

SHEPHERDING THE CHURCH OF GOD AS A SLAVE OF GOD

(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message One

Being Replaced with Christ by Enjoying and Ministering Christ to Shepherd the Church of God as a Slave of God for the Fulfillment of the Dream of God

Scripture Reading: Gen. 28:11-12, 16-19a; John 6:57, 63; Isa. 22:15-22; 1 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 3:2

I. God's dream is the dream of His eternal purpose to have the reality of Bethel, the house of God, the mutual dwelling place of God and man; in this universe God is doing only one thing—He is building His eternal habitation for His eternal expression—Gen. 28:11-12, 16-19a; Matt. 16:18:

- A. Christ as the One “who inhabits eternity” came forth “from the days of eternity” to build Himself into man and to build man into Himself so that He and man can mutually indwell one another and so that Christ can be “all and in all”—Isa. 57:15; 66:1-2; Micah 5:2; John 14:2, 20, 23; 15:4-5; Col. 3:10-11.
- B. Christ is the reality of Bethel, the church as the house of the living God, the reality of every aspect of the dream of God's eternal purpose—Gen. 28:10-22:
 1. Christ is the living stone (1 Pet. 2:4), the foundation stone (1 Cor. 3:11), the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), and the topstone (Zech. 4:7) of God's spiritual house; through regeneration we have become living stones (1 Pet. 2:5), and through transformation we are becoming precious stones as the duplication of Christ for His building (1 Cor. 3:12a; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rev. 21:18-21).
 2. Christ as the solid Rock wrought into our being for our transformation is our pillow, our true rest, our real Sabbath, our perfect peace, and our absolute satisfaction—Matt. 11:28; Isa. 30:15a.
 3. The Christ who has been wrought into us and on whom we rest becomes a pillar as the material and the support for God's building, God's house; by the growth of Christ as the living stone within us, we are made pillars in God's house to make us collectively a corporate pillar of Christ as the reality of God's house—1 Kings 7:21; Gal. 2:9; Rev. 3:12; 1 Tim. 3:15.
 4. Christ as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit is the heavenly ladder, bringing God into us and us into God to make us a corporate God-man, the church as the one new man, the reality of the house of God with God as man's house and man as God's house—Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:10-11; Psa. 90:1; Isa. 66:1-2; John 14:23; 15:4-5.
 5. Christ as the life-giving Spirit is the anointing—the moving and working of the compounded Triune God as the holy anointing oil enjoyed and experienced by us—1 John 2:20, 27; 2 Cor. 1:21-22.
 6. Christ is the reality of the house of God, and we need to know, experience, enjoy, and give ourselves to Him as El-bethel, “the God of the house of God,” so that He can fully replace us with Himself for the accomplishment of His eternal purpose—Gen. 35:7.

- C. In God's New Testament economy, now that Christ has come, we must "hear Him" and see "Jesus only"; "Jesus only" is the unique constituent of God's spiritual house, the church as the corporate new man—Mark 9:7-8; Col. 3:10-11.
- II. God's desire, His dream, is for us to be replaced with Christ by eating Christ; the reality that is in Jesus (the God-man living of the individual Jesus) becomes the reality of the Body of Christ (the God-man living of the corporate Christ) by our eating Christ to enjoy Christ—John 6:57; Acts 9:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12; Col. 3:10-11; Phil. 1:19-21a; cf. Ps. 16:11; 43:4:**
- A. Our being replaced with Christ to live Christ is not an exchanged life but a grafted life, a life in which Christ lives in us, through us, by us, and with us—Rom. 11:24; 6:4-5; Gal. 2:20.
- B. The Lord Jesus lived *because of* the Father to express the Father as the Slave of God so that we might live *because of* Christ to express Christ as the slaves of God; food supplies us so that we can live *because of* its supply; to live *because of* the food, we must eat the food—John 6:57; 17:4; Phil. 1:19-21a; Gal. 6:17-18:
1. Because the Lord Jesus ate butter (typifying the richest grace) and honey (typifying the sweetest love) all the days of His life, He was able to choose the perfect will of God ("the good") and refuse anything other than this ("the evil")—Isa. 7:14-15, Darby's New Translation.
 2. The Lord Jesus enjoyed the Father as His supplying factor to express the Father and as His energizing factor to carry out the Father's perfect will—John 1:14-17; 5:19-20; 8:29; 16:32; 17:26; cf. Luke 2:12; Phil. 2:8.
 3. To live because of Christ as our food, we must eat Him daily as the heavenly butter, typifying the richest grace, and as the heavenly honey, typifying the sweetest love, so that He can be the supplying factor to live in us for His expression and the energizing factor to operate in us for His good pleasure—v. 13; Exo. 3:8; 1 Pet. 2:2; Ps. 119:103.
 4. The Lord's words that He speaks to us are spirit and life; when we eat, digest, and assimilate His words, His words *become to us* the gladness and joy of our heart (butter as the richest grace and honey as the sweetest love) to be the supplying and energizing factor of our obedience to God to flow out God—John 6:63; 7:38; Jer. 15:16, 19; Acts 20:32; Eph. 4:29; Isa. 55:11.
- III. We must be replaced with Christ by enjoying and ministering Christ to shepherd the church of God as a slave of God for the fulfillment of the dream of God, the eternal purpose of God—Acts 20:19, 28; Rom. 1:1; Gal. 6:17; Mark 9:7-8; Eph. 3:11:**
- A. Christ as the Slave-Savior did not come to be served, but to serve; as the great Shepherd of the sheep, He served us in the past, He still serves us in the present, and He is going to serve us in the future—Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26-27; 12:37; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:17; Gen. 48:15.
- B. Whenever we have a need, we can come to the Lord and let Him serve us so that He can serve others through us; as the life-giving Spirit, the Slave-Savior shepherds others through us by dispensing Himself as life into us so that we can become the channel for Him to dispense Himself as life into others—Matt. 26:13; John 13:12-17; 1 John 3:16; John 10:10b; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6.

- C. Our service to the Lord in this age, in time, is a preparation for our service to Him in the next age and in eternity—Matt. 25:21; Rev. 22:3:
 - 1. Our usefulness before God is the result of our being mingled with Him; the measure of God in us is the measure of our usefulness before Him—Col. 2:19; Heb. 13:20-21; Phil. 2:13.
 - 2. God's only goal in time is to dispense Himself into us day by day so that we may be fully mingled with Him; all of our service is a matter of God coming into us and coming out of us—John 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 3:2-3, 6, 16-18.

IV. We must be replaced with Christ as the Steward in God's house to make us dispensing stewards of the mysteries of God and of the varied grace of God for the carrying out of God's eternal economy, His household administration—1 Cor. 15:45; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 1 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 3:2, 9; 1 Pet. 4:10:

- A. We need to be replaced with Christ as the real and unique Nazarite to bless others with the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity—Num. 6:1-9, 22-27.
- B. Christ as the life-dispensing Spirit is the Steward in God's house, who dispenses His unsearchable riches into us for our beautification; then all the wealth, mingled with us as a miraculous structure of treasure, returns to Him for His glorification—Eph. 3:8, 16-21; 5:25-27; Gen. 24:2, 47, 53, 61-67.
- C. Christ, typified by Eliakim, is the Steward of God's house, dispensing Himself as the eternal wealth of God into us to become our universal replacement for His expression—Isa. 22:15-22; Gal. 2:20:
 - 1. God discharged everyone on the cross, and He is replacing everyone with Christ; when God created us, He hired us, and when He put us on the cross, crucifying us with Christ, He fired us—v. 20.
 - 2. Whatever or whoever is not Christ God fires; the real church life is a life in which all the saints are fired and replaced with Christ, making Christ everything in the church—Matt. 17:3-5; Heb. 10:5-10; Col. 2:16-17; 3:10-11.
 - 3. The self as the enemy of the Body replaces Christ, but Christ as the constituent of the Body replaces the self; we must exercise our spirit to lock up the self and unlock the riches of Christ so that we may be fully replaced with Christ—Matt. 16:21-27; Rev. 3:8; cf. Lev. 14:9.
- D. Joseph is a type of Christ as the shepherding life and as the dispensing Steward of the divine life supply—Gen. 37:2; John 10:11; 21:15-17:
 - 1. The reigning aspect of the mature life never condemns God's people; rather, it shepherds and appreciates them—Gen. 37:5; 39:12; 42:9.
 - 2. In order to receive food from Joseph, the people had to pay four kinds of prices: their money (convenience), their livestock (the means of living), their land (resources), and themselves; if we would receive and dispense the life supply from the Lord to shepherd the church of God as a slave of God, we must give Him our convenience, our means of livelihood, and our resources; the more we give Him, the more life supply we will receive from Him—47:14-23.
 - 3. Ultimately, in order to receive the best portion from the Lord, including food for satisfaction and seed for reproduction, we must hand over ourselves,

every part of our being, to Him for His building—Rom. 12:1; 6:13; 2 Cor. 5:14; cf. 1 Chron. 29:12-16.

4. We must have the realization that the Lord has purchased us, that we belong to Him, and that we have been married to Him; those who live in this atmosphere will breathe the heavenly air of holiness to be fully replaced with Christ for the building of the house of God—1 Cor. 3:9-17; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 11:2.