

KNOWING THE BODY—THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY

Evening Session—Message Three

The Divine Commission according to the Heavenly Vision for the Increase and Building Up of the Body

Scripture Reading: Acts 26:18

- I. The Lord appeared to Paul to appoint him a minister and a witness of the things in which Paul had seen Him and of the things in which He would appear to Paul—Acts 26:16; cf. 1:8; 23:11; 20:20, 31:**
 - A. Paul was not disobedient to the heavenly vision of Christ as the mystery of God, of the church as the Body of Christ, the mystery of Christ, and of man as a vessel to contain, be filled with, and express the processed and consummated Triune God—26:19; 9:4-5, 15.
 - B. Once you have seen a vision of God's plan and have been converted from everything to Christ Himself, there will be something within you energizing you to carry out God's plan—Gal. 1:15-16; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 15:10.
- II. Acts 26:18 reveals the work that we must do today for the increase and building up of the Body of Christ; this verse unveils the all-inclusive contents of our divine commission:**
 - A. This is to carry out the fulfillment of God's jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord, proclaimed by the Lord Jesus in Luke 4:18-21 according to God's New Testament economy.
 - B. We need to pray over the contents of our divine commission in Acts 26:18, asking the Lord to make them our experience and reality so that we can bring others into this experience and reality—Eph. 3:8:
 1. "To open their eyes":
 - a. We need to continually pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to understand and to see more and more of Christ, the Body of Christ, and the divine dispensing for the divine economy—1:17; 3:5; cf. Rev. 4:6; 3:17; Matt. 6:6.
 - b. We cannot go on without new knowledge of the Lord and a new vision of Him—Acts 26:16; Phil. 3:8b, 10a, 13; cf. Deut. 4:25.
 - c. Being a minister and a witness is not a matter of teaching and knowledge but of appearing and vision; the things in which we have seen the Lord and the things in which the Lord will appear to us are the things which we must minister to others—Acts 22:14-15.
 - d. Our commission is to "enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is"—Eph 3:9.
 2. "To turn them from darkness to light":
 - a. Light is the presence of God—Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:5.
 - b. We need to be people who are full of light—Luke 11:34-36.
 - c. The enjoyment of Christ as our God-given portion is "in the light"—Col. 1:12; John 8:12; 1:4; Psa. 119:105, 130; Matt. 5:14; Rev. 1:20.
 - d. We need to be luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life—Phil. 2:14-16.

- e. We need to tell out the virtues of the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light—1 Pet. 2:9.
- 3. “To turn them...from the authority of Satan to God”:
 - a. The highest point in our spiritual experience is to have a clear sky with the throne above it—Ezek. 1:22, 26:
 - (1) To have the throne above a clear sky is to give the Lord the preeminence in our being and the highest and most prominent position in our life—Col. 1:18; cf. Ezek. 14:3.
 - (2) The clearer our sky is, the more we are under the throne, under God’s authority—Acts 24:16.
 - (3) For God to have the throne in us means that He has the position to reign in us—cf. Rom. 5:17.
 - (4) If we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, genuine authority will be with us to bring others under God’s authority—2 Cor. 10:4-5, 8; 13:3, 10.
 - b. Our uttermost love for the Lord qualifies, perfects, and equips us to speak for the Lord with His authority—cf. John 21:15-17.
- 4. “That they may receive forgiveness of sins”:
 - a. We need to go to the Lord to receive a thorough forgiveness of all our sins—1 John 1:7, 9.
 - b. David begged God to blot out his transgressions, wash him thoroughly from his iniquity, cleanse him from his sin, and purge his sin with hyssop—Psa. 51:1-2, 7, 9:
 - (1) Hyssop typifies Christ in His humble and humiliated human nature (1 Kings 4:33a; Exo. 12:22a), implying Christ as our Mediator and sacrifice (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 10:9).
 - (2) Like David we need to stay in the presence of God to have a thorough and genuine repentance and confession to receive a full forgiveness from God.
 - (3) If we confess our sins to receive God’s forgiveness, we will have the gladness of God’s salvation and be sustained with a willing spirit; then we can teach transgressors His ways and sinners will turn back to Him—Psa. 51:12-13.
- 5. “That they may receive...an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me”:
 - a. This inheritance is the Triune God Himself with all He has, all He has done, and all He will do for His redeemed people.
 - b. The Triune God is embodied in the all-inclusive Christ, who is the portion allotted to the saints as their inheritance—Col. 2:9; 1:12.
 - c. We enjoy the pneumatic Christ as the pledge of our inheritance (Eph. 1:14) “among those”, that is, in the church life—cf. 2 Tim. 2:22.
 - d. We need to bring people into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ in the church life so that they may enjoy Christ as we do and be sanctified dispositionally with the holy nature of God through the exercise of their spirit—Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 4:13.