

Message Two

The Building of the Bride

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26; 2:7-10, 18-25; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9-11

I. The building of God is the central matter in the entire Bible; the bride of Christ is the building of the Triune God—"Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man"—Gen. 2:22:

- A. The entire Bible may be likened to a building manual; the revelation concerning the garden of Eden, as the beginning of the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures, and the revelation concerning the New Jerusalem, as the ending of the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures, reflect each other.
- B. What is revealed in these two parts of the Scriptures is the central thought of God, the central line of the divine revelation, and a controlling principle of the interpreting and understanding of the Holy Scriptures:
 - 1. Genesis 1 and 2 are the blueprint of God's organic architectural plan to have His divine building (Heb. 11:10); God's desire is to build Christ into our intrinsic constitution so that our entire being will be reconstituted with Christ; in this way God may gain a corporate man to express Him in His image and to represent Him with His authority (Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 3:9; Matt. 16:18; 2 Sam. 7:12-14a).
 - 2. Revelation 21 and 22 are the photograph of the finished building, the corporate expression of the Triune God; the New Jerusalem is the reflection and fulfillment of the divine revelation concerning the garden of Eden.
 - 3. Christ will come back as the Bridegroom to marry His bride, who will be the totality of the overcomers; this building up by the overcomers in this age is for the initial consummation of the New Jerusalem in the kingdom age (19:7-9) and eventually for the full consummation of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth (21:2).
 - 4. By the continual working of the Holy Spirit through all the centuries, this goal will be attained at the end of this age; then the bride, the overcoming believers, will be ready, and the kingdom of God will come—Matt. 26:29; 13:43.
 - 5. The corporate bride, the New Jerusalem, will fulfill the two aspects of the purpose of God (Gen. 1:26); first, the New Jerusalem will be the full expression of God in God's full image for His glory (Rev. 21:11; cf. 4:3); second, this New Jerusalem will subdue the enemy, conquer the earth, and exercise God's authority with His dominion over the entire universe (Gen. 1:26; Rev. 22:5; cf. 20:10, 14-15).
- C. When we as God's people enter into a love relationship with God, we receive His life, just as Eve received the life of Adam; it is this life that enables us to become one with God and makes Him one with us—Gen. 2:21-22.

II. For God and His people to be one, there must be a mutual love between them; the love between God and His people unfolded in the Bible is primarily like the affectionate love between a man and a woman—John 14:21, 23; Jer. 2:2; 31:3:

- A. As God's people love God and spend time to fellowship with Him in His word, God infuses them with His divine element, making them one with Him as His spouse, the same as He is in life, nature, and expression—Psa. 119:140, 15-16.
- B. God first loved us in that He infused us with His love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and the brothers—1 John 4:19-21.

- C. The life which we have received from God is a life of love; Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life so that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is—3:14; 5:1; 2:5-6; 4:17.
- D. Our natural love must be put on the cross; one difference between God's love and our natural love is that it is very easy for our natural love to be offended.
- E. We must be persons who are flooded with and carried away by the love of Christ; the divine love should be like the rushing tide of great waters toward us, impelling us to live to Him beyond our own control—2 Cor. 5:14.
- F. The commandment regarding brotherly love is both old and new: old, because the believers have had it from the beginning of their Christian life; new, because in their Christian walk it dawns with new light and shines with new enlightenment and fresh power again and again—1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23; cf. John 13:34.
- G. The Body builds itself up in love to become Christ's bride (Eph. 4:16); our God-given, regenerated spirit is a spirit of love; we need a burning spirit of love to conquer the degradation of today's church (2 Tim. 1:7).
- H. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1b; cf. 2 Cor. 3:6); loving one another is a sign that we belong to Christ (John 13:34-35); loving to be first in the church is versus loving all the brothers (3 John 9).
- I. Just as the Lord Jesus laid down His soul-life so that we might have the divine life, we need to lose our soul-life and deny the self to love the brothers and minister life to them in the practice of the Body life for the preparation of Christ's bride—1 John 3:16; 4:17 and footnote 5; John 10:11, 17-18; 15:13; Eph. 4:29—5:2; 2 Cor. 12:15; Rom. 12:9-13.
- J. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything or do anything for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:31b—13:8a.

III. We need to see what God did in order to produce a counterpart for Himself; Genesis 2 reveals a picture of Christ and His bride in the types of Adam and Eve:

- A. Adam typifies God in Christ as the real, universal Husband, who is seeking a wife for Himself—Rom. 5:14; cf. John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9-11.
- B. "Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart"—Gen. 2:18:
 - 1. Adam's need for a wife typifies and portrays God's need, in His economy, to have a wife as His counterpart, His complement (lit., His parallel); although God, Christ, is absolutely and eternally perfect, He is not complete without the church as His wife.
 - 2. God desires to have both Adam, typifying Christ, and Eve, typifying the church; His purpose is to "let them have dominion" (1:26); it is to have a victorious Christ plus a victorious church, a Christ who has overcome the work of the devil plus a church which has overthrown the work of the devil; God wants Christ and the church to have dominion (Rom. 5:17; 16:20; Eph. 1:22-23).
- C. From the ground God formed every animal of the field and every bird of heaven and brought them to Adam, "and the man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of heaven and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper as his counterpart"—Gen. 2:19-20.
- D. The wife must be the same as the husband in life, nature, and expression; among the cattle, the birds, and the animals Adam did not find a complement for himself, one that could match him—v. 23.
- E. In order to produce a complement for Himself, God first became a man, as typified by God's creation of Adam—John 1:14; Rom. 5:14.

- F. “Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place”—Gen. 2:21:
1. Adam’s deep sleep for the producing of Eve as his wife typifies Christ’s death on the cross for the producing of the church as His counterpart—Eph. 5:25-27.
 2. In the Bible, sleep means death—1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thes. 4:13-16; John 11:11-14.
 3. Christ’s death is the life-releasing, life-imparting, life-propagating, life-multiplying, and life-reproducing death, which is signified by the grain of wheat falling into the ground to die and to grow up in order to produce many grains (12:24) for the making of the loaf which is the Body, the church (1 Cor. 10:17).
 4. Through Christ’s death the divine life within Him was released, and through His resurrection His released divine life was imparted into His believers for the constituting of the church—Luke 12:49-50; cf. Rom. 12:11; Rev. 4:5.
 5. Through such a process God in Christ has been wrought into man with His life and nature so that man can be the same as God in life and nature in order to match Him as His counterpart.
- G. “And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man”—Gen. 2:22:
1. The rib taken from Adam’s opened side typifies the unbreakable, indestructible eternal life of Christ (Heb. 7:16; John 19:32-33, 36; Exo. 12:46; Psa. 34:20), which flowed out of His pierced side (John 19:34) to impart life to His believers for the producing and building up of the church as His counterpart:
 - a. Out of Christ’s side came blood and water, but all that came out of Adam’s side was the rib without the blood.
 - b. This is because at Adam’s time there was no need of redemption through the blood, because there was no sin; by the time that Christ was “sleeping” on the cross, there was the problem of sin; thus, the blood that came out of Christ’s side was for our judicial redemption.
 - c. Following the blood, the water came out, which is the flowing life of God for our organic salvation (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; Num. 20:8); this divine, flowing, uncreated life is typified by the rib taken out of Adam’s side (Rom. 5:10).
 2. Genesis 2:22 does not say that Eve was created but that she was built; the building of Eve with the rib taken from Adam’s side typifies the building of the church with the resurrection life released from Christ through His death on the cross and imparted into His believers in His resurrection—John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3.
 3. The church as the real Eve is the totality of Christ in all His believers; the church is the reproduction of Christ; other than Christ’s element, there should be no other element in the church—Gen. 5:2.
- H. Only that which comes out of Christ with His resurrection life can be His complement as His bride (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:6; 5:28-30); the church is a pure product out of Christ; the church is “Christly,” “resurrectionly,” and heavenly.
- I. Adam and Eve, being one, lived a married life together as husband and wife (Gen. 2:24-25); this portrays that in the New Jerusalem the processed and consummated Triune God as the universal Husband will live a married life with the redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified humanity as the wife, forever (Rev. 22:17a).
- J. In the eternity that is without end, by the divine, eternal, and surpassingly glorious life, they will live a life that is the mingling of God and man as one spirit, a life that is superexcellent and that overflows with blessings and joy.