

THE UNIQUE WORK IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY

(Saturday—Afternoon Session)

Message Nine

The Consummation of the Unique Work in the Lord's Recovery—the New Jerusalem

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 9-23

- I. The unique work in the Lord's recovery is to work out the New Jerusalem—the ultimate goal of God's economy—Rev. 21:10-11:**
 - A. The degradation of the church is mainly due to the fact that nearly all Christian workers are distracted to take something other than the New Jerusalem as their goal.
 - B. We should do only one work, which is to make God's chosen people beings in the New Jerusalem—3:12.

- II. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate consummation of the building up of the believers, who have been made God in life, in nature, in constitution, and in expression but not in the Godhead; thus, there is an intrinsic relation between the believers' becoming God in life and in nature and the producing of the New Jerusalem—21:2; 3:12:**
 - A. The New Jerusalem involves God becoming man, and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead, and God and man being mingled together as one entity—John 1:12-14; 14:20; 15:5a; Rev. 21:3, 10-11.
 - B. In Christ God has become man to make man God in His life and in His nature so that the redeeming God and the redeemed man can be mingled, constituted, together to be one entity—the New Jerusalem—vv. 3, 22.
 - C. The New Jerusalem is a composition of God's chosen, redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, renewed, transformed, conformed, and glorified people who have been deified—John 3:6; Heb. 2:11; Rom. 12:2; 8:29-30:
 1. For us to be deified means that we are being constituted with the processed and consummated Triune God so that we may be made God in life and in nature to be His corporate expression for eternity—Rev. 21:11.
 2. The deification of the believers is a process in God's organic salvation that will consummate in the New Jerusalem; this is the highest truth and the highest gospel—Rom. 5:10; Rev. 3:12; 21:10-11.
 - D. In the beginning of the Bible there is the single God, and at the end there is a great, corporate God, the New Jerusalem, a corporate God-man—the enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation of the processed and consummated Triune God with the regenerated, transformed, and glorified believers—Gen. 1:1; Rev. 21:3, 22; 22:17a.

- III. Today our work for the Lord with its issue should be governed and directed by the vision of the New Jerusalem; what is unveiled in the description of this unique city should be the model of what we are and how we work—3:12; 21:2, 9-23:**

- A. The New Jerusalem is the consummation of the organic building up of the Body of Christ in the local churches; the local churches are the procedure for God to accomplish the building up of the Body of Christ for the building of the New Jerusalem—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27; Rev. 21:2:
 - 1. The Body of Christ needs the local churches for its existence and function—Acts 8:1; 13:1.
 - 2. The local churches are the many expressions in many localities of the one Body of Christ—Rev. 1:4, 11.
 - 3. In the first chapter of Revelation we see the local churches, but in the last two chapters we see only one city—v. 11; 21:2.
 - 4. The Lord's desire is to gain the New Jerusalem through the precursor of the organic Body of Christ built up in the local churches—Eph. 4:16; Rev. 21:2.
- B. The New Jerusalem is the universal golden lampstand—vv. 18b, 23:
 - 1. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate consummation of the lampstands in the Scriptures—Exo. 25:31-37; 1 Kings 7:49; Zech. 4:2; Rev. 1:20; 21:18b, 23.
 - 2. The churches as golden lampstands will be consummated in the New Jerusalem, the aggregate of all the lampstands—1:20; 21:18b, 23:
 - a. In the book of Revelation there are two great signs—the sign of the golden lampstands and the sign of the New Jerusalem—1:1, 12, 20; 21:2, 10-11.
 - b. Revelation begins with the lampstands and ends with the lampstand—1:20; 21:18b, 23.
 - c. The lampstands are signs of the churches, whereas the New Jerusalem is a sign of God's eternal dwelling place—vv. 2-3, 22.
 - 3. The New Jerusalem, a mountain of gold, is the universal golden lampstand holding the Lamb as the lamp shining out God as the light—vv. 18b, 23; 22:1, 5.
- C. The New Jerusalem is the eternal Bethel—Gen. 28:10-22; Rev. 21:3, 22:
 - 1. Jacob's dream was a dream of God's goal, a dream of Bethel, a dream of the house of God (Gen. 28:10-22), which is the church today (1 Tim. 3:15) and which will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal dwelling place of God and His redeemed elect (Rev. 21:3, 22):
 - a. God had a dream, and that dream was to have the New Jerusalem, a built-up city, as the consummation of His economy—v. 2.
 - b. Our dream is to become the New Jerusalem as the consummation of God's economy—vv. 9-10.
 - 2. Christ, in His being the heavenly ladder at Bethel, speaks to us how God desires to have a house on the earth constituted with His redeemed and transformed elect, that He may bring heaven to earth and join earth to heaven, to make the two as one for eternity—John 1:51; Gen. 28:10-22.
 - 3. The building of God, the house of God, is the mutual abode of God and man; God's home is man, and man's home is God—Isa. 66:1-2; 1 Cor. 3:16; Psa. 90:1; John 15:5a; 14:23.
 - 4. In eternity future the New Jerusalem will be standing in the whole universe as something uplifted toward the heavens upon which the angelic family will ascend and descend to bring heaven to earth and join earth to

heaven for the divine traffic, the divine fellowship, between God and man—
2 Cor. 13:14.

- D. The New Jerusalem is the eternal Mount Zion, the Holy of Holies, the place where God is—Rev. 14:1-5; 21:1-3, 16; Heb. 12:22:
 - 1. In the church age the God-men who have been perfected and matured are Zion, the overcomers—Rev. 14:1:
 - a. The church is the heavenly Jerusalem, and the overcomers are Zion as the high peak and the highlight—Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1.
 - b. The overcomers are for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:16; Rev. 3:12.
 - 2. In the new heaven and new earth the entire New Jerusalem will become Zion; the New Jerusalem, the eternal Zion, will be the Holy of Holies, the place where God is—21:1-3, 16, 22.
- E. The New Jerusalem is the real and consummate Shulammitte—a corporate Shulammitte, including all God’s chosen and redeemed people—S. S. 6:13; Rev. 21:2, 9-10; 22:17:
 - 1. The wonderful Shulammitte, the duplication of Solomon, is the greatest and ultimate figure of the New Jerusalem—S. S. 6:13; Rev. 21:2.
 - 2. As Solomon’s counterpart, the Shulammitte became the same as Solomon in life, nature, and image, as Eve was to Adam—Gen. 2:20-23:
 - a. This signifies that the lover of Christ becomes the same as He is in life, nature, and image to match Him for their marriage—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; Rev. 19:7; 21:2.
 - b. The many lovers of Christ eventually will become duplications of God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead; this is the fulfillment of God becoming man so that man may become God, which is the high peak of the divine revelation.

IV. “The processed and consummated Triune God, according to the good pleasure of His desire and for the highest intention in His economy, is building Himself into His chosen people and His chosen people into Himself, that He may have a constitution in Christ as a mingling of divinity with humanity to be His organism and the Body of Christ, as His eternal expression and the mutual abode for the redeeming God and the redeemed man. The ultimate consummation of this miraculous structure of treasure will be the New Jerusalem for eternity”—inscription on Witness Lee’s tomb.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**DEIFICATION—BECOMING GOD
IN LIFE AND IN NATURE BUT NOT IN THE GODHEAD**

This brings us to the matter of deification—God’s intention to make the believers God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. Athanasius referred to deification when at the council of Nicea in A.D. 325 he said, “He [Christ] was made man that we might be made God.” Although the term *deification* is familiar to many theologians and Christian teachers, during the past sixteen centuries only a small number have dared to teach regarding the deification of the believers in Christ.

I have not been influenced by any teaching about deification, but I have learned from my study of the Bible that God does intend to make the believers God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. For instance, 1 John 3:2 says, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is.” This verse clearly reveals that we will be like God.

God makes us like Him by imparting His life and nature into us. Second Peter 1:4 says that we have become “partakers of the divine nature.” John 1:12-13 says that we were born, regenerated, by God with His life. As God’s children we are “baby gods,” having God’s life and nature but not His Godhead. The Godhead is unique; He is the only One who should be worshipped.

We have been born of God and today, having God’s life and nature, we are partially like Him. One day, when He comes, we will be wholly and entirely like Him.

It was wonderful for David to be a man according to God’s heart, but it was not sufficient. God wants those who can say, “I am not just a person according to God’s heart. I am God in life and in nature but not in His Godhead.” On the one hand, the New Testament reveals that the Godhead is unique and that only God, who alone has the Godhead, should be worshipped. On the other hand, the New Testament reveals that we, the believers in Christ, have God’s life and nature and that we are becoming God in life and in nature but will never have His Godhead. (*Life-study of 1 & 2 Samuel*, pp. 166-167)

THE NEW JERUSALEM—A COMPOSITION OF DIVINITY AND HUMANITY BLENDED AND MINGLED TOGETHER AS ONE ENTITY

The conclusion of the divine revelation in the Bible is a building, the New Jerusalem. This building is a blending and mingling of divinity with humanity. This is proved by the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21. Verse 3 refers to the New Jerusalem as “the tabernacle of God,” and verse 22 says, “I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” The New Jerusalem as the tabernacle of God is for God to dwell in, and God and the Lamb as the temple are for the redeemed saints to dwell in. This indicates that the New Jerusalem will be a mutual dwelling place for God and man. Furthermore, this building is a composition of human beings. The gates are pearls inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel (v. 12), and on the twelve foundations are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v. 14). This indicates clearly that the New Jerusalem is a composition of the Triune God, who is the essence, center, and universality, and God’s redeemed people.

The New Jerusalem is a composition of divinity and humanity blended and mingled together as one entity. All the components have the same life, nature, and constitution and thus are a corporate person. This is a matter of God becoming man and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. These two, God and man, man and God, are built up together by being blended and mingled together. This is the completion, the consummation, of God’s building. We all need to see this vision. (*Life-study of 1 & 2 Samuel*, pp. 198-199)

The Diamond in the Box

If we read the Bible without paying attention to this crucial point, then, in a very real sense, the Bible is to us an empty book. This means that although the Bible is real in itself, in our understanding of it the Bible is empty. As an illustration, let us suppose that a certain box, which is quite attractive, contains a large diamond. A child may be interested in the box but not in the diamond. An adult, however, would focus his attention on the diamond contained in the box. Today, many Christians care for the Bible as the “box,” but they have not seen and

do not appreciate the “diamond” which is the content of this box, and they may even condemn those who have a proper appreciation of the “diamond” in the “box.” The “diamond” in the “box” of the Bible is the revelation that in Christ God has become man in order that man might become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead.

The vast majority of today’s Christians neglect the crucial point in the Bible that in Christ God has become man in order to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead and that God desires to mingle Himself with man to be one entity. Some not only neglect this; they falsely accuse as heretical those who teach it. Today many believe one aspect of this crucial point—that God became a man named Jesus— but they do not believe the other aspect—that man is becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. (*Life-study of 1 & 2 Samuel*, p. 204)

THE LIGHT AND THE LAMP

The City Having No Need of the Sun nor of the Moon

Revelation 21:23 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.” In the millennium the light of the sun and of the moon will be intensified (Isa. 30:26). But in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth, there will be no need of the sun nor of the moon. The sun and the moon will be in the new heaven and new earth, but they will not be needed in the New Jerusalem; for there God, the divine light, will shine much more brightly.

There Being No Night There

In the New Jerusalem there will be no night, for “night shall be no more” (Rev. 22:5a). “Night shall not be there” (21:25b). In the new heaven and new earth there will still be the distinction between day and night, but in the New Jerusalem there will be no such distinction. Outside the city there will be night, but within the city there will be no night because the city will have an eternal, divine light, God Himself.

The Glory of God Illumining the City as the Light of the Divine Life, and the Lamb Being the Lamp Shining Out the Divine Light through the Transparent City as the Glory

Revelation 21:11 and 23 tell us that the New Jerusalem has the glory of God and that her light is like a most precious stone, as a jasper stone, clear as crystal. In the New Jerusalem Christ, as the lamp of the holy city, will shine with God within as the light to illumine the city with the glory of God, the expression of the divine light. “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” (v. 23). The glory of God, which is God expressed, illumines the New Jerusalem. Hence, the glory of God, with God as its substance, essence, and element, is the light of the New Jerusalem which shines in the Lamb as its lamp. The expressed glory of God, or the God of glory expressed, is the light shining in Christ as the lamp through the jasper wall of the New Jerusalem like the most precious jasper, which bears God’s appearance rich in life (v. 11). The appearance of God rich in life goes with the shining for God’s expression in His final and consummated manifestation.

In 21:23 we see that God is the light and Christ is the lamp. This indicates that God and the Lamb are one light. God is the content, and the Lamb, Christ, is the light-bearer, the expression. This means that God who is the light will shine in Christ as the lamp throughout the city. This is a matter of the divine dispensing, for the shining of the divine light is actually the dispensing of the processed Triune God into the believers.

God, the divine light, needs a lamp. Without the Lamb being the lamp, God's shining would kill us. However, with the redeeming Christ as the lamp, the divine light does not kill us but instead illumines us. First Timothy 6:16 says that God dwells in unapproachable light. In Christ, though, God becomes approachable. Apart from Christ, God's shining would be a killing, but in Christ God's shining is an illumining. Because the divine light shines through the Lamb, the Redeemer, it has become lovable and touchable. Through the Lamb as the lamp God's light becomes an enjoyable shining for God's dispensing. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2731-2733)

THE WIFE OF THE REDEEMING CHRIST

The New Jerusalem is not only the tabernacle of God but also the wife of the redeeming Christ. In both the Old and New Testaments, God likens His chosen people to a spouse for His satisfaction in love (Isa. 54:6; Jer. 3:1; Ezek. 16:8; Hosea 2:19; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:31-32). In the New Jerusalem as the wife of the redeeming Christ, God will have the fullest satisfaction in love.

Revelation 21:9b and 10 say, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." Whereas the bride is mainly for the wedding day, the wife is for the entire life. The New Jerusalem will be the bride in the millennium for one thousand years as one day (2 Pet. 3:8) and then the wife in the new heaven and new earth for eternity. The bride in the millennium will include only the overcoming saints, but the wife in the new heaven and new earth will include all the redeemed and regenerated sons of God (Rev. 21:7).

The New Jerusalem will be one with the redeeming Christ, as Eve became one with Adam. Eve was builded from a rib that was taken out of Adam's side, and then she was brought back to him to be one flesh with him—to be one with him in nature and in life (Gen. 2:21-24; Eph. 5:25-27, 29-32). The principle is the same with the New Jerusalem as the wife of the redeeming Christ. She will be one with her Redeemer in nature and in life. Once again we see that the New Jerusalem cannot be a material city, for a physical city cannot be one with Christ in nature and in life. The New Jerusalem will not only have the divine element added to it and the holy nature of God wrought into it but will also be one with the redeeming Christ in nature and in life.

Having the Church as Her Miniature

The New Jerusalem as the wife of the redeeming Christ has the church as her miniature. This is revealed by Paul's word in Ephesians 5:22-32, where he speaks of the church as the counterpart of Christ. The church is actually a part of Christ, for the church comes out of Christ and is unto Christ, just as Eve came out of Adam and was unto Adam.

In Ephesians 5:32 Paul says, "This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church." The fact that Christ and the church are one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17), as typified by the husband and wife being one flesh, is the great mystery. It surely is a great mystery that the church as Christ's counterpart comes out of Christ, has the same life and nature as Christ, and is one with Christ.

Having Been the Bride of Christ in the Millennium

In the new heaven and new earth Christ will have a wife, but in the millennium He will have a bride (Rev. 19:7-8; 21:2), consisting of the overcoming believers. At His coming back Christ will marry the overcomers. This marriage is described in Revelation 19:7-9.

Revelation 19:7 says, "Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." The marriage of the Lamb is the issue of the completion of God's New Testament economy. God's economy in the New Testament is to obtain for Christ a bride, the church, through His redemption and divine life. By the continual working of the Holy Spirit through all the centuries, this goal will be completed at the end of this age. Then the bride, who will consist of the overcoming believers, will be ready.

The words *His wife* in Revelation 19:7 refer to the church (Eph. 5:24-25, 31-32), the bride of Christ (John 3:29). However, according to Revelation 19:8 and 9, the wife, the bride of Christ, consists only of the overcoming believers during the millennium, whereas the bride, the wife, in Revelation 21:2 is composed of all the saved saints after the millennium for eternity.

Revelation 19:7b tells us that the wife "has made herself ready." The readiness of the bride depends on both the overcomers' maturity in life and on their being built up together as a corporate entity. Therefore, the overcomers are not only mature in life but also built up together as one bride.

Revelation 19:8 says, "It was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." Here *pure* refers to the nature and *bright*, to the expression. The righteousnesses, or righteous acts, do not refer to the righteousness (which is Christ) we received for our salvation, a righteousness that is objective and that qualifies us to meet the requirement of the righteous God. The righteousnesses of the overcoming believers in Revelation 19:8 are subjective so that they may meet the requirement of the overcoming Christ. The fine linen, therefore, indicates our overcoming life. It is actually the Christ whom we live out of our being.

Constituted of All the Perfected Saints

Ultimately, in the new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem as the wife of the redeeming Christ will be constituted of all the perfected saints. After the millennium all the saints will have been perfected and constituted together to be the wonderful entity of the New Jerusalem.

The consummation of the church as the counterpart of Christ will be the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity. Revelation 21:2 says, "I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The New Jerusalem is a living composition of all the saints redeemed and perfected by God throughout all generations. This is the bride, the wife, of Christ as His counterpart. As the wife of Christ, the New Jerusalem comes out of Christ and becomes His counterpart. She is prepared by participating in the riches of the life and nature of Christ.

Revelation 22:17 indicates that Christ and the New Jerusalem as His wife will be a universal couple for eternity. The Spirit, who is the totality of the processed Triune God, becomes one with the believers, who are now fully matured to be the bride. Therefore, the consummation of the processed Triune God and the consummation of God's chosen, redeemed, regenerated, and transformed people will be one and will be a universal couple expressing the Triune God for eternity. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2700-2703)