

2 CORINTHIANS

Message Four

**The Function of the New Covenant Ministry
and
the Spirit of a New Covenant Minister**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 3:1-6; 2:13; 6:6; 12:18

- I. The function of the new covenant ministry is to write living letters of Christ with the life-giving Spirit—2 Cor. 3:1-6:**
- A. The believers became the apostles' letters of commendation, written by the apostles with Christ as the content in every part of their being—vv. 1-2.
 - B. Because the apostles were filled with Christ, in their ministry they spontaneously ministered Christ to others, inscribing Christ into them.
 - C. When the apostles preached Christ or ministered Christ, they ministered Him into the spirits and hearts of the believers—v. 3; Eph. 3:17a:
 - 1. First, Christ as the life-giving Spirit is ministered into our spirit; this means that Christ is written in our spirit.
 - 2. By further ministry Christ spreads from our spirit into our mind, emotion, and will:
 - a. Eventually, Christ will be written into every part of our inward being.
 - b. This is actually Christ making His home in our heart—Eph. 3:16-17a.
 - c. Christ making His home in our heart equals the writing of Christ throughout our inner being.
 - D. The writing that takes place in our hearts by the ministers of the new covenant has the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit as the element—2 Cor. 3:3:
 - 1. This element is actually the processed God; thus, it is the Triune God who is being written into us—13:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
 - 2. The ministers of the new covenant write letters with the processed Triune God as the element.
 - 3. The heavenly ink is the Spirit, and the essence of this Spirit-ink is Christ with all His riches; to have this ink in our experience, we must enjoy Christ, possess Christ, be filled with Christ, be saturated

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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- with Christ, and be covered with Christ—2 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 1:15a, 16a; 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:8, 16-17a.
- E. The only One qualified to do the work of writing living letters of Christ is God—2 Cor. 3:5-6:
1. The living God Himself is the sufficiency, competency, and qualification of the apostles' ministry for God's New Testament economy to dispense Christ into God's chosen people for the building up of the Body—v. 5.
 2. Only the Triune God constituted into us is sufficient to carry on the work of writing letters of Christ—v. 6.
 3. God is writing Himself into His chosen people; the Writer is God, the writing substance is God, and the issue, the result, is also God.
- F. The writing of living letters of Christ involves both dispensing and constituting:
1. With respect to the One doing the writing, it is a matter of dispensing—13:14.
 2. With respect to the one being written upon, it is a matter of constituting—a constituting that takes place through the divine dispensing—Eph. 3:16-17a; Gal. 4:19.
 3. Spiritual letter writing involves the dispensing of the Divine Trinity; this dispensing results in constituting, and the issue of this dispensing and constituting is that we become letters of Christ.
- G. To preach the gospel is to write a living letter; gospel preaching is a matter of letter writing—2 Cor. 10:14, 16; cf. 4:3-4.
- H. The inscribing of Christ into others is not for our work; it is for the church so that God's administration may be carried out and His eternal purpose may be fulfilled—1 Cor. 14:4-5, 12; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:16.
- II. The spirit of a new covenant minister is exemplified by the spirit of Paul:**
- A. In 2 Corinthians we see that Paul's spirit is:
1. An open spirit—6:11-13.

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2. A holy spirit—v. 6.
 3. A frank spirit—10:7-12; 11:5-31; 12:11.
 4. A pure spirit—v. 14.
 5. A bold spirit—7:4, 16; 10:11; 13:2.
 6. A humble spirit—10:1; 12:21.
 7. A loving spirit—vv. 15, 19.
 8. A tender spirit—7:3-4b.
 9. A spirit that is not self-seeking—2:13; 7:2; 12:14, 17.
 10. A coordinating spirit—v. 18; 2:10.
- B. Since our spirit has been joined to the Lord as one spirit, our spirit should be the predominant part of our being; first, our spirit becomes the spirit of our mind, and eventually, the spirit of our body—1 Cor. 6:15-20; Eph. 4:23.
- C. In order to have the spirit of a new covenant minister, we need to:
1. Know the spirit by the sense of the spirit—Rom. 8:2, 6; 2 Cor. 2:13.
 2. Deny the self, crucify the flesh, and exercise our spirit unto godliness—Matt. 16:24; Gal. 5:24; 1 Tim. 4:7; John 4:24.
 3. Discern the spirit from the soul through the dividing of soul and spirit—Heb. 4:12.
 4. Be subject to the discipline of the Holy Spirit—12:9; 1 Pet. 5:6; Rom. 8:28.
 5. Experience the breaking of the outer man for the release of the spirit—2 Cor. 4:16.
 6. Pray at every time in spirit—Eph. 6:18; Jude 20; Luke 18:1; 1 Thes. 5:17.
 7. Live and walk according to the spirit—Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25; Rev. 1:10.
 8. Have a burning spirit of love—2 Tim. 1:6-7.
 9. Pray that the Father would strengthen us with power through His Spirit into the inner man—Eph. 3:16.
 10. See the relationship between our regenerated spirit and the Body—1:17; 2:22; 3:16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18; 1:22-23.