

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Spring Term of 2023**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE TRUTH IN PAUL'S EPISTLES**

Message Three

**The Power and Characteristics of God Manifested in His Outward and Physical Creation
as a Picture of Our Experience of Christ as Life in His Inner and Spiritual New Creation**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:1-3, 26; Col. 1:15-18; Rom. 1:20; Psa. 19:1-3; Acts 14:15-17; 17:23-31

I. Genesis 1:1 speaks of God's original creation; the word *created* here means to bring something into existence out of nothing:

- A. In His creation God made three crucial, equally important items—the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man; the heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit that he may contact God, receive God, worship God, live God, fulfill God's purpose for God, and be one with God—Zech. 12:1; Gen. 2:7; John 4:23-24.
- B. In God's New Testament economy, whatever we are (Rom. 2:29; 8:5-6, 9), whatever we have (vv. 10, 16), and whatever we do toward God (1:9; 7:6; 8:4, 13; 12:11) must be in our regenerated spirit, which is the Spirit Himself joined to our spirit (8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17) as the key to God's organic salvation, which is our Christification to make us the same as He is for His glorification (John 17:1; Rev. 21:10-11).
- C. "In Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth,...all things have been created through Him and unto Him...And all things cohere in Him"—Col. 1:16-17:
 - 1. *In Him* means in the power of Christ's person; all creation bears the characteristics of Christ's intrinsic power; *through Him* indicates that Christ is the active instrument through which the creation of all things was accomplished in sequence; *unto Him* indicates that Christ is the end of all creation; all things were created unto Him for His possession.
 - 2. All things cohere, subsist together, in Christ as the holding center, just as the spokes of a wheel are held together by the hub at their center—v. 17.
- D. Christ as God is the Creator; however, as a man, sharing the created blood and flesh (Heb. 2:14a), He is part of the creation; because Christ is the Firstborn of all creation and the Firstborn from the dead, He has the first place in all things (Col. 1:15-18).

II. The created universe manifests the power and the characteristics of God and speaks forth Christ, the embodiment of God, as the Desire of all the nations (Psa. 19:1-3; Rom. 1:20; Acts 14:15-17; 17:23-31; Hag. 2:7); the all-inclusive Christ is the reality of all the positive things in the universe (Col. 2:16-17; *Hymns*, #496):

- A. "The invisible things of Him, both His eternal power and divine characteristics, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being perceived by the things made, so that they would be without excuse"—Rom. 1:20:
 - 1. The universe is the manifestation and declaration of God's glory—Psa. 19:1-3; cf. Exo. 28:2; Heb. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Cor. 10:31; Isa. 43:7; Rom. 9:23.
 - 2. The abundance of light in the universe shows that light is a divine characteristic, a divine attribute of the divine nature—James 1:17; 1 John 1:5; John 8:12; 1:1-4; Psa.

- 119:105, 130; Matt. 5:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 5:8-9; Col. 1:12-13; Luke 11:34-36; Isa. 2:5; 49:6; Acts 13:47; 26:18.
3. The greatness of the universe manifests the greatness of God—Titus 2:13; Micah 5:4; Isa. 33:21-22; Psa. 104:1-2; Heb. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:16-18; Phil. 1:20; *Hymns*, #17.
 4. The wonder of the universe with the arrangement and movement of the stars and the distinction of the four seasons manifests how wonderful God is; Christ as the embodiment of God is the wonder in the entire universe; thus, He, along with every item of what He is, is wonderful, incomprehensible, and mysterious—Isa. 9:6; Exo. 16:15; 1 Tim. 3:16; Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4; 5:32.
 5. The beauty of the universe such as mornings and evenings; flowers, grass, and trees; mountains and rivers; picturesque views—these and all the pleasant and inspiring scenery—are manifestations of God's beauty—Psa. 27:4; 48:2; 50:1-2; Isa. 60:7, 9, 19, 21.
 6. God's arrangement and preparation of the universe for mankind and His provision for man's every need show God's lovingkindness toward men—Acts 14:15-17; 17:23-31.
- B. Because the universe with the billions of things and persons in it was created for the purpose of describing Christ, He, in revealing Himself to His disciples, could easily find in any environment something or someone to serve as an illustration of Himself—Col. 1:15-17; Luke 1:78-79; John 1:1-3; 10:9-11; 12:24; Matt. 12:41-42; 6:28-29; Mal. 4:2.
- C. In the New Testament, Christ is the Spirit of reality who makes the untraceable riches of all that He is real to us, guiding us into Himself as the divine reality—John 14:6a; 1 John 5:6; John 14:17; 16:13.
- D. We need to enjoy Christ day by day as the reality of all our necessities—He is our breath (20:22), our drink (4:10, 14; 7:37-39a), our food (6:35, 57), our light (1:4; 8:12), our clothing (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:14), our dwelling place (Psa. 90:1; 91:1; John 15:5, 7a), and our pleasure, our enjoyment (Gen. 2:8-9; Psa. 36:8-9; 43:4; 100:1-5; Phil. 4:4).
- E. The elements of the reality of all the types are in the Spirit, and the Spirit transfuses and dispenses all these riches into us through the Lord's words—1:19; John 6:63; Col. 3:16; Eph. 6:17-18; Rev. 2:7.
- F. Our Savior, Jesus, is the Holy One, the eternal God, Jehovah, and the Creator of the heavens and the earth, who sits above the circle of the earth (Isa. 40:22, 25-26, 28a); as the Holy One, Jesus is unlimited, unsearchable, incomparable, and high (vv. 12-14, 17-18, 28b, 22a):
1. As our Creator, He does not faint and does not become weary; He gives power to the faint and multiplies strength to those who have no vigor.
 2. By waiting on Him as the eternal God, we will be renewed and strengthened to such an extent that we will mount up with wings like eagles and soar in the heavens—vv. 28-31; see footnote 1 on v. 31.
- G. In God's appearing to Job (Job 38:1-3), His intention was to show Job that he was nothing and that God is unlimited, unsearchable, and untraceable; God appeared to Job with the divine unveilings concerning His creation, including His created universe (vv. 4-38) and concerning the God-created animals (v. 39—39:30):
1. God appeared to Job by showing and speaking to Job about His creation in order to humble him and silence him (40:3-5); this implies that He wanted to help Job realize that he was nothing and that he knew nothing so that he would be emptied for some further seeking after God and could realize that what he was short of in his human life was God Himself.
 2. At the end of the book of Job, God came in to reveal Himself to Job, indicating that He Himself was what Job should pursue, gain, and express; eventually, Job gained God in his personal experience by seeing God—42:5-6.

3. In the New Testament sense, seeing God equals gaining God; the more we see God, know God, and love God, the more we abhor ourselves and deny ourselves—2 Cor. 3:18; Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23; 14:26.

III. The Spirit, the word, and the light were the instruments used by God to generate life on the first day of His restoration and further creation for the fulfillment of His purpose; the Spirit, the word, and the light are all of life—Gen. 1:1-5; Rom. 8:2; Phil. 2:16; John 8:12b:

- A. The history of the old creation typifies the path of our experience of life in the new creation; the deeper, intrinsic significance of the outward, physical world is a reflection of the reality of the inner, spiritual world; actually, God is building up a spiritual world with the transfigured Christ, the transformed Christ, as the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b.
- B. Christ as the Spirit is the reality of God—Rom. 8:9-10; 2 Cor. 3:17; John 16:13-15:
 1. The Spirit of God, as the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), came to brood over the waters of death in order to generate life, especially man, for God's purpose (Gen. 1:2; 2:7; 1:26).
 2. In spiritual experience the Spirit's coming is the first requirement for generating life—Deut. 32:11; Luke 15:8-10; John 6:63a; 16:8-11.
- C. Christ as the Word is the speaking of God—1:1; Heb. 1:2:
 1. After the Spirit's brooding, the word of God came to bring in the light—Gen. 1:3; 2 Cor. 4:6; cf. Psa. 33:9; 119:105, 130.
 2. In spiritual experience the coming of the word is the second requirement for generating life—John 5:24; 6:63b.
 3. "By faith we understand that the universe has been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not come into being out of things which appear"—Heb. 11:3.
 4. God speaks in the Son, and the Son upholds and bears all things by His instant word, the word of His power (1:1-3); when the Lord speaks, everything is in order.
- D. Christ as the light is the shining of God (Gen. 1:3-5; John 1:1, 4-5; 8:12a; 9:5); in spiritual experience the coming of the light is the third requirement for generating life (Matt. 4:13-16; John 1:1-13):
 1. In describing his conversion to Christ, Paul refers to Genesis 1:3 by saying, "The God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"—2 Cor. 4:6.
 2. God's shining in the universe produced the old creation; now His shining in the hearts of the apostles made them a new creation; what they did for Christ and what they were to the believers were the issue of God's shining; God's shining produces the new covenant ministers and their ministry—cf. Isa. 60:1, 5a; 2 Cor. 3:7-8, 15-18.

IV. The light-bearers appeared on the fourth day to produce the higher forms of life—Gen. 1:14-19:

- A. According to the revelation of the whole Bible, light is for life; light and life always go together—Psa. 36:9; Matt. 4:16; John 1:4; 8:12; 1 John 1:1-7.
- B. Life depends on light, and the higher the light, the higher the life:
 1. The indefinite light of the first day (Gen. 1:3) was sufficient for generating the lowest forms of life; the more solid and more definite light from the light-bearers—the sun, the moon, and the stars (v. 16; Psa. 136:7-9)—on the fourth day was necessary for producing the higher forms of life, including the human life.
 2. This signifies that for our spiritual rebirth, the light of the "first day" is sufficient; but for the growth in the divine life unto maturity, more and stronger light, the light of the "fourth day," is needed.

3. The light-bearers were for signs, seasons, days, and years (Gen. 1:14), which are all shadows of Christ (Col. 2:16-17); furthermore, when the light shines, the light rules, giving us the proper direction and discernment—Gen. 1:14, 16, 18; Eph. 5:8-13.
- C. The sun (Psa. 136:8) signifies Christ (Mal. 4:2; Luke 1:78-79; Matt. 4:16; Eph. 5:14); the overcoming saints were also likened to the sun by the Lord Jesus (Matt. 13:43).
- D. The moon (Psa. 136:9) can be considered a figure of the church, the wife of Christ (cf. Gen. 37:9; S. S. 6:10); the moon has no light of its own but shines in the night and reflects the light of the sun; likewise, the church shines in the dark night of the church age by reflecting the divine light of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; cf. Phil. 2:15-16a).
- E. The stars first signify Christ and then the overcomers; the light from the stars is needed particularly when the moon wanes; likewise, the shining of the overcoming saints as the heavenly stars is needed particularly in the time of the church's degradation—Num. 24:17; 2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 1:20; 22:16; Dan. 12:3.
- F. The shining of the divine light eventually produces the life that can express God in His image and likeness and can exercise dominion for God—Gen. 1:26:
 1. God's intention that man would express God in His image and represent God with His dominion is fulfilled not in Adam as the first man (1 Cor. 15:45a), the old man (Rom. 6:6), but in Christ as the second man (1 Cor. 15:47b), the new man (Eph. 2:15), comprising Christ Himself as the Head and the church as His Body (1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:12; Col. 3:10-11).
 2. This is completely fulfilled in the overcoming believers, who live Christ for His corporate expression (Phil. 1:19-26) and will have authority over the nations and reign as co-kings with Christ in the millennium (Rev. 2:26-27; 20:4, 6).
 3. It will ultimately be fulfilled in the New Jerusalem, which will express God in His image, having His glory and bearing His appearance (4:3a; 21:11, 18a), and also exercise God's divine authority to maintain God's dominion over the entire universe for eternity (v. 24; 22:5).