

Message Three

The Goodness of the Land—Its Food

Scripture Reading: Col. 1:12; Exo. 3:8; Deut. 8:7-10; 26:9

I. Christ, as the preeminent and all-inclusive One, is the allotted portion of the saints—Col. 1:12:

- A. The allotted portion refers to the lot of the inheritance, as illustrated by the allotment of the good land of Canaan given to the children of Israel for their inheritance—Josh. 14:1.
- B. The New Testament believers' allotted portion is not a physical land; it is the all-inclusive Christ as the life-giving Spirit—Col. 2:6-7; Gal. 3:14; 5:16; Rom. 8:4:
 - 1. The riches of the good land typify the unsearchable riches of Christ in different aspects as the bountiful supply to His believers in His Spirit—Deut. 8:7-10; Eph. 3:8; Phil. 1:19.
 - 2. By enjoying the riches of the land, the believers in Christ are built up to be Christ's Body as the house of God and the kingdom of God—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 14:17.
- C. Because we are practically joined to Christ as the reality of the good land and are enjoying His riches, God's eyes are upon us continually, causing us to enjoy God's presence and making us the object of His care—Deut. 11:12; Rev. 1:14; 5:6; 2 Chron. 16:9; Psa. 32:8.

II. The purpose of God's calling is to bring God's chosen people into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ, typified by the good land flowing with milk and honey—Exo. 3:8; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9:

- A. Milk and honey, which are the mingling of both the animal life and the vegetable life, are two aspects of the life of Christ—the redeeming aspect and the generating aspect—Deut. 8:8; 26:9; cf. John 1:29; 12:24:
 - 1. The redeeming aspect of Christ's life is for our judicial redemption, and the generating aspect of Christ's life is for our organic salvation—1:29; 12:24; Rev. 2:7; 22:14; Rom. 5:10.
 - 2. The symbols of the Lord's table signify the redeeming and generating aspects of Christ's life for God's complete salvation; thus, the good land has become a table, a feast for our enjoyment—Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:16-17.
- B. By enjoying Christ as the land of milk and honey, we will be constituted with Him as milk and honey—"Your lips drip fresh

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honey, my bride; / Honey and milk are under your tongue”—
S. S. 4:11a; 1 Pet. 2:2; Psa. 119:103.

III. The good land is a land of wheat, typifying the limited Jesus, the One who was incarnated, crucified, and buried—Deut. 8:8; John 12:24:

- A. In the midst of situations that limit us and press us, we may experience the Lord as a grain of wheat—vv. 24-26a; Rev. 1:9; Acts 16:7:
 - 1. When we contact the Lord in our limiting and restricting circumstances, we will realize that He is the infinite God who became a finite man and that there is power in Him to bear any kind of limitation—Phil. 4:13.
 - 2. Christ our life is within us as a grain of wheat to live the life of the incarnated One, the limited One; He is our life to make us willing to be limited and to die and be buried—Col. 1:27; 3:4.
 - 3. If we contact the Lord, we will experience Him as a grain of wheat, and in Him we will be content with our situation—Phil. 4:11-12.
- B. Paul considered himself the prisoner of Christ Jesus; apparently, Paul was confined in a physical prison; actually, he was imprisoned in Christ—Eph. 3:1; 4:1.
- C. Eventually, every faithful lover of Christ will be imprisoned not only by Christ but in Christ; the more we love Him, the more we will be in Him to such an extent that He becomes our prison where we can enjoy Him to the uttermost—Phil. 4:4.

IV. The good land is a land of barley, typifying the resurrected Christ—Deut. 8:8:

- A. Because barley ripens early, it is the firstfruits of the harvest—a type of the resurrected Christ—1 Cor. 15:20; Lev. 23:10.
- B. As the firstfruits, Christ has become the bread of life; hence, barley loaves signify Christ in resurrection as food to us—John 6:48; Deut. 8:9a:
 - 1. The number five signifies responsibility; this indicates that the resurrected Christ is able to bear responsibility—John 6:9.
 - 2. As we feed on Christ as the barley loaves, we become a loaf of barley to feed others with the Christ whom we have experienced—cf. Judg. 7:13-14.

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- C. In order to experience the wheat, the limited Jesus, we need to apply the barley, the unlimited Christ; we follow the limited Jesus in the power of the resurrected Christ—Heb. 13:12-13.
 - D. We can do all things in the One who empowers us because He is the resurrected and unlimited Christ—Phil. 4:13.
- V. The good land is a land of vines, typifying the sacrificing Christ, the Christ who sacrificed everything of Himself, and out of His sacrifice He produced new wine to cheer God and man—Deut. 8:8; Judg. 9:13; Psa. 104:15a:**
- A. Christ is the wine-producer, sacrificing Himself to produce wine to cheer God and others; if we contact the Christ typified by the vine and experience His sacrificing life, He will energize us to live a life of sacrifice, producing wine to make God and others happy—Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:2; 2 Cor. 1:24.
 - B. In ourselves we are not able to live a life of sacrifice, for our life is a natural life, a selfish life—Job 2:4; Matt. 16:25:
 - 1. If we contact the Lord and experience His sacrificing life, He will energize and strengthen us to sacrifice for God and for others—Phil. 4:13; Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:2.
 - 2. The more we experience Christ as the vine with His sacrificing life, the more we will be energized to sacrifice ourselves to make God and others happy:
 - a. We will be “drunken” with happiness, realizing that the happiest person is the one who is the most unselfish.
 - b. We will bring happiness to those who contact us, and we will bring cheer to God—2 Cor. 1:24; 5:13a.
- VI. The good land is a land of fig trees, signifying the sweetness and satisfaction of Christ as our supply—Deut. 8:8; Num. 13:23; Judg. 9:11:**
- A. Paul is a pattern of one who experienced and enjoyed the sweetness and satisfaction of Christ as his supply—Phil. 1:7, 18-19; 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:4, 10-13.
 - B. Although Paul’s desire was to depart and be with Christ, he was willing to remain in the flesh for the sake of the saints’ progress and joy of the faith—1:21-26:
 - 1. Through Paul as a channel, the saints could experience Christ and have the progress and joy of the faith—v. 25.

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2. Today there is an urgent need for channels of supply; if the saints are to experience Christ, someone must serve as a channel of supply.
- C. Paul was a partaker of grace, and he rejoiced in the Lord greatly; he was happy in the Lord, and his happiness did not diminish as time went by—v. 4; 2:2; 3:1; 4:4, 10.
- D. Through the Body Paul received the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; grace is God in Christ as our enjoyment conveyed to us through the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ—1:19; 4:23.

VII. The good land is a land of pomegranates, typifying the fullness of life, the abundance and beauty of life, and the expression of the riches of life—Deut. 8:8; Exo. 28:33-34; 1 Kings 7:18-20:

- A. Pomegranates and golden bells were on the bottom part of the high priest's robe, which signifies the church—Exo. 28:33-34.
- B. The church should be full of life in her humanity; this is the significance of pomegranates made of linen.
- C. The church has humanity for the expression of the fullness of life and also divinity for the sounding of the golden bells:
 1. The fullness of life is expressed in the church's humanity, but the voice of warning is expressed in the church's divinity (the golden bells)—v. 35.
 2. We first have the expression of the fullness of life and then the sounding of the golden bells, that is, the speaking from the divinity of the church.
 3. The beauty of life expressed in our humanity and the divine sounding from the golden bells are signs of a proper church life.
- D. The two hundred pomegranates surrounding the capitals at the top of the pillars in the temple signify the expression of the riches of life—1 Kings 7:18-20; 2 Chron. 3:15-16; Jer. 52:22-23; Rev. 3:12:
 1. Those who judge themselves (bronze) and regard themselves as nothing will be able to bear responsibility in full in the midst of an intermixed and complicated situation (nets of checker work and wreaths of chain work) because they live not by themselves but by faith in God (lily work); thus, they express the riches of life two hundredfold (pomegranates)—1 Kings 7:15-22.

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2. Out of every one hundred pomegranates, ninety-six were exposed to the open air, and four were covered—Jer. 52:22-23:
 - a. The expression of the riches of life is eternally complete, in the freshness of resurrection, and in the Spirit.
 - b. The fact that four of every one hundred pomegranates were hidden indicates that our natural being, our natural life, and our self must be concealed.
 - c. When our natural being disappears, we have the ninety-six pomegranates, the rich expression of the life of Christ in the reality of the spiritual air.

VIII. The good land is a land of olive trees, typifying Christ as the One who was filled and anointed with the Spirit—Deut. 8:8; Zech. 4:12:

- A. The olive tree's oil, typifying the Holy Spirit, is used to honor God and man—Judg. 9:9; cf. 1 Sam. 2:30:
 1. We cannot serve the Lord or help others without the Holy Spirit—Acts 6:3.
 2. In order to serve the Lord and help others, we must be filled with the Spirit; only when we are filled with the Spirit can we honor God and honor others.
- B. When we minister Christ to others, supplying them with oil, we are supplying them with God (gold)—Zech. 4:11-12:
 1. We all should be olive trees emptying God from ourselves into others.
 2. In this way oil will be provided to the needy ones by those who are olive trees out of which God is flowing.
- C. As Christians, we are olive trees, not in the sense of being separate trees but in the sense of being branches of Christ, the unique olive tree—vv. 11-12:
 1. Although Christ is the unique olive tree, out from Him many branches, many shoots, have issued forth; these branches, or shoots, are the many olive trees on earth today.
 2. As branches of Christ, the unique olive tree, we need to supply others with oil, that is, with the Spirit, so that they may be enlivened for God's unique testimony.