

Message Nine

**The Organic Building Up of the Church  
as the Body of Christ  
through the Process of Spiritual Metabolism  
according to the Believers' Inner Experience  
of the Indwelling Christ**

Scripture Reading: 2 Sam. 7:12-14a; Eph. 3:16-21

**I. Second Samuel 7:12-14a is the unveiling of a prophecy through typology showing us that we need God to build Christ into our intrinsic constitution so that our entire being will be reconstituted with Christ—Matt. 16:18:**

- A. God's eternal economy according to His heart's desire is to build Himself into man and to build man into Him (Eph. 3:16-17a); this mutual abode is the reality of the Body of Christ consummating in the New Jerusalem (John 15:4-5a; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:24; 4:13, 15-16; Rev. 21:3, 22).
- B. God's intention in His economy is to build Himself in Christ into our being—2 Sam. 7:12-14a; Eph. 3:17a; John 14:20; Gal. 4:19:
  - 1. God desires to work Himself in Christ into us; everything that Christ is and everything that Christ has accomplished are for this one thing—Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:17a; Col. 3:10-11.
  - 2. We need God to build Himself in Christ into our humanity, working Himself in Christ into us as our life, our nature, and our person—Eph. 3:17a.

**II. Ephesians 3:16-21 reveals that the Triune God has come into us to do a building work with Himself as the element and also with something from us as the material; this is illustrated by the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:**

- A. The Lord sows Himself as the seed of life into men's hearts, the soil, so that He might grow and live in them and be expressed from within them—v. 3.
- B. The seed is sown into the soil to grow with the nutrients of the soil; as a result, the produce is a composition of elements from both the seed and the soil—v. 23.
- C. We have within us certain nutrients created by God as a preparation for His coming into us to grow in us; God has created the human spirit with the human nutrients along with the human heart as the soil for the growth of the divine seed within us—1 John 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23; Col. 2:19:

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

Message Nine (continuation)

1. The rate at which we grow in life depends not on the divine seed but on how many nutrients we afford this seed; the more nutrients we supply, the faster the seed will grow and the more it will flourish—Psa. 78:8; Matt. 5:3, 8:
  - a. If we remain in our soul, in our natural man, there will not be any nutrients for the growth of the divine seed; but if we are strengthened into our inner man and if we pay attention to our spirit and exercise our spirit, the nutrients will be supplied and Christ will make His home in our heart—Eph. 3:16-17; Rom. 8:6; 1 Tim. 4:7.
  - b. If we are going to have the Lord as the seed of life grow within us to be our full enjoyment, we have to open to the Lord absolutely and cooperate with Him to deal thoroughly with our heart—Matt. 13:3-9, 19-23.
2. On the one hand, God strengthens us with Himself as the element, and on the other hand, we afford the nutrients; through these two God in Christ carries out His intrinsic building—the building of His home—in our entire being.
- D. According to the Bible, growth equals building; the Lord Jesus declared, “I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18); this building takes place by the growth of the divine seed within us (1 John 3:9; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 3:1, 6-9, 12; 16:13).
- E. God’s economy is to work Himself into us so that we may experience a metabolic process of spiritual digestion and assimilation that produces transformation as a gradual and intrinsic metabolic change in our natural life; this is for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—2 Cor. 3:18:
  1. In order for God’s building to take place, we need to receive, digest, and assimilate the organic, pneumatic Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit, as our spiritual food, drink, and breath—John 6:51, 57; 7:37-39; 20:22.
  2. When we enjoy Christ by eating, drinking, and breathing Him, a metabolic process, a spiritual digestion and metabolism, takes place within us, and Christ is constituted into our being; this inner metabolism is transformation, and transformation is the building—Rom. 12:2; Phil. 1:20-21; cf. Rev. 21:18; 4:3.
- F. The organic building up of the church as the Body of Christ through the process of spiritual metabolism is actually what Jehovah prophesied to David in the way of typology in 2 Samuel 7:12-14a.

Message Nine (continuation)

**III. In Ephesians 3:16-21 Paul prayed concerning the believers' inner experience of the indwelling Christ for the organic building up of the church as the Body of Christ—4:12, 16; 2:21-22:**

- A. Paul prayed to the Father that we would be strengthened through His Spirit into the inner man with the result that Christ could make His home in our heart and thereby occupy, possess, permeate, and saturate our whole inner being with Himself—3:16-17a.
- B. The Triune God may be likened to a big machine, of which Paul was the operator; we have to learn one lesson, that is, that there is a high principle in the entire universe; this principle is that God wants to do something, but He will only be the “machine,” and He needs someone to be the operator:
  - 1. When Paul prayed the prayer in Ephesians 3:16-21, he was a representative of the entire Body of Christ.
  - 2. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are the three “parts” of this universal “machine,” and the Body is the operator; when we pray this prayer as the operator, the Father works through His Spirit as a channel to strengthen every part of our inner being into the inner man so that the goal, the aim, the Son, might make His home within all the parts of our heart.
- C. To say that we need to be strengthened with power into the inner man indicates that we are not in the inner man, that we live mostly in the outer man—v. 16; 1:19-22; 3:20.
- D. Christ has the desire to occupy every room of our heart:
  - 1. The phrase *make His home* is only one word in the Greek, *katoikeo*, which basically means to settle down in a dwelling, to make a dwelling place, and the prefix of this word, *kata*, means “down”—v. 17a.
  - 2. As Christ makes His home deep down in our hearts, we are being rooted in love for God’s farm and grounded in love for God’s building—v. 17.
  - 3. As He makes His home in our hearts, we will be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints the immeasurable Christ, whose dimensions are the dimensions of the universe—v. 18:
    - a. Our experience of Christ in the church must be three-dimensional, like a cube (the breadth, length, height, and depth), and must not be one-dimensional, like a line.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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- b. Both in the tabernacle and the temple, the Holy of Holies was a cube—Exo. 26:2-8; 1 Kings 6:20.
  - c. Eventually, the New Jerusalem, God's building, will be an eternal cube, the Holy of Holies, twelve thousand stadia in three dimensions—Rev. 21:16.
4. Christ's making His home in our hearts causes us to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ that we may be filled unto all the fullness of the Triune God for His corporate expression, His glorification—Eph. 3:19-21; cf. Gen. 24:47, 53, 61-67.
- E. Christ builds the church by building Himself into us, that is, by entering into our spirit and spreading Himself from our spirit into our mind, emotion, and will to occupy our entire being—2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 3:17a:
1. Since our heart is the totality of our inward parts, the center of our inward being, and our representative with regard to our inclination, affection, delight, and desire, when Christ makes His home in our heart, He controls our entire inward being and supplies and strengthens every inward part with Himself.
  2. The more Christ spreads within us, the more He settles down in us and makes His home in us, occupying every part of our inner being, possessing all these parts, and saturating them with Himself.
  3. In order for Christ's word in Matthew 16:18 concerning the building up of the church to be fulfilled, the church must enter into a state where many saints will allow Christ to make His home deep in their heart, possessing, occupying, and saturating their entire inner being.
  4. The more Christ occupies our inner being, the more we will be able to be built up with others in the Body—Eph. 2:21-22; 4:12, 16.
  5. Ephesians 3:17 speaks of being rooted and grounded in love; our being rooted indicates that we are plants that need to grow, and our being grounded means that we need to be built up.
  6. According to verse 18, we are eventually full of strength to apprehend the universal dimensions of Christ—the breadth, the length, the height, and the depth—not by ourselves individually but “with all the saints,” that is, corporately and jointly; this reveals that we need to be built together.

FIRST AND SECOND SAMUEL

Message Nine (continuation)

7. When Christ makes His home in our hearts, we will be filled unto all the fullness of God; this fullness is the church, the Body of Christ, as the corporate expression of the Triune God—v. 19.
  8. God's glory is wrought into the church, and He is expressed through the church above all that we ask or think; hence, God is glorified in the church—vv. 20-21.
- F. Ephesians 3:16-21 shows Paul's spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith:
1. By revelation the mystery of Christ was made known to Paul (vv. 3-6); thus, his spirit and attitude—what he saw, what he said, and what he cared about in his heart—were related to the vision of the building up of the church as the Body of Christ through the inner experience of the indwelling Christ.
  2. Paul was obsessed with this vision, and it became his spirit and attitude; therefore, he had such a prayer (in the sphere and element of faith) recorded in Ephesians 3:16-21; if we have seen the vision of how Christ builds up the church as the Body of Christ through the inner experience of the indwelling Christ, we will have Paul's spirit, attitude, prayer, and faith when we serve God in the church.