

SHEPHERDING THE CHURCH OF GOD AS A SLAVE OF GOD

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

Shepherding the Flock of God as a Slave of God by Coordinating with Christ in His Heavenly Ministry to Care for the Churches and Produce the Overcomers

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:12-13; 7:17; John 21:15-17; Zech. 10:1, 3b, 8, 12; 11:7; 1 Pet. 5:1-6

I. We must shepherd the flock of God as a slave of God by coordinating with Christ in His heavenly ministry to care for the churches and produce the overcomers—Rev. 1:12-13; John 21:15-17:

- A. Christ's heavenly priesthood is a speaking ministry; He speaks to God by interceding for us, and then He speaks to us to accomplish that for which He intercedes by ministering God into us—Heb. 7:25; 8:1-2.
- B. In His caring for the churches as the golden lampstands, the ascended Lord is the "walking Christ" and the "speaking Spirit"; by His walking in the midst of the churches, He gets to know the condition of each church, and then according to what He sees, He speaks to us—Rev. 1:13; 2:1, 7.
- C. The seven lampstands receive Christ's trimming and His infilling in His heavenly ministry so that all the saints in the churches might be metabolically and organically transformed with the aim of making them His overcomers:
 1. He takes care of the churches as the lampstands in His humanity as the Son of Man to cherish them by dressing the lamps of the lampstand (Exo. 30:7) and by trimming the wicks of the lampstand (25:38); He trims away religion (Rev. 2:9), worldliness (vv. 12-17), evil (vv. 20, 24), and lukewarmness (3:15-16) so that we may be His shining testimony (1:20; Matt. 5:14-16).
 2. As the High Priest, He takes care of the churches as the lampstands in His divinity with His divine love, signified by the golden girdle on His breasts, to nourish the churches and fill them with Himself as the golden oil (Zech. 4:12-14) for the shining testimony of Jesus (Rev. 1:13, 20); to eat the tree of life (2:7), to eat the hidden manna (v. 17), and to enjoy the Lord as the feast (3:20) are all His nourishing and infilling.
- D. While the Lord Jesus as the Ruler of the kings of the earth is arranging the world situation so that God's people may go on, He is also exercising His heavenly ministry to supply God's lovers and seekers with the heavenly riches, the divine element, so that they may be kept on an overcoming level to become pillars in the Triune God for His divine building—Acts 5:31; Rev. 1:5; 19:16; Rom. 8:28-29; Rev. 3:12; cf. 21:22.
- E. God's eternal covenant is to consummate the New Jerusalem by Christ's shepherding; we must enjoy Him to carry out His heavenly ministry by loving Him to the uttermost to shepherd His sheep—Heb. 13:20-21; John 21:15-17.

II. Jehovah's visiting His people was His coming to them in the man Jesus as the Slave-Savior (Matt. 1:23; Mark 10:45) to be the real Shepherd of His afflicted flock (Zech. 10:3b; Matt. 9:36; John 10:2-4, 11, 14); when we enjoy

the Lord's loving and shepherding visitation, our situation changes due to His cherishing and nourishing presence (Eph. 5:29):

- A. While the Lord is so favorable to us in His shepherding of us, we should ask Him to send us even more favor; since God is giving us showers of rain, we should ask Him for more rain, praying for His abundant blessing—Zech. 10:1.
- B. After being visited and touched by the Lord as the Shepherd, every weak sheep among God's people becomes a horse of majesty in battle—v. 3b.
- C. Often during our time of morning revival, the Lord whistles for us, calling us and gathering us to Him—v. 8.
- D. The Lord strengthens us in Himself so that we walk about in His name, that is, in His person as the reality of His name; to be in God's name is to be one with God in our daily walk by our living, walking, and having our being in God's name—v. 12; Col. 3:17.
- E. Jehovah as Jesus shepherds His flock with two staffs—one called Favor (referring to grace) and the other Bonds (referring to being bound into oneness); Jesus came as the Shepherd to feed God's flock with grace so that they would be bound together into oneness—Zech. 11:7; Eph. 4:3.

III. Christ as the Head of the church charged the apostles to appoint elders (overseers) in all the local churches to carry out the shepherding of His flock—1 Tim. 3:1-7; 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-6; Acts 20:28:

- A. The obligation of the elders in the churches is shepherding, as Christ did and as the gifted persons do (Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 5:2), and teaching to strengthen the shepherding and carry out its goal (1 Tim. 3:2b; 5:17).
- B. The elders shepherding the churches by taking the lead should not lord it over them, God's allotments to the elders, but should become patterns of the flock; they should gird themselves with humility to serve the saints—1 Pet. 5:1-6; cf. 2 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 20:26-28; 3 John 9-11.
- C. Their willing and faithful shepherding will be rewarded with the unfading crown of glory at the manifestation of the Chief Shepherd—1 Pet. 5:4.

IV. The redeemed saints from the nations, throughout all generations, those who constitute the church, will enjoy God's care and the Lamb's shepherding for eternity—Rev. 7:9-17; 5:9; Rom. 11:25; Acts 15:14, 19:

- A. This great multitude of redeemed ones has come out from the great tribulation suffered by God's redeemed people throughout the ages into a heavenly state, into the temple of God, where they serve Him day and night; their service is the issue of God's salvation—Rev. 7:9, 15.
- B. Christ is the tabernacle of God (John 1:14), and the New Jerusalem, as the ultimate enlargement of Christ, will be God's eternal tabernacle (Rev. 21:2-3), in which all God's redeemed ones will dwell with Him forever (v. 22); God will overshadow them with Himself as the One who is embodied in Christ; Christ, as the embodiment of God, will be their tabernacle (7:15).
- C. "For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes"—v. 17:

1. The Shepherd of God's flock is one of the sheep, the Lamb; this shows that the Lord comes down to our level, the level of the sheep, even the weak ones' level, to sympathize with us in our weaknesses and cherish us in His humanity—Heb. 4:15; cf. 2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22.
2. The Lord's shepherding includes His feeding, His nourishing us in His divinity; under the shepherding of Christ, "I will lack nothing"—Psa. 23:1.
3. "Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me / All the days of my life, / And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah / For the length of my days"—v. 6.