

Message One

**The Centrality and Universality of Christ
and
the Union of God and His People to Be a Universal Couple**

Scripture Reading: Micah 5:2; Joel 3:16-18; Amos 9:11;
Mal. 4:2; Hosea 2:19-20

- I. Like the Major Prophets, the Minor Prophets unveil that God's economy in His loving chastisement of Israel, in His governmental dealing with Israel, and in His judgment upon the nations issues in the manifestation of Christ as the centrality and universality in God's economy to bring in the kingdom, the age of restoration, which will usher the old and ruined universe into the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem—Micah 5:2; Joel 3:16-18; Amos 9:11; Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:21; Rev. 21:1-2:**
- A. World history is displaying the fulfillment of what was prophesied through the prophets; for twenty-seven centuries Israel has been suffering under a long, divine chastisement—Joel 1:4.
 - B. God's chastisement of Israel has been for the purpose that Christ would be manifested as everything, as the centrality and universality in God's economy; this manifestation will bring in the age of restoration—2:25; 3:16-18.
 - C. God is moving, working, and managing the world affairs to fulfill His eternal economy, that is, to make Christ everything to mankind for the bringing in of the kingdom, the age of restoration—Hosea 14:1-9; Amos 9:11; Micah 4:1-4.
 - D. The central point of all the prophets is Christ—Luke 24:27; John 5:39:
 - 1. God's intention, God's desire, makes Christ the centrality and universality in His economy—Col. 1:15-18.
 - 2. In the New Testament Christ is all and in all; in the new man Christ is everyone and in everyone, and thus the whole church is nothing but Christ—3:10-11; 1 Cor. 12:12.
 - E. The central thought of the Minor Prophets includes the following points concerning Christ:
 - 1. God will judge the world, and thus sinners should prepare to meet God—Joel 3:2a; Amos 4:12; Acts 17:31.
 - 2. Christ, as the eternally divine One, came to earth and was born to be human—Micah 5:2.
 - 3. Christ entered into death and resurrected from it for the extending of God's salvation to all the nations—Jonah 1:17; 2:10; 3:2.
 - 4. Sinners who repent and believe in Christ will be forgiven of their sins and justified by God to have the divine life so that they may walk in the divine light and become the mighty ones of Christ, sent with Him by God in Christ's second coming—Amos 4:12; Micah 7:8-9, 18-19; Hab. 2:4; Joel 3:11b.
 - 5. Christ will arise as the Sun of righteousness and come as the Angel of the covenant to reign in Zion and to shepherd Israel, and then the millennium of the restoration will be brought in—Mal. 4:2; 3:1; Micah 4:1-3, 7b; 5:4; Hosea 14:4-8; Rev. 20:4, 6; Matt. 19:28.

II. God's intention in His eternal economy is that He and His chosen people would be a universal couple—Hosea 1:2; 2:19-20; Jer. 2:2:

- A. The crucial emphasis of the revelation released by all the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi is that God wants to have an organic union with His chosen people—Hosea 2:19-20:
 - 1. In this union God is His people's life, and they are His expression; in this way, God and His chosen people become a universal couple—Rev. 22:17.
 - 2. Both the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets speak of God as the Husband and of God's chosen people as the wife; this thought is fully developed in the New Testament—Matt. 9:15; 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:2, 9-10.
- B. The entire Bible is a divine romance, showing that throughout the centuries God has had a romance with man; thus, the Bible is a record of how God courts His chosen people and eventually marries them—Gen. 2:21-24; S. S. 1:2-4; Isa. 54:5; 62:5; Jer. 2:2; 3:1, 14; 31:32; Ezek. 16:8; 23:5; Hosea 2:7, 19; Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9-10; 22:17:
 - 1. When we as God's people enter into a love relationship with God, we receive His life, just as Eve received the life of Adam—Gen. 2:21-22.
 - 2. It is this life that enables us to become one with God and makes Him one with us—John 3:3, 5-6, 15-16, 29-30.
 - 3. By loving the Lord as our Husband and thereby partaking of His life and nature, we become one with Him as His counterpart, enlargement, and expression—2 Cor. 11:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; John 3:15-16, 29-30.
 - 4. The divine romance is portrayed in the Song of Songs—1:2-4:
 - a. This book is a marvelous and vivid portrait, in poetic form, of the bridal love between Christ as the Bridegroom and His lovers as His bride in their mutual enjoyment in the mingling of His divine attributes with the human virtues of His lovers—vv. 15-16; 4:7, 10-15; 5:1-2; 6:4, 10.
 - b. According to Song of Songs, our relationship with the Lord should be very romantic; if there is no romance between us and the Lord Jesus, then we are religious Christians, not romantic Christians.
 - 5. Both the old and new covenants are espousal covenants; both the entire Old Testament and New Testament were written in this way—Jer. 2:2:
 - a. The entire Bible is God's courting word; as a whole, the Bible is a word of such a divine courtship—2 Cor. 11:2.
 - b. If we would keep God's courting word, we need a responsive, affectionate love for Him; this kind of responsive, affectionate love is depicted in Song of Songs, where we have a portrait of the love between the Beloved and His love—1:2-4; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; John 14:21, 23.
- C. God created man with the purpose of having a counterpart—Gen. 1:26:
 - 1. God is a lover, and He created man in the image of Himself as a lover so that man would love Him—Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 2:9.
 - 2. God created man according to His own being—Gen. 5:1-2:
 - a. God is loving, and He wants man to love Him—1 John 4:19.
 - b. In this way, there will be a mutual relationship of love between God and mankind, those created to be His counterpart—Rev. 22:17.
- D. God chose Israel to be His spouse—Hosea 2:19-20; Jer. 2:2; 31:3; Ezek. 16:8.

- E. In typology certain women in the Old Testament reveal that the church is the counterpart of Christ—Gen. 24:67; 41:45; Ruth 4:13; 1 Sam. 25:40-42; S. S. 6:13:
1. The church as the counterpart of Christ is typified by Eve as the counterpart of Adam; Eve's coming out of Adam typifies that the church comes out of Christ and has the life and nature of Christ—Gen. 2:21-24; Eph. 5:23-32.
 2. Rebekah typifies the church, as the counterpart of Christ, being chosen from the world—Gen. 24:67.
 3. Ruth typifies the church, as the counterpart of Christ, being redeemed—Ruth 4:13.
 4. Abigail typifies the church, as the counterpart of Christ, being the warring church in the midst of sufferings—1 Sam. 25:40-42.
 5. The Shulammitte typifies the church, as the reproduction and duplication of Christ, to match Him for their marriage—S. S. 6:13.
- F. When the Lord Jesus came, He came as the Bridegroom for the bride—John 3:29; Matt. 9:15:
1. The Lord Jesus regenerates the church so that the church may be His bride—John 3:3, 5-6, 29-30.
 2. The Lord is the Bridegroom with the divine life and the divine nature; if we would become His bride, we must also have the divine life and the divine nature—Matt. 9:15; 1:18, 20, 23; John 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4.
 3. Through regeneration we receive another life, the divine life; in this life and by this life we are qualified to become Christ's counterpart and to match Him—John 3:3, 5-6, 15, 29; Rev. 22:17.
- G. At the end of this age Christ will come to marry His redeemed and take her as His wife—19:7:
1. The present age is an age of "dating," courtship, and engagement between God and His people—2 Cor. 11:2.
 2. At the end of this dispensation there will be a glorious wedding day, at which time Christ will marry His redeemed ones—Rev. 19:7-9.
- H. At the very end of the Bible we see that God will enjoy a married life with His people in eternity and for eternity—21:9:
1. For eternity in the new heaven and new earth, the New Jerusalem will be the wife of the Lamb—v. 2; 22:17.
 2. This is the fulfillment of the divine romance revealed in the Scriptures—Jer. 2:2; Hosea 2:19-20; Rev. 19:7; 22:17.