spirit and the Son also are one (2 Cor. 3:17). This is the Triune God--the Father, the Son, and the Spirit--reaching us as the Spirit. Hence, when the Spirit comes, the Son and the Father also come.

When we put these verses together, we see that the One who is within us is not simple. No doubt, this One is the Son, but this is the Son in whom the Father is, and also the Son who is coming with the Spirit. Therefore, eventually we see that "I" in John 14:20 is the Triune God.

Seeing the Lord Because He Lives in Us

In John 14:19 the Lord Jesus says, "Yet a little while and the world beholds Me no longer, but you behold Me; because I live, you shall live also." If the Lord had remained in the tomb, He would not have lived, and the disciples would not have seen Him again. But this verse indicates that because He lives we shall see Him. He said that He would rise up and live and that we also shall live. What does this mean? In order to understand this verse, we need to study the entire New Testament. The Lord's word "You behold Me; because I live, you shall live also," means, "I shall live in you to make you live." Here the Lord Jesus is telling us that after His resurrection He would live in us.

At this point let me ask you a question: have you seen the Lord Jesus? Some might answer this question by saying that they have seen the Lord Jesus in the saints, the believers. One who answers the question this way does not have the proper understanding of John 14:19. The

Lord does not say in this verse, "You behold Me because you see Me in other believers." Rather, the Lord's word indicates that we see Him because He lives in us. We live because He lives. This means that we live because He lives in us to make us live.

In answer to the question concerning whether we have seen the Lord, we should say, "I have seen the Lord because He lives in me." For example, a brother sees his wife because she lives with him. But the One we now see not only lives with us, He lives in us. Every moment He lives in us. Because He lives in us, we may see Him.

The chorus of the well-known hymn, "He lives," goes like this:

He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus
lives today!
He walks with me and talks with
me, along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to
impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

This is a good hymn, and I appreciate it. The chorus says that we know Christ lives because He walks with us and talks with us. However, this is not as good as saying that we know Christ lives because He lives within our heart. In answer to the question, "How do you know Christ lives?" the chorus of this hymn answers, "He lives within my heart!" We know that the Lord lives not simply because He walks with us and talks with us, but because He lives in us.

How do you know Christ lives? You should answer this question by saying, "I know He lives because He lives in me." Likewise, if we are asked if we have seen the Lord Jesus, we should say, "Yes, I have seen the Lord, for He lives in me. Even while you are asking me this question, He lives in me. Because He lives in me, I see Him. Even now as I am speaking, I can see Him. While I am speaking to you, He is speaking to me. I am simply a transmitter speaking whatever He speaks to me."

The Lord's word, "Because I live, you shall live also,"

certainly was fully fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. When Peter stood up with the eleven, that was Christ in resurrection. Peter's speaking was also Christ in resurrection. If someone had asked Peter where Christ is, he might have said, "Christ is here. Don't you see me? If you see me, you see Christ because He lives in me."

OUR EXPERIENCE OF CHRIST IN RESURRECTION

The Christ Who Is Resurrection

Regarding our experience of Christ in resurrection, we may use the term "the pneumatic Christ." Although we do not like to speak of the spiritual Christ, we like the expression "the pneumatic Christ." This expression indicates that Christ is the Spirit who gives life. The pneumatic Christ is actually the life-giving Spirit Himself, not in a doctrinal way but in an experiential way. Throughout the centuries, a number of Christian teachers have said that in our experience Christ is identical to the Spirit. Doctrinally this is difficult to explain; however, experientially we know that Christ is the Spirit living in us.

According to the New Testament, both Christ and the Spirit live in us. Do we, then, have two living in us or one? The best answer to this question is to say that the One who lives in us is the pneumatic Christ, the Christ who is the life-giving Spirit.

Christians often say, "Our Christ is living; we have a living Christ." But many believers do not realize that this living Christ is the Christ in resurrection and the Christ who is resurrection. In John 11:25 the Lord Jesus said, "I am the resurrection." Here we see that Christ Himself is resurrection. The very Christ who is now in resurrection is the resurrection itself.

Walking in Resurrection

The New Testament charges us to walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25). To walk by the Spirit simply means to walk in resurrection. In order to experience this, we need to deny ourselves so that Christ may live in us. If we die, Christ lives. Christ lives in us by our dying.

Dying That Christ May Live in Us

Now that Christ lives within us, we are intimately involved with Him. We may say that He and the believer become one "seed." You are the shell, and He is the life within the shell. The shell needs to die so that the life within it may live. Therefore, when we die, Christ lives. We die to live Him, and He lives by our dying.

This word about Christ's living in us as a result of our dying may be called a "heavenly logic" or a "spiritual philosophy." This kind of philosophy is much better than any natural, human philosophy. Our philosophy is that we die so that Christ may live in us. According to this heavenly logic, Christ lives through our dying.

Christ living in us through our dying is a matter of resurrection. Paul says, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). We cannot know Christ without knowing the power of His resurrection, because the very Christ we live today is resurrection. Resurrection is the pneumatic Christ who is the life-giving Spirit.

Walking According to the Spirit as the Reality of Resurrection

More than forty years ago, Brother Nee told us that the reality of resurrection is the Spirit. Although he did not explain much what it means to say that the Spirit is the reality of resurrection, I was deeply impressed by his word. I was also troubled by it and said to myself, "How can we say that the Spirit is the reality of resurrection?" After years of study and experience, I can testify that resurrection, the pneumatic Christ, and the life-giving Spirit are one. This Christ is the resurrection, and this resurrection is the life-giving Spirit.

Because the Spirit is the reality of resurrection, we need to walk according to the Spirit. When we walk according to the Spirit, we walk in resurrection. When we walk by the life-giving Spirit, we walk with the living Christ, and this living Christ is the Christ in resurrection.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-SIX

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S ASCENSION

Scripture Reading: Heb. 2:9; 12:2; Acts 2:36

With this message we begin a series on the Man-Savior's ascension. First we shall give a description of the Lord's ascension. Then we shall consider both the objective and the subjective aspects of His ascension.

THE MAN-SAVIORS INAUGURATION INTO HIS HEAVENLY OFFICE

The Man-Savior's ascension is His inauguration into His heavenly office through the process of creation, incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection as God and man, as the Creator and the creature, and as the Redeemer, the Savior, and the life-giving Spirit, to execute God's administration and to carry out God's New Testament economy (dispensation).

If we would understand the Man-Savior's ascension, we need to see that it is His inauguration into His heavenly office. This inauguration required a lengthy process that began with creation and continued with incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. This process involved the Man-Savior as God, man, Creator, creature, Redeemer, Savior, and life-giving Spirit. The Lord Jesus was inaugurated to execute God's administration and to carry out God's New Testament economy. In the objective aspect, the Lord's ascension caused Him to be crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9) and to be enthroned for God's administration (Heb. 12:2) and made Him the Lord to possess all and the Christ to carry out God's commission.

Have you ever heard that Christ had an inauguration

and that His inauguration was His ascension? Some may respond to this question by saying that the word "inauguration" cannot be found in the Bible. It is, of course, correct to say that this word is not in the Scriptures, but the fact of the Man-Savior's inauguration is there nonetheless. The expression "the Triune God" likewise is not in the Bible, but it is a fact that the Bible reveals the Triune God. For example, Matthew 28:19 speaks of baptizing believers "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In like manner, the New Testament reveals the fact of Christ's inauguration. Consider Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." In this verse the word "made" can be understood to mean "inaugurated." Hence, Christ's inauguration is in Acts 2:36. If we read the preceding verses, we shall see that there the Lord's ascension is mentioned. In His ascension God inaugurated Jesus Christ into His heavenly ministry. This means that in His ascension, in His inauguration, God made Him Lord and Christ.

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S STATUS AS THE ASCENDED ONE

As the One inaugurated into His heavenly office through His ascension, the Man-Savior has a wonderful status. He is both God and man, both the Creator and a creature. Some theologians would agree that Christ is God, man and the Creator, but would deny the fact that He is also a creature. However, Colossians 1:15 says that Christ is the Firstborn of all creation, indicating that with respect to His humanity He is a creature. But due to the heresy of Arius, which was condemned at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, many are reluctant to say that, according to Colossians 1:15, Christ is a creature. In this verse we are told that Christ is the image of God, the Firstborn of all creation. If this verse were not in the Bible, we would not presume to say that Christ is both the Creator and a creature. However, this verse is the basis for saying that Christ is a creature as well as the Creator.

If we say that Christ is both God and man, then we

must also say that He is both the Creator and a creature, for God is the Creator and man is a creature. However, some theologians say that Christ is both God and man, and then say that He is only the Creator, not a creature. How ridiculous! Is man not a creature? Hebrews 2:14 indicates that the Lord Jesus had blood and flesh. Are blood and flesh not created things? If you deny that Christ is a creature, you are actually denying that He came in the flesh. Denying that Christ has come in the flesh is a heresy condemned in chapter four of 1 John.

Years ago, some in Hong Kong were proclaiming, "Our Christ is the Creator; He is not a creature." When I heard about this, I told the saints, "It is very wrong to say that Christ is the Creator but not a creature. If you say that Christ is not a creature, then you are also saying that He did not become a man. But since Christ became a man, He also became a creature, because man is a creature." Our Christ, whom God inaugurated into the heavenly office, is both God and man. He is the creature as well as the Creator. Furthermore, He is the Redeemer, the Savior, and the life-giving Spirit. What a wonderful status He has! What qualifications He possesses!

Many Christians do not realize what kind of status and qualifications Christ has as the ascended One. However, I can testify that whenever I contact the Lord, I realize that He is God, man, the Creator, a creature, the Redeemer, the Savior, and the life-giving Spirit. Because I have this realization concerning the Lord, sometimes I am beside myself with joy when I contact Him. I can even say that I am sometimes "electrified" by the Spirit when I think of what Christ is.

Have you ever considered that Christ is not God in part but the whole God? He is not only God the Son but also God the Father and God the Spirit. Hence, Christ is the whole God, the Triune God. Furthermore, He is a tripartite man. Therefore, as the Triune God and the tripartite man, He is the whole God and a perfect man. Let us all learn to say, "My Savior is the Triune God and a tripartite man. He is the Creator and also a creature. He

is the Redeemer and the life-giving Spirit, and this life-giving Spirit is the consummation of the Triune God." The more we realize this, the more we shall be "electrified" and beside ourselves with joy in the Lord.

EXECUTING GOD'S ADMINISTRATION AND CARRYING OUT GOD'S NEW TESTAMENT ECONOMY

As the One who passed through the process of creation, incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, the Man-Savior with His wonderful status has been inaugurated into His heavenly office to execute God's economy. Christ is now on the throne to administrate the entire universe. He is the unique Administrator, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. All the rulers of the earth are under Him. He is the Administrator to execute God's administration and also to carry out God's New Testament economy. His administrating is related to the universe, but His carrying out of God's New Testament economy is to propagate Himself for His reproduction to build up the church, His Body, which will issue in the New Jerusalem. How wonderful!

What we have covered thus far is an introductory word concerning the Man-Savior's ascension. Let us now go on to consider the objective aspect of Christ's ascension.

THE OBJECTIVE ASPECT OF THE MAN-SAVIOR'S ASCENSION

Crowned with Glory and Honor

In His ascension the Man-Savior was crowned with glory and honor. Hebrews 2:9 says, "But we see Jesus, Who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." Here glory and honor are considered a crown. Glory is the splendor related to Jesus' person: honor is the preciousness related to Jesus' worth (1 Pet. 2:7). Here we may also point out that the Lord's dignity is related to His position (2 Pet. 1:17). As the ascended One crowned with

glory and honor, Christ is in a state of glory and has a rank of honor.

It is always an honor for a person to have a high rank. For example, the principal of the school has a high rank, and that rank is his honor. But a janitor, on the contrary, does not have any rank or honor. Christ is glorious in state and honorable in rank. He is above all kings and rulers, this is His honor. He has received such a glory and has entered into such an honor. This glory and honor are the crown with which He has been crowned.

Enthroned for God's Administration

Another matter related to the objective aspect of Christ's ascension is that He has been enthroned for God's administration. Concerning this, Hebrews 12:2 says that Christ is now "seated at the right hand of the throne of God." From this verse we may have the impression that next to the throne of God, at His right hand, is another throne. However, in the book of Revelation we see that it is only one throne of both God and Christ. In Revelation 3:21 the Lord says that He sat down with His Father on His throne. Furthermore, Revelation 22:1 speaks of "a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Revelation 22:3 goes on to say of the holy city, New Jerusalem, that the "throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." Revelation 22:1 and 3 do not speak of thrones--one for God and another for the Lamb--but of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Hence, it is one throne for both God and the Lamb.

In what way are both God and Christ sitting on the one throne? Chapter twenty-one of Revelation is helpful in this matter. Verse 23 says, "The city has no need of the sun nor of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." Here we see that the Lamb, Christ, as the lamp shines with God as the light to illumine the city with the glory of God, the expression of the divine light. Christ, the Lamb, is the lamp, and God is the light within the lamp. Because the light is in the lamp, the light cannot be separated from the lamp. We can see from this how both God and Christ are sitting on one throne. Just

as the light in the lamp, so God is in Christ. Since God is in Christ sitting on the throne, both God and Christ sit on one throne in the heavens.

The fact that God in Christ is sitting on throne means that God administrates the entire universe from within Christ and through Christ, just as the light shines from within the lamp and through the lamp. From this we can see that Christ is enthroned with God. God is on the throne, and this very God is in the enthroned Man-Savior. As we consider this we see that the enthronement of the Man-Savior involves the divine Trinity.

Christ has been enthroned in His ascension. His ascension was for His enthronement. The Man-Savior, as the ascended One, has been crowned with glory and honor and has been enthroned for God's administration.

The Lord to Posses All

The Man-Savior, in His ascension, has been made the Lord to possess all (Acts 2:36). He is now the Lord to possess the whole universe, God's chosen people, and all positive things, matters, and persons. Christ is the Lord not only of God's chosen people, but also of the angels and of all those who will be in the millennium and in the new heaven and the new earth. Therefore, He is the Lord of the heavens, the earth, and of everything and everyone He has redeemed. The Man-Savior was made the Lord of all to possess all.

Christ to Carry Out God's Commission

Acts 2:36 reveals that in His ascension the Man-Savior was made not only the Lord but also the Christ. He was made the Christ as God's anointed (Heb. 1:9) to carry out God's commission.

In this message we have given an introductory word concerning the Man-Savior's ascension, and have emphasized the objective aspect of His ascension. In the following message we shall see how we can experience His ascension. Then we shall go on to consider the subjective aspect of His ascension.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-SEVEN

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S ASCENSION

(2)

Scripture Reading: Heb. 2:9; 12:2; Acts 2:36

In the previous message we saw that the Man-Savior's ascension was His inauguration into His heavenly office through the process of creation, incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. The Man-Savior was inaugurated as God and man, as the Creator and a creature, and as the Redeemer, the Savior, and the life-giving Spirit to execute God's administration and to carry out God's New Testament economy. Considering the objective aspect of Christ's ascension, we saw that in His ascension He was crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9), enthroned for God's administration (Heb. 12:2), and made the Lord to possess all and the Christ to carry out God's commission (Acts 2:36).

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE ASCENDED CHRIST

When some hear about the objective aspect of Christ's ascension, they may say, "Yes, in His ascension the Man-Savior has been inaugurated into His heavenly office. This is wonderful but it seems to be something too high for me and too far away from me. What does this have to do with me?" In answering such a question we need to realize that the very Christ in resurrection, the pneumatic Christ, lives in us. According to John 20:22, in His resurrection Christ came back to the disciples to breathe Himself into them. But according to Mark 16, Luke 24, and Acts 1, the Lord ascended to the heavens so that something further could take place. If His relationship with us ceased with His breathing Himself into us, it would be difficult for Him to work out anything for the accomplishment of God's New

Testament economy. After breathing Himself into the disciples, it was still necessary for Him to be inaugurated into His heavenly office.

We may use the election and inauguration of the President of the United States as an illustration. The President does not begin executing his presidency immediately after the election. No, he must wait until the day of inauguration, the day he is inaugurated into his office. Then, after his inauguration, he may begin to carry out his administration as President. Likewise, after the Man-Savior's resurrection, He still needed to be inaugurated in His ascension. For fifty days after the Lord breathed Himself into the disciples, they were quiet. But after the Lord ascended to the heavens and was inaugurated into His post, a great many things began to happen, starting on the day of Pentecost.

We need to realize the significance of the Man-Savior's ascension. In addition to His resurrection, there is also His ascension. Now the very Christ who lives in us and works through us is not only the One in resurrection but also the One in ascension. The One in resurrection is full of life and power, but He still needs authority in ascension. After His ascension the Lord has not only life and power in resurrection but also authority in ascension.

Apart from a proper inauguration, a government official cannot have authority. Authority comes through inauguration. Once a person has been inaugurated into a certain post, he has the authority of that office. We need to see that, as believers, we have One living in us who has not only life and power in resurrection but also authority in ascension. The very Christ in resurrection and ascension lives in us and dwells upon us. He lives in us as life, and He dwells upon us as authority. Therefore, we are now one with this Christ in His resurrection and ascension. As a result, we have life and power in resurrection and also authority in ascension.

APPRECIATING THE MAN-SAVIOR'S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

We may not have much appreciation for what is

revealed in the Scriptures concerning the Man-Savior's resurrection and ascension. Recently, while I was having a time with the Lord, I realized that we all need the Lord's mercy. We may never have seen into the depths of the truths that are revealed in the Bible. Rather, we may often read the Bible in a very superficial way. We do not go below the surface to see what is in the depths. For example, we may appreciate the Lord's word in Matthew 11:28: "Come to Me all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." When we read this verse, we may say, "Thank You, Lord. I am one who labors, one who is burdened. Lord, I come to You and ask You to give me rest." We may understand even such a verse as John 3:16 in a shallow way. In this verse the Lord says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that every one who believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." In reading this verse, we may pay attention only to the fact that God loves the world. However, we may not study what it means to believe. We may not consider what eternal life is, or what it means to have eternal life. We may not realize that eternal life is actually the Triune God. To have eternal life, therefore, is to enjoy, participate in, and experience the Triune God. However, we may have little or no understanding of this.

Reading the Bible in a superficial way can be compared to skating on the ice that covers a deep lake: the skater does not break the ice to see what is under the surface. When we read the Bible, we may "skate" on the "ice," the surface, of the Word. We do not break through the surface, go down into the depths, and see what is revealed there.

Because of superficiality in the reading of the Bible, very few Christians know the matters of resurrection, ascension, and the coming down of the Spirit. Therefore, we are burdened that we all see that the Christ who is now living and working within us is the One in resurrection with life and power and also the One in ascension with authority. The One in resurrection and ascension now lives, works, and operates in us.

We need to be impressed with the fact that the Lord's

relationship with us does not stop with His resurrection, but goes on to His ascension. Many things happened as a result of His ascension. We have emphasized that as God, man, the Creator, a creature, the Redeemer, the Savior, and the life-giving Spirit, He has been crowned and enthroned. He has been inaugurated into His heavenly office to administrate the entire universe and to execute God's New Testament economy. This administration and execution are not only with life and power but also with authority. He is now in us both in His resurrection and in His ascension. We all need to realize Him to such an extent.

RECOGNIZING THE MAN-SAVIOR'S STATUS AND OFFICE AS WE CONTACT HIM

If we have this realization of the Man-Savior as we contact Him, our contact with Him will be different. Our realization of the Lord makes a great difference in our contact with Him. This can be illustrated by our contact with people. If you do not know a person's status and qualifications, this will influence the way you contact him. For example, if you do not know that a certain man is the principal of the school but consider him a janitor, this will surely influence the way you contact him. But if you know that he is the principal, your way of contacting him will be different. It always makes a difference in contacting others when we know their status, qualifications, position, and office. In like manner, if we know the Man-Savior's status and office, this will affect our contact with Him.

Today many believers pray to the Lord and contact Him in a way that is far from adequate. They do not have much appreciation of the Lord's status, position, and qualification. They do not have much understanding of the process through which He passed in order to be inaugurated into His heavenly office.

Before the Man-Savior was inaugurated in His ascension, He passed through the process of creation, incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection. The creation came into being through Him. Concerning this, John 1:3 says, "All things came into being through Him, and

apart from Him nothing came into being which has come into being." Furthermore, Colossians 1:16 says, "In Him were all things created in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him." Christ also passed through incarnation: He as the Word, which is God, became flesh (John 1:1, 14). Through incarnation, He brought the creating God into His creature, into humanity. He lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years, and we need to know Him in His human living. Eventually, He went to the cross through which He entered into death and had a tour of the region of death. Following this, in His resurrection He conquered death and nullified it (2 Tim. 1:10). Because death could not hold Him (Acts 2:24), He walked out of death and entered into resurrection. After His wonderful resurrection and in resurrection, He ascended to the highest place in the universe; He ascended to the heavens.

In His ascension the Man-Savior was crowned with glory and honor. In His ascension He was also enthroned to be the Administrator over the whole universe. Furthermore, in His ascension He was made the Lord of all and the Christ to carry out God's eternal plan to propagate Himself on earth to produce a Body to match Him for His expression. Now when we contact Him we should contact Him as such a One. When we contact Him, we need to have the realization of what He is, a realization of His status, position, and office.

We thank the Lord that we are no longer "skating" on the surface of the Word. In His mercy He has broken through the "ice" and opened the depths of the Scriptures to show us all these treasures.

NEW EXPRESSIONS TO CONVEY THE TRUTH

Recently, I heard of some words of appreciation spoken by certain Christians concerning the expounding of the Bible among us. However, some of them do not feel good that we use some new expressions, expressions not used by others in teaching the truths of the Bible. I admit that

during the past thirty years we have introduced quite a few new terms and expressions to convey the truths buried in the Word of God. However, we have not invented any teaching; on the contrary, we have simply discovered what is revealed in the Bible. We cannot improve nor should we alter the divine truths. But, by the Lord's grace, we can and should improve or adjust the discoveries of the deeper truths conveyed in the Holy Word.

The truths we discover in the Word often need new terms to denote them. However, this is not something unusual, for this is the situation in man's culture. New terms and expressions are always needed to denote new discoveries. For example, a few centuries ago did we have the words "computer," "vitamin," and "X-ray"? No, we did not have these terms because those things had not been discovered. But as soon as something new is discovered, there is the need for an expression or term to designate it. The principle is the same with using new terms and expressions to convey the truths in the Bible. "Triune God" and "Trinity" were new expressions used by the early teachers of the biblical truths to denote the triune Godhead. Some deeper aspects of the truth concerning God's New Testament economy, which the Lord has shown us in recent years, require new expressions.

Let us use the word "economy" as an illustration. It is not likely that as recently as twenty or twenty-five years ago this word was often used in Christian writings. Instead of the word economy, many teachers used the word "dispensation," a word that has caused much confusion. What is a dispensation? Some think that a dispensation is merely a period of time. Actually, according to the Bible, the real, genuine, and basic meaning of dispensation is economy--God's household administration to work Himself into His children. God's economy is a matter of the Triune God dispensing Himself into the tripartite man. Our use of the expression "God's economy" is just one illustration of the fact that the Lord's recovery is going on. In the going on of the Lord's recovery we need to use certain terms and expressions to convey the truth.

We praise the Lord for what He has shown us from the Word regarding the ascension of the Man-Savior. The more we consider His ascension, the more we are in the heavens, for we are in His ascension. Our Christ today is not only the One through whom everything was created, the One who became incarnate, the One who lived on earth, the One who died on the cross for our sins, and the One who resurrected from among the dead. Today our Christ is the One who, after passing through the lengthy process of creation, incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, has ascended to the highest and is in the heavens. In His ascension, He was crowned and enthroned, and He was made the Lord and the Christ to possess all and to carry out God's commission so that God's economy, His eternal plan, may be fulfilled on earth among us and through us in this age. How wonderful that we have such a Christ in ascension!

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-EIGHT

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S ASCENSION

(3)

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:22, 10; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:23; 3:19b; Heb. 4:14; 7:26, 22; 8:6; 9:15-16; Rev. 1:13; 2:1

In this message we come to the subjective aspect of the Man-Savior's ascension. It is not as easy to speak of the subjective aspect of the Man-Savior's ascension as it is to speak of the objective aspect. Concerning the Lord's ascension being subjective to us, I feel that I lack the utterance to express what the Lord has shown us.

A TRANSMISSION FROM THE ASCENDED CHRIST TO THE CHURCH

We have seen that in His ascension Christ was crowned with glory and honor and enthroned for God's administration. This means that He shares God's throne to be the unique Administrator in the universe. Through His ascension Christ was also inaugurated to be the Lord to possess all and to be the Christ to carry out God's commission. Since all these matters are objective, how can we prove that Christ's ascension is related to us in a subjective way? Proof is in the fact that there is a transmission from the ascended Christ to us. I first used the word "transmission" in relation to Christ's ascension twenty-two years ago, during a message in which I was trying to speak on Ephesians 1:19-23. Verse 22 says that God gave Christ "to be Head over all things to the church." The phrase "to the church" indicates a transmission from the ascended Christ to the church, His Body.

HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH

The second part of Ephesians 1:22--"and gave Him to

be Head over all things to the church"--has been a problem for translators of the Bible. Mainly there are three ways to translate this clause. The first way is that followed by the King James Version and the *New Translation* of J. N. Darby; it is also the translation in the Recovery Version. The King James Version says, "gave him to be the head over all things to the church," and Darby's version says, "gave Him [to be] head over all things to the assembly." The Recovery Version, quoted above, says, "gave Him to be Head over all things to the church."

A Gift from God to Christ

According to this translation, God gave Christ to be something to the church. It does not mean that God gave Christ to the church as a gift; it means that God gave Christ a gift--the headship over all things. According to this understanding, a great gift was given to Christ by God, and this great gift was the headship over all things.

"To the Church"

God's giving Christ to be the Head over all things is to the church. "To the church," as we have pointed out, implies a transmission. What God gave Christ to be is to the church; it is transmitted to the church. The church shares it. This corresponds to the word "His power toward us" in verse 19. The phrase "toward us" is a key, for it also indicates a transmission. God's power in the heavens is toward us; that is, His power is transmitted to us.

The transmission of electricity from the power plant to our homes is an illustration of the transmission of God's power from the heavens to the church. The current of electricity flows from the power plant through wires into our homes. This current of electricity is its transmission. When the lights are on, we know that this transmission is taking place. If we go to the meter, we shall see a clear indication that the current of electricity is flowing, that there is transmission of electricity from the power plant into our homes.

In a similar way, there is a transmission of the

heavenly current of the divine electricity from the "power plant" in the third heaven to the church. As the church, we are the "building" into which the divine electricity is being transmitted. Therefore, God's power is toward us. This means that the divine electricity is being transmitted from the heavens to us.

Ephesians 1:19 says that the transmission of God's power toward us is "according to the operation of the might of His strength." The phrase "according to" indicates that a track is needed for the transmission of the divine electricity. This track may be compared to the tracks on which a locomotive runs. Without a railroad track a locomotive has no way to move properly. Likewise, the heavenly, divine electricity is being transmitted into us according to a "track."

As used in verse 19, the phrase "according to" also indicates a model or pattern, showing us how this great power is transmitted to us. God's power is transmitted according to the operation of the might of His strength. Here Paul, seemingly exhausting the vocabulary of the Greek language, speaks of power, operation, might, and strength. Paul uses all these words to convey something of the vastness of God's power to us. God's power is transmitted to us according to an operation, and this operation is of the might of His strength.

God's Power Wrought in Christ

In Ephesians 1:20 Paul continues, "Which He wrought in Christ in raising Him from among the dead, and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies." To what does "which" refer? It refers to "power" in verse 19. In verse 20 Paul speaks of the power which God wrought in Christ.

From this verse through verse 22 we see that God wrought this power in Christ by four steps: first, raising Him from among the dead; second, seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies; third, subjecting all things under His feet; and fourth, giving Him to be Head over all things to the church. The final step of God's working in Christ with His great power was to give Him to be the

Head over all things, and what God gave Christ to be was to the church.

TWO OTHER TRANSLATIONS

A second way of translating Ephesians 1:22 does not use the words "to be." According to this way of rendering the verse, it would read, "gave Him, head over all things, to the church." The verse would then mean that God has given something to the church. What has God given to the church? God has given Christ to the church as the Head over all things. One version that follows this way of translating this verse is the Concordant Literal New Testament: "gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia." Wuest in his expanded translation says the same thing: "Him He gave as Head over all things to the Church." Dean Alford also interprets this verse to mean that God gave Christ to the church as the Head, and this Head is over all things. This second way of translating this verse would indicate after God raised Christ from among the dead, seated Him in the heavens, and subjected all things under His feet, He then gave Him to the church as the Head over all things. This would not be logical according to the sequence. The three steps of raising Christ, seating Him in the heavens, and subjecting all things under His feet are great steps. According to the second way of translating the verse, these great steps are followed by a lesser step--giving Christ to the church.

The third way of translating Ephesians 1:22 says that God gave, appointed, or made Christ the Head over all things *for* the church. This is the translation in the Chinese version and also in the Berkeley Version. According to this translation, God raised Christ from among the dead, seated Him in the heavens, subjected everything under His feet, and then appointed Him to be the Head of all things for the church.

The significance of the third way of translating this verse is higher than the second and lower than the first. Of the three ways of translating Ephesians 1:22, the second way is the poorest.

After considering this matter carefully, I still prefer to follow the first way. God raised Christ from among the dead, seated Him in the heavens, subjected all things under His feet, and, eventually, gave Him a great gift. Vincent says that the word "gave" in verse 22 does not mean appointed or made; instead, it means to give something as a gift. Therefore, this verse is saying that God gave something to Christ. What did God give Him? God gave Him the headship over all things. After raising Christ from the dead, seating Him in the heavens, and subjecting all things under His feet, God gave Him the great gift of the headship over all things.

This way of translating Ephesians 1:22 is logical, significant, and correct. Man condemned Christ and sentenced Him to death. But God came in to raise Him up, to seat Him in the heavens, to subject all things under His feet, and to give Him to be the Head over all things. The headship over all things was the gift given to Christ by God.

THE TRANSMISSION FROM THE ASCENDED CHRIST TO THE CHURCH

The best translation of the second part of Ephesians 1:22 is: "gave Him to be Head over all things to the church." If Paul had concluded Ephesians 1 by saying that God gave Christ to be Head over all things, Christ's ascension would not have anything to do with the church. Paul, however, added the important phrase "to the church." As we have pointed out, this phrase implies a transmission. Whatever Christ, the Head, has attained and obtained is transmitted to the church, His Body.

We need to see that the phrase "to the church" indicates that all that Christ is in His ascension is being transmitted to the church. Because the divine transmission is not once for all, the church should continually receive this transmission. Electricity may be installed in a building once for all, but the transmission of electricity takes place continually. Likewise, God raised up Christ, seated Him in the heavens, put everything under His feet, and gave Him the great gift of being the Head over all things. Now

whatever Christ is in His ascension is being transmitted into the church. This is the continual transmission into the church of the ascended Christ with the full significance of His ascension.

If there is a problem with the transmission of electricity from the power plant into a building, the problem is usually not with the power plant. The problem is with the building, that is, with the receiver. In like manner, there is never a problem with the heavenly power plant; however, often with the church there is a problem concerning the receiving of the divine transmission. Often we may have problems that frustrate the transmission of the divine electricity into us. This transmission is not able to get through to many of today's Christians. Actually, not many Christians are willing to be fully open to receive this transmission continually.

Seated with Christ in the Heavenlies

Through the divine transmission from the ascended Christ to the church, the Man-Savior's ascension is definitely related to us. There can be no doubt that we are connected to Him in His ascension. For this reason, Ephesians 2:6 tells us that we are seated together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. For years I could not understand how, in the words of Ephesians 2:6, we can be seated in the heavens. I have found electricity an excellent illustration in helping us to understand this. The electricity that operates in our homes is also in the power plant. This means that at the same time electricity is both in the power plant and in our homes. Likewise, through the divine transmission we are joined to Christ in the heavens. This is not something superstitious; it is a marvelous fact. The power that is in the heavenly power plant is also in us.

The Reality of the Divine Transmission

Even though we cannot see this power, it is a reality. We cannot see the power that keeps the planets in position in the solar system, but it is nevertheless a fact. We should not say, "Christ's ascension is something far away from me. I can't understand it, and I can't see the divine

transmission." Neither can you see the power that keeps the planets revolving around the sun, but you still believe it. We need to believe that in the divine, spiritual realm there is a power that transmits to us all that Christ has attained and obtained in His ascension. What Christ has attained and obtained in His ascension is beyond measure. But whatever He has attained and obtained is now being transmitted into the church. As long as we are clean receptacles and are willing to open ourselves, this transmission will take place continually.

Experiencing the Divine Transmission

By now we should be able to see the connection, or the relationship, between us and Christ's ascension. There is a power, a divine current, flowing from the ascended Christ to the church, just as electricity flows from the power plant into a building. We should not only believe in the divine transmission; we need to experience it day by day. I can testify that because I experience this transmission, nothing can defeat me, frustrate me, or hold me down. Light, life supply, and sustaining power come to me continually because of this divine transmission.

Do you know where the church should be today? The church should be in the transmission of the exalted and ascended Christ. Christ has been raised from among the dead and seated at God's right hand in the heavens. All things have been subjected under His feet, and He has been given the headship over the entire universe. Now whatever He has attained and obtained in these four steps taken by God concerning Him is being transmitted into the church. This transmission is indicated by the phrase "toward us who believe" in Ephesians 1:19 and the phrase "to the church" in verse 22. In this transmission the church shares with Christ in all His attainments: the resurrection from among the dead, being seated in His transcendency, the subjection of all things under His feet, and the headship over all things. Praise the Lord for the transmission into our being of the Christ who is both in resurrection and in ascension!

Not only is Christ in us; His resurrection and ascension are also in us. As the processed, all-inclusive, indwelling Spirit, Christ dwells in us today with His humanity, divinity, human living, death, resurrection, and ascension. All this is being transmitted into us.

Concerning the experience of the divine transmission, we have all been hindered by the distorted teachings of traditional theology. Many Christians have never heard of the things concerning Christ's ascension. In particular, they have no concept regarding divine transmission. The traditional teachings have given many of us an improper education, and this kind of education has held us back from experiencing Christ in His resurrection and ascension. I urge you to empty yourselves in order to receive something newer and deeper from the divine revelation in the Scriptures.

The New Testament reveals that our Christ is in resurrection and ascension. Whatever He has obtained and attained in His resurrection and ascension is now being transmitted into us by the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit. We simply need to open ourselves and say, "Lord, I am here. I love You, and I give myself to You. Lord, I empty my whole being for You." If you pray like this, you will experience and enjoy this divine transmission.

THE GOAL OF THE DIVINE TRANSMISSION-- THE HEADING UP OF ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

God's Eternal Administration

The divine transmission revealed in Ephesians 1 has a great goal--the heading up of all things in Christ. Concerning this, Ephesians 1:10 says, "Unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him." The Greek word translated "dispensation" may also be rendered "economy." The economy, or dispensation, which God purposed in Himself is to head up all things in Christ at the fullness of the times. The times here refer to the ages. The fullness of the times will be when the new heaven and new earth come after all

the dispensations of God in all the ages have been completed.

We have strongly emphasized the fact that God has made Christ the Head over all things. Through all the dispensations of God in all the ages, all things will be headed up in Christ in the new heaven and new earth. This will be God's eternal administration and economy.

At present the whole universe is being corrupted and is deteriorating. Consider the condition of the human race. No one is able to head up the nations. Nevertheless, God is heading up all things in Christ, the unique Head. However, we need to know that for God's heading up of all things, this unique Head needs a Body, and this Body is the church. The church is the Body through whom God is heading up all things in Christ.

Through a Universal Man

Ephesians 1:10 speaks of a dispensation of the fullness of the times. This indicates that at the fullness of God's dispensations the heading up of all things will be complete. This heading up is done by God through a universal man. The Head of this man is Christ, and the Body of this man is the church. This universal man, comprising the Head and the Body, is the means by which and the sphere in which God is heading up all things in the entire universe.

Because God is heading up all things through a universal man constituted of Christ, the Head, and the church, the Body, we as members of the Body need to keep the oneness under the headship. The subtlety of the enemy is to divide the members of the Body of Christ. However, we are standing for a testimony of the oneness of the believers. In the Lord's recovery we stand as one. Praise Him that here there is a testimony of oneness! This oneness is the instrument, channel, and sphere that God is using to head up all things in Christ.

The Groaning of Creation

Concerning the heading up of all things in Christ and through the church, I would ask you to consider Romans 8:19-22: "For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly

expects the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but because of Him Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will also be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans together and travails in pain together until now." Here we see that all creation is groaning, sighing, because of its corruption. Creation is expecting, eagerly awaiting, the manifestation of the sons of God. At that time all divisions and separations will be removed, and all things, not only mankind, will be headed up in Christ.

First, Christ is heading up the believers. Then through His Body He will head up all things. This is marvelous. Although the heading up of all things in Christ and through the church is far beyond our understanding, it is nonetheless a fact. Therefore, we need to believe that sooner or later God will accomplish this.

Not Impossible with God

When some hear about the eventual heading up of all things in Christ through the church, His Body, they may ask when this will take place. We, of course, do not know; the Bible only tells us "unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times" (Eph. 1:10).

According to man's view, the heading up of the entire universe seems to be an impossibility. Someone may say, "You talk about the heading up of all things in one unique head? This is impossible." To man, this is impossible, but it is not impossible with God. With Him, nothing is impossible (Mark 10:27).

Although we do not know how long it will be until the dispensation of the fullness of times, when all things have been headed up in Christ, we have the assurance that God will accomplish this. Whatever God speaks will take place. He has told us that He is heading up all things in Christ, the Head of the church, and He will do it.

LIFE-STUDY OF LUKE

MESSAGE SEVENTY-NINE

THE MAN-SAVIOR'S ASCENSION

(4)

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:22, 10; Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:23; 3:19b; Heb. 4:14; 7:26, 22; 8:6; 9:15-16; Rev. 1:13; 2:1

In this message we shall give a concluding word on the subjective aspect of the Man-Savior's ascension. We have seen that in His ascension Christ was given to be the Head over all things to the church so that all things might be headed up in Him (Eph. 1:22, 10). Now we shall go on to see that the ascended Christ is the Head of the church and also the High Priest in the heavens.

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH, HIS BODY, TO EXPRESS GOD IN HIS FULLNESS

In His ascension Christ was made the Head of the church, His Body, to express God in His fullness. Colossians 1:18 says, "He is the Head of the Body, the church." According to Ephesians 1:23, His Body is the fullness of the One who fills all in all. In Ephesians 3:19 Paul speaks of our being "filled unto all the fullness of God." All this fullness dwells in Christ (Col. 1:19; 2:9). Through His dwelling in us, Christ imparts His unsearchable riches into our being, so that eventually we shall be filled unto all the fullness of God. This makes us the expression of God, which is what the church should be.

The Oneness of the Head and the Body

As the Head of the church, His Body, Christ certainly is joined to the Body. Just as in one's physical body the head and the body are one, so Christ, the Head, and the

church, His Body, are joined and therefore are one. It would be absurd to think that one's head is not related to one's body. Likewise, it would also be a mistake to think that as the Head Christ is far away from the Body. However, some think that Christ is far away from us, the members of His Body. According to this concept, the Head is in the heavens, and the Body is on earth. To those who hold this concept it seems that there is a vast distance between the Head in the heavens and the Body on earth. How, then are the Head and Body connected? This understanding of the Head and the Body is nonsensical.

In His ascension Christ was made the Head of the church. How can we say that the Head is in the heavens and that the church, the Body, is on earth, far away from the Head? According to the Bible, the Head is not alone in the heavens without His Body, and the Body is not on earth without the Head. The Body without the Head would be a monstrosity.

No doubt, the Bible reveals that Christ, the Head, has ascended to the heavens. We, of course, are on earth. Then where are the Head and the Body--in heaven or on earth? The Head and the Body are one and form a universal man. But is this universal man in heaven or on earth? If you say that the Head is in heaven and the Body is on earth, you will be seriously mistaken. If this is the situation, what joins the Head and the Body? Some may say that the Head and the Body are both in heaven and on earth. But what does this mean? Does it mean that sometimes we are in heaven and that at other times we are on earth?

In answering the question concerning the location of the Head and the Body, we need to realize that this does not involve the elements of space and time. With material things there are these elements. But with divine things there is neither the element of space nor the element of time. For Christ to be the Head of the church, His Body, is certainly not a material thing; this is altogether a divine matter. With this divine matter there is not the element of space nor the element of time. Therefore, we need to see that in the divine life and in the divine Spirit, we, the believers, are one with Christ.

The Body is one with the Head in the divine life and in the divine Spirit. Regarding the Head and the Body, we should not consider space and time, for here these elements do not apply. As members of the Body in the divine life and the divine Spirit, we are not separated by space or time. We all are now in the Body.

We would emphasize the fact that with material matters we have the elements of space and time, but we do not have these elements with divine things. For example, the Lord Jesus said, "No one has ascended into heaven, but He Who descended out of heaven, the Son of Man Who is in heaven" (John 3:13). Here the Lord says that although He came down from heaven, He was still in heaven. This means that while He was on earth, He was still in heaven. According to His physical body, He was on earth when He spoke these words. But according to His divine being, which does not involve the elements of space and time, He was in heaven.

In the church life we should not consider the Head and the Body from a physical point of view. Rather, we need to consider the Head and the Body from the divine viewpoint. According to the divine viewpoint, we are one with the ascended Christ, and His ascension is also ours (Eph. 2 6). Here in the ascension we express Him in His fullness.

The Fullness of Christ for His Expression

Ephesians 3:19 speaks of our being filled unto all the fullness of God, and 1:23 says that the church, His Body, is the fullness of the One who fills all in all. We have often pointed out that this fullness is the result, the issue, of the enjoyment of the riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). Through the enjoyment of Christ's riches we become His fullness to express Him. When we enjoy Christ, there will be a result of this enjoyment. The result of enjoying Christ is the fullness, and this fullness is the proper church life. In the church life, which is the fullness of Christ, the church expresses Christ. This expression of Christ in the church is in the divine nature and the divine sphere.

We can see from this that Christ's ascension has much

to do with us. It is in His ascension that we are one with Him. Furthermore, in His ascension, not merely in His resurrection, He is our Head and we are His Body. The New Testament does not say that it was in Christ's resurrection that God made Him Head of the church. Rather, the Bible reveals that it was in His ascension that God made Christ the Head of the church, His Body.

THE HIGH PRIEST IN THE HEAVENS

In His ascension Christ was also made the High Priest in the heavens. Hebrews 4:14 says that we have a "great High Priest Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God." The Lord came from God to us through incarnation, and then He went back from us to God through resurrection and ascension to be our High Priest to bear us in the presence of God and to care for all our needs (Heb. 2:17-18; 4:15). Therefore, Hebrews 7:26 says, "For such a High Priest befits us, holy, guileless. undefiled, separated from sinners, and become higher than the heavens." In His ascension Christ passed through the heavens; now He is not only in heaven (Heb. 9:24), but is also higher than the heavens, far above all heavens (Eph. 4:10). In His ascension He was inaugurated into His priestly office. When He was on earth, He did not carry on His priestly ministry as He is now doing in the heavens.

Caring for the Churches

It is significant that in the book of Revelation Christ is unveiled first not as the Administrator, but as the Priest. Revelation 1:13 says, "In the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet." On the one hand, Christ is the High Priest interceding in the heavens for the churches (Heb 7:25-26; Rom. 8:34); on the other hand, He is the High Priest moving in the churches to care for them. In Revelation 1:13 Christ is depicted as the High Priest, as shown by His garment, a garment reaching to the feet, that is, a priestly robe (Exo. 28:33-35).

The first vision of Christ in Revelation, recorded in

chapter one, is that of the High Priest clothed with a priestly garment. As the High Priest, Christ is walking among the lampstands and taking care of them, especially of their shining by trimming the lamps. Then in chapter eight Christ is revealed as the Priest offering the incense at the golden altar: "And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him that He should add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne" (v. 3). Therefore, in chapter one Christ is revealed as the Priest taking care of the lampstands, and in chapter eight He is unveiled as the Priest offering incense to God. Then, of course, in chapter five He is revealed as the Administrator over the whole universe. To the universe Christ is not the Priest; He is the Administrator. But to the church Christ is the High Priest. As the ascended One in the heavens, He is now living, working, and ministering as a Priest.

Bearing Us and Holding Us

In the Old Testament the high priest typifies Christ as our High Priest. According to the book of Exodus, the high priest bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his shoulders and on his heart: "And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth...and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial" (Exo. 28:9-10, 12). The names of the twelve tribes were also engraved on the twelve stones set in the breastplate of gold worn by the High Priest: "And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.... And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually" (Exo. 28:21, 29). The names engraved on the

onyx stones and on the stones of the breastplate signify that the high priest always bore the names of God's chosen people before God. Today Christ is our High Priest, and we are on His shoulders and on His breast. He is in the heavens as the High Priest bearing us and holding us.

As our High Priest, Christ is also taking care of us. He is a "merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God" (Heb. 2:17), a High Priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses (Heb. 4:15).

Although Christ as the High Priest is taking care of us, we all have our own thought and feeling as to how He should care for us. For example, we all want to be healthy and have a long life. We may not even be satisfied if we lived to be a hundred years of age. If we reach the age of one hundred, we may desire to live to be one hundred and twenty. However, often the Lord's way of caring for us is different from what we desire. Therefore, we may complain and say, "Lord, why do You not seem to care about my health? I'm sick, and I pray for healing. Lord, where is Your power? Where is Your healing? Lord, why don't You hear me?" The Lord may not answer a prayer for healing. In His care for a certain one, He may allow that one to die of his illness. We do not know what is good for us, but the Lord knows. He knows what is needed for our life on earth.

We all have our preferences concerning our living. We may desire to be wealthy and have many material things. But the Lord may allow us to be poor and deprive us of many things. Likewise, we may desire to have children who love the Lord and serve Him. Those who have daughters may hope that they will marry the best brothers in the churches. However, the situation concerning our children may turn out to be much different from what we desire. It we ask the Lord about this, He may say, "You do not know what is best for you. I know that this is the way it should be."

Perhaps you are thinking that matters such as these have nothing to do with the ascension of Christ. However, the ascension of Christ certainly is related to these things. The Lord's ascension includes His priesthood. As the ascended One, He is the High Priest bearing us, holding us,

and taking care of us. However, what is good for us is a matter not of our interpretation but of His. For example, you may buy a new car, hoping that it will last many years. But the Lord's opinion of the matter is that your car should last a very short time. If you were to come to me and say, "I bought a new car, and after a few weeks it was wrecked. Why did this happen? Didn't the Lord know that I would have an accident and that the car would be wrecked? Since He knew this, why did He allow me to buy it? Why didn't He stop me?" I, of course, cannot explain why. Only the Lord knows the reason; He is the High Priest.

Usually when I receive letters from saints asking me about their situation, I set the letters aside. The reason I set such letters aside is that I am not the High Priest, and I do not know what is on His heart concerning the saints. I cannot say anything for Him about such matters. If I were to try to say something, I actually would not be helping the saints. Fifty-five years ago I had a great deal to say when I was asked such questions. I had much to say because I did not know anything, and therefore I spoke many things in a presumptuous way. But now, having more experience of the Lord and more knowledge of Him, I have very little, if anything, to say.

Nevertheless, I can say this: the Lord's care for us is always positive. One day we shall see Him and worship Him. Some of us may say to Him, "Lord Jesus, forgive me for complaining to You about my situation. Now I know that God's will for me is good." Our High Priest is taking good care of us all.

Caring for God's Desire

The ascended Christ cares not only for us and our welfare; He cares for God's desires. This High Priest cares more for God's need than for our need. God wants lampstands. Therefore, the Lord establishes lampstands and trims the lamps for the expression of God (Rev. 1:13; 2:1). This work includes His edifying of the saints and His building up of the church. The Lord is now building up a living testimony of Jesus.

The Executor of the New Testament

As the High Priest in the heavens, the Lord is the surety and Mediator of the better covenant and the Executor of the New Testament. Hebrews 7:22 says, "Jesus has become the surety of a better covenant." That Christ has become the surety of a better covenant is based on the fact that He is the High Priest. Hebrews 8:6 tells us, "He is also the Mediator of a better covenant." Furthermore, Hebrews 9:15 and 16 say, "And because of this He is Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament there must of necessity be the death of him who made it."

In verse 15 we have the word "covenant," and in verse 16, the word "testament." In Greek the same word is used for both covenant and testament. A covenant is an agreement with some promises to accomplish certain things for the covenanted people, while a testament is a will with certain accomplished things bequeathed to the inheritor. The new covenant consummated with the blood of Christ is not merely a covenant but a testament with all the things which have been accomplished by the death of Christ bequeathed to us. First God gave the promise that He would make a new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34). Then Christ shed His blood to enact the covenant (Luke 22:20). Since there are accomplished facts promised in this covenant, it is also a testament. This testament, this will, has been confirmed and validated by Christ's death, and it is now being executed by Christ in His ascension.

Our High Priest is establishing lampstands and trimming the lamps. In this establishing and trimming, He is also executing the New Testament for us. The New Testament has many bequests, all of which are divine blessings bequeathed to the churches.

In the Bible the word "testament" is equal to the modern word "will." The New Testament, therefore, is a new will for our inheritance. This new will is for the

bequeathing of the divine blessings, including the Person of Christ and His all-inclusive redemptive work. The One who enacted this new will is Jesus Christ, who died for its enactment. Now whatever He enacted has been bequeathed to us and is available to us.

The enactment of a will and all that is bequeathed in it requires the death of the one who makes the will. Once the maker of the will dies, the bequests in the will become available to the heirs. Praise the Lord that Christ died to enact the will and that He is now in the heavens as the living Executor of the will He has bequeathed to us! How does He execute this will? He executes the new will by establishing the churches as the lampstands and by trimming all the lamps.

At this very moment the ascended Christ is establishing lampstands and trimming the lamps. I can testify that daily I am under His trimming, for I have much that needs to be trimmed. I also realize that He is walking among the local churches, that He is establishing the golden lampstands. By doing this He is executing, carrying out, the New Testament in a real way. Every blessing in the New Testament is a bequest applied to us by the living, resurrected, and ascended Christ. This is Christ in His ascension. Praise Him that we may enjoy Him in this way!

Christ's ministry as the High Priest in the heavens has a destination--the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem will be the consummation of Christ's work in His ascension. Whatever Christ is now working in His ascension will consummate in the coming New Jerusalem.