

# **The Calling and the Journey**

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## **Part 1**

### **The Calling and Journey of the Saint**

The Christian calling is a call to the Person of Jesus Christ. The journey that emerges from that calling is an ongoing experiencing of Christ. Thus, in a very real sense of the word, the Christian calling and the Christian journey are ONE thing -- because they are both a matter of God apprehending believers for His eternal purpose in His Son. We are called into a purpose of God that begins HERE -- but is to extend on out throughout the eternal ages.

Christianity is, at the core, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) When you and I are called to God -- and we answer that call and put our faith in Jesus Christ -- He joins us to Himself and we are made one with Him in spirit. (I Cor. 6:17) That is HOW Christ dwells in us. And it is then that the JOURNEY begins. And that journey in Christ – that purpose to which we are called – is that God would reveal Christ in His people.

### **Separation of Soul and Spirit**

When we are saved it was because we were joined to the Lord and made one SPIRIT with Him. Thus, right from the start we are one with Christ – and so our journey with Christ is as certain as our oneness with Him.

Note: We are made one SPIRIT with Him – we are not joined to the Lord and made one SOUL or one BODY with Him. This is a vital Truth to see.

At the point of our salvation – that is – at the point of our new birth – we know very little about being a new creation. We know very little about

experiencing Jesus Christ. What we do know is how to live governed by the SOUL and BODY. But the flesh wars against the spirit. Therefore, if we are to overcome, we have to grow to know Jesus Christ and come to be governed by HIM.

This will require the work of the Cross. We will need to pick up our Cross so that the power of the natural man is broken – broken, not eradicated – and so that once broken, we can be free to governed by Christ.

Each believer has this division of soul and spirit within – each has two natures, the old and the new. Much of what God is doing as we journey in Christ is to crucify us with Christ so as to deal with the old nature or flesh. Then there can be a great release of the life of Christ from within.

We will see more about the necessity of the work of the Cross as we go along.

### **Realizing Christ**

Paul states the purpose of God in the believer many places in the NT. For example, Galatians 4:19 says that God desires to, “form Christ,” in us.

***My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you. (Gal. 4:19)***

That Greek word translated, “formed,” means, “to inwardly realize and express.” So, once Christ is in us through our being joined to Him in spirit, God wants to bring us into an inward realization of His Son -- into an inward knowing, experiencing, and expression of Christ. This, above all else, is what constitutes the Christian journey.

This is the same Truth as written by Paul in Romans 8:29:

***For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8:29)***

Again, a look into the Greek helps here – the phrase, “conformed to the image of His Son,” would be better stated as, “formed together with His Son.” Thus, the Christian life is not a matter of God making us to, “look like Jesus.” It is not a matter of God acting upon us and doing stuff to us by His spirit, so that we might look like Jesus and become a xerox copy of Him. That is not Christianity. Rather, the purpose of God is to reveal Christ in us – to bring us into an inward realization of Him that will, if we will embrace God’s revelation of Christ -- renew our minds. We will decrease that He might increase. The result, rather than make us, “look like Jesus,” will be that the Jesus Christ who is in us will have the freedom to live and move both in us and through us.

It is vital to see the difference between merely, “looking like Jesus,” and Jesus Christ actually living through us. Religion can make us, “look like Jesus.” Law and principles might be able to achieve some of that. But for Jesus to be able to live through us – that requires a work of the Cross in us; it requires that we are crucified with Christ – so that His life might grow to manifest through our crucified flesh.

Jesus Christ cannot be manifested through UNCRUCIFIED flesh. The only way in which the

Christ who is within a believer can be manifested is if we bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus. (see II Cor. 4:10-11) Then His life within can come out THROUGH us. But then the source of life will be Christ Himself with Whom the believer is united. But uncrucified flesh – especially uncrucified religious flesh – will take aspects of religion and try to use them to mold religious flesh into the image of Christ. The source of such a, “life,” will not be Christ, but the natural, soul man. The person may seem to, “look like Jesus,” by practicing a form of Christianized religion. But it is not Christ. It is not life.

Here again we see the essential of being crucified WITH Christ. Paul knew that Jesus Christ died FOR him. Yet He wrote we must be crucified WITH Christ:

***I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)***

***But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. [We are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (II Cor. 4:8-11)***

Being united with Jesus Christ in spirit not only saves us, but it puts us on a journey – a journey of experiencing all that Christ is and all that Christ has done. Indeed, if we are united with Christ in spirit we are united with Him in both His death and His resurrection. Death is already pronounced upon the old man in Adam. But that needs to be worked out. And Christ Himself is our life. Thus, to experience Him, the power of both His death and resurrection must be at work in us – which is exactly how Christ is able to come to live through us.

Regarding the work of the Cross, Jesus Himself said, “If anyone would come after Me.....” His words clearly mean our Christian journey is one that will follow after Christ. And He described that journey:

***If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)***

So we see that our calling is not to any experience. It is not unto a religion about Christ; not unto doctrines. No. We are called unto the Person of Jesus Christ. And our journey is to come into an inward realization of Him; into an experiencing of Him – so that He might be manifested through His people.

Now, that is what God wants to do in and through the believer. But it is not merely for the individual. No. It is for God’s glory. It is for the benefit of the entire Body of Christ.

To begin with, in this age, by virtue of our oneness with Christ, God wants us to grow to be extensions of Christ -- to bring God glory. He wants us to live as extensions of Christ -- to be His witnesses in this world. But when the end of the age arrives, and we are raised physically with glorified bodies, then all of this becomes eternally revealed. We are to be extensions of Jesus Christ throughout the eternal ages -- and used of Him in authority and in power. An extension of Christ – which is another way to say we are members of Christ – is always directed by the Head. We will not be, “independent contractors.” We will forever be those who are in Christ and live from out of Him to do His will.

### **God Calls to Christ**

If you look up the Greek word in the New Testament, which is most often translated, “calling, called, or called out,” you will find that in that word there is the idea of, “invitation.” There is no sense in which this word can mean, “unconditional election,” in the way that is defined by the heresy of Calvinism. Calvinism states that God has already chosen who will be saved and who will not – and that a person’s response is based on whether God has chosen them to be saved. Indeed, Calvinism actually teaches that, “regeneration precedes faith” – that is, people believe ONLY because God has already saved them by election, and people don’t believe because God has chosen NOT to save them by election. Such nonsense would do away with all sense of God truly CALLING someone to Christ. Any CALLING, in that case, would be a façade – just a matter of going through the motions of what God has already decided.



No. When God calls someone, He does so by revealing light and Truth in Christ -- and the person SEES. They see at least enough to turn to Christ. They see that their very salvation is involved -- but it is an invitation -- in the sense that they can either embrace it or refuse it. There is nothing unconditional about it.

A calling to Christ is an invitation to Christ. Just as Jesus said in John 6:44, "No one can **come to Me** except the Father who sent me **draw** him." He did not say, "All must come to Me whom the Father has already regenerated, and no one else can come to Me because the Father has not already regenerated them." No, for in that case the person would not be coming to Christ for salvation -- they are coming to Christ because they are already saved by election -- and therefore coming to Christ does not save them! Thus, we see that the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election -- the Calvinistic doctrine of, "regeneration before faith" -- is a denial of Jesus Christ as the Savior? A person comes to Christ because they are first elected and regenerated. One wonders why they would need to come at all?

It is true that Jesus clearly stated that the ability of a person to come to Him is dependent upon the Father drawing them. But the person must nevertheless still COME TO CHRIST. And they can refuse. Can we see that? God brings light -- God draws them to Christ. But this is so that they can COME -- and they must respond to the drawing of them to Christ by COMING to Him by faith. In short, God does the drawing. The believer does the coming by faith -- enabled by God's drawing.

That word, “invitation,” carries an eternal seriousness and significance. Sometimes, when you read a word like, “invitation,” it almost sounds like it is ok if you do accept, and ok if you don’t. But we need to realize that an invitation to Christ carries eternal consequences. It cannot be revoked. Once you see the light and the Truth that Jesus Christ is your salvation, and that He alone is Savior -- and once you have been convicted of your sin -- you can’t go back and say that you have NOT seen. No, you HAVE seen – indeed, your eyes have been opened by God Himself. Thus, you are accountable for ultimately choosing one or the other -- light or darkness; Christ or yourself -- and your eternal destiny depends on which choice you make.

### **Called Into a Person**

***Paul, called [to be] an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes [our] brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called [to be] saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: (I Cor. 1:1-2)***

The Truth of the Christian calling was continually on the mind of Paul. That is because he knew that the CALLING is not merely an event that happens and is over with. Rather, He knows that we are called into a JOURNEY – which means that the journey is the outworking of the calling.

Paul brings this fact home again and again to the Corinthian church. The Corinthian church was a church that had all kinds of horrible problems. The main problem was their bypassing of Christ crucified and risen – in favor of living a

Christianity in the soul realm. If you read this epistle, this rears its ugly head in one form or another. It certainly reared its ugly head in the form of open immorality – an immorality which they celebrated. They celebrated it, I am sure, because they thought that tolerating immorality was being forgiving and loving. This is how it registered in their emotions and soul life – howbeit completely contrary to Jesus Christ.

Likewise, in this epistle, you will see that instead of going to God with their problems, they sued each other. You will likewise find that they abused spiritual gifts -- and turned them into a circus. They exalted the gifts as things unto themselves. You will find that they had issues and misunderstandings about marriage. They were confused about whether a wife could go directly to God for herself instead of needing to walk with Christ through her husband. You will also find that they were in the soul realm with regard to participation with each other in Christian communion. All of these things were evidence that they had been deceived into abandoning Jesus Christ in favor of a Christianity that was lived from out of themselves -- based on the soul realm and natural, religious man.

This is why Paul begins right from the start of the epistle to bring Jesus Christ crucified front and center. The soul life must be broken. Believers need to become crucified with Christ so that He can be our life.

***For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us***

***which are saved it is the power of God...But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. (I Cor. 1:17-24)***

***For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (I Cor. 2:2)***

The further away you get from the Person of Jesus Christ as our life – and the necessity of the Cross -- the further you're going to get into the soul realm and into deception. This is exactly why there is so much deception in the church today. You have entire movements that are based on the soul realm -- millions of people who are otherwise sincere accepting psychic and emotional experiences as being of God. Why? Because they have been taught that emotions and psychic experiences are of God – and because those counterfeits are able to find a home IN THEM.

Living from out of the soul realm – and accepting it as the spirit of God – can lead people into some very dark places. For example, there are people claiming to have had all manner of incredible experiences. Some of them say that they died, went to heaven, saw Jesus, and came back. Others claim they have seen Jesus face to face – claim He has personally appeared to them and talked with them. All of it is a bunch of baloney and scripture says so. We need to come to terms with that.

I recognize that there are people who would swear up and down on a stack of Bibles that they

had those experiences and that they were real. The real question is: At what point are we going to believe scripture and put away our experiences -- no matter how real they may seem? How many understand that ALL deception seems real? That ALL deception is presented as TRUTH? That is why deception is able to deceive – it seems REAL! It seems TRUE. It will FEEL that way to the natural man. How many understand that the most powerful deceptions ever devised by Satan are going to seem true to those who are deceived? How could it be otherwise?

The deceptions of Satan are constituted in such a way as to appeal to, match, feed, and use our natural, psychic man. As such, those tactics of Satan are going to SEEM right. They are going to SEEM true. There will be a sense of correctness present in them -- in a disguised psychic manner – because the deception corresponds to something in our natural man. If you add in a Christian environment, you can have incredible deception, all in the name of Jesus Christ. But what is behind it all is of Satan.

There are people who have spent their entire lives claiming to be born again believers -- and yet what they believe is absolutely contrary to the Truth. It is possible to see visions, have psychic experiences, feelings, and even seem to be manifesting spiritual gifts – but for ALL of it to be in the soul or psychic realm. Much of it can be emotionalism that is passed off as spiritual. You can also have a Christian life based on intellectualism -- which is of no more value than one based on emotionalism. The terrible possibilities of deception are endless once a person is living out from the psychic realm – for it is the point of access for Satan.

What is the solution? What is the protection? We might say to adhere to scripture. But while that would be right, anyone who is deceived and living in these errors is going to read INTO the Bible their experiences, and are going to claim they already follow scripture. For the problem is not that they merely have wrong theology. No. The problem is that they are governed by a lying spirit. And worse, there is something IN THEM that has given place to it.

The solution is to repent, and to begin allowing God to take us on the journey that He desires – that we might come into an inward realization and experiencing of Christ. If we know Christ we will repent and be set free from those dimensions in our own heart that could give place to error, and we will know error when we encounter it. Knowing the Truth in Christ is the only way to know and oppose the error.

This is all very much part of our calling. We are called to a Person -- and our journey is to be in, and with, and out from, that Person. The journey is not a bunch of experiences apart from Him. The journey is to be in Him. Everything that God is doing, in the Christian life and journey, is all geared into bringing us into an inward realization and revelation of Jesus Christ. It is all geared to that because that is God's purpose.

### **Paul, Called to be an Apostle**

Let's get back to 1 Corinthians 1:1-2. As we saw above, Paul says of himself, "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ."

That alone tells us plenty. Paul did not decide one day to appoint himself to be an apostle. There are a lot of people out there today who have done that. There are people who have appointed themselves to be a pastor. They say they, “felt God’s calling to the ministry,” or that, “God spoke to them,” etc. But you never once find in scripture that this is how God calls anyone into ministry. In scripture, the person is called to CHRIST. Then as they experience Him and walk with Him – as they are crucified with Him -- it becomes apparent that they have a particular spiritual gift. They don’t try to be a pastor. It is simply who they are in Christ. True ministry is not, “official,” or the product of getting a degree. It is not because other people have input. Indeed, the person themselves has no input. The gift is there through the new birth – and it emerges as Christ emerges.

Now, of course, even all of that can be mimicked by religious flesh. There are people who have always wanted to be looked to by others in the church – they are controlled by religious pride. They lust after that. And because they are not crucified with Christ they continue to live from out of themselves and what they want. Therefore, it is only natural that they say God has called them. But it is really their own natural inclinations, or ambitions, or pride that is calling them.

The true spiritual gifts are GIVEN. They are built into the new creation – and they emerge in a person as Christ is manifested through that person. They are not dragged down from heaven by religious flesh because a person wants to be a minister. They are not found in the natural birth as the source. That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.

## **The Saints and Sanctification**

Paul said that he was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the WILL OF GOD. He said he was writing these things unto the brethren at the church of Corinth – “to them which are sanctified by Jesus Christ” – “called to be saints.” Herein we see both the calling and the journey. Believers are called to Christ – called to be saints; called to be sanctified. This leads us to an important term.

The word translated, “saint,” in the Greek is the same word that is translated, “sanctified.” Both are found in this verse. They both come from exactly the same root Greek word, “hagios.”

“Hagios,” is the term God uses the most in scripture to refer to Christians. “Hagios,” is translated SAINT, or SAINTS – and therefore the English term used the most in the Bible to refer to believers is SAINT. And, “hagios,” or SAINT, means, “to belong to God.” Thus, a saint is one who belongs to Jesus Christ.

You will note that Paul says, “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified (root, hagios) in Christ Jesus, called [*to be*] saints (hagios).”

Here we see both the calling and the journey. Believers are called to BE SAINTS – but the journey of a SAINT into Christ is sanctification -- a saint is one who is continually being sanctified in Jesus Christ. In other words, a saint is one who is called to belong to Christ, and the journey is one wherein that reality is worked out, experienced, and lived.



The word commonly translated HOLY in scripture is likewise HAGIOS. Thus, the saints are, “holy ones.” Sanctification is a matter of be made more and more holy – of coming to more and more belong to God. Paul states this directly to the church at Ephesus.

***Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly [places] in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. (Eph. 1:3-4)***

It is here that we must refer back to the earlier discussion – we are not made, “to look like Jesus.” Rather, we are brought to the place where Christ can live through us. This is true sanctification. Sanctification is not ME being made holy – as a condition unto myself. No. Sanctification is Christ – it is me belonging to Christ to the point where He can live through me. Christ is the personification of sanctification in the believer.

***That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord. (I Cor. 1:29-31)***

Have we realized that what we might call, “Christian character” – if it is real – is Christ? Real Christian character is sanctification – and to the extent that Christ is seen in a believer that believer has been sanctified in Christ. The same

Truth applies to RIGHTEOUSNESS. Paul does not say in this verse that God imputes to us righteousness because of Christ. No. Rather, He says that Christ IS our righteousness. In short, God has not given us THINGS because of Christ. Rather, God has given us Christ Himself who IS all things in the believer. Sanctification is Christ. And if we manifest Him we are sanctified.

As we have seen, Christ wants to live THROUGH us. That is a difficult concept for most of us. Most of us try to visualize Christ living through us, or we try to make it happen. But we cannot know much of that until we get there – until God brings us to that point in our realization of Christ. Indeed, all of those efforts must be put aside by the work of the Cross. The work of the Cross will make us less and less preoccupied with ourselves, and more and more preoccupied with Christ. This is an essential if Christ is to live through us. But can we see that this is not merely a doctrine? It is an experiencing of Christ – there is simply no other way to be set free from our continual preoccupation with ourselves into the freedom of Christ as our life. God must bring us to the place where we abandon ourselves to Christ – lose ourselves to Him by faith. We can know the teaching – but that will not get us far until we know Christ.

Someone once said that those who manifest Christ the most are the ones who are least aware of it. That is the Truth. Why? Because as stated, in order to manifest Christ we must be set free from preoccupation with SELF. We won't be continually monitoring ourselves to see whether Christ is there – to see whether we are manifesting Him. No. We will be preoccupied with Him. And as we leave ourselves alone into

His hands, and live by faith from out of Him, He will be seen. We won't have to try to manifest Him; we won't have to try to look like Jesus, or do as Jesus would do – in the sense of keeping laws or in the sense of walking in a religious system. No. As Christ is revealed IN US – we will abandon ourselves – and He will be manifested through us. He is the Vine and we are the branches. How much effort does a branch put forth in order to bear the fruit of the Vine? None. The branch simply abides – lives in and out from – the Vine.

None of this is the result of walking in a religion. None of it can become real by following some creed or statement of faith. No. All of it is possible only by coming into a realization of Jesus Christ – by experiencing Him and the reality of His death and resurrection. It is really what the JOURNEY in this age is all about. It is the JOURNEY that begins with the new birth – the birth that is from above.

A saint does not belong to themselves – the very term; the very definition of the word SAINT means that. We are not our own, we are bought with a price, and that being the case, there is a process of sanctification which is undertaken -- which we call, “the journey.” That journey is intended to make our relationship with Christ something we actually experience. That journey, in the end, will result in the believer magnifying and manifesting Christ from the inside out unto God's glory. So, we are called to be saints and are on a journey of sanctification whereby Christ is to be revealed in and through us.

## **Grace and Truth**

We have read at the beginning of I Corinthians that Paul is addressing those who are sanctified in Jesus Christ -- called to be saints – and then adds:

***Who in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord...peace be unto you and grace from God the Father and from the Lord, Jesus Christ. (I Cor. 1:2-3)***

You will find this same greeting at the beginning of almost every epistle of Paul. He always mentions the blessing as coming from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ -- those two are always mentioned – the Father and The Son. Paul then adds here, “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given to you by Jesus Christ.” That is quite a generous statement, given the irreverence and sin at Corinth. But God always does extend grace. God is a redemptive God.

John the apostle echoes these thoughts. He writes, “Grace and Truth came in Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17) How many understand that there is NO grace that God has to give except it be in His Son? Jesus, in fact, is the very personification of the grace of God given to us. No wonder this Truth is included in so many of those salutations to the churches.

## **The Testimony or Evidence Who is Jesus Christ**

Paul continues in I Corinthians 1:

***I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and [in] all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. (I Cor. 1:4-6)***

“The testimony of Christ in you,” is, “Christ Himself in you.” His presence in the believer is THE testimony or evidence of God in Christ. John the apostle writes:

***If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (I John 5:9-11)***

The words translated, “witness,” and, “record,” in this passage are exactly the same word often translated, “testimony.” It could also be translated EVIDENCE. Jesus Christ in the believer is the evidence of God Himself.

Note that Paul says that the believer is, “ENRICHED in Christ in all utterance and knowledge.” In other words, it is through an ongoing realization of Jesus Christ that the believer’s mind is renewed and that the believer is able to KNOW and SPEAK the Truth.

So, thus far Paul has reminded the Corinthians that Christ is in them – that they are one with Christ in spirit. He has reminded them that they are called to be SAINTS – called to belong to

Christ. And He has reminded them that this means that they are on a journey in Christ for the purposes of God. He begins this letter with those statements because, "Christ in them," is the basis for everything he wants to reestablish as their foundation – a foundation they had forsaken. He wants them to return to Christ as their life by faith.

Jesus Christ dwells in the believer. It is to Him that we are called. And it is IN HIM that we journey. This is the basis for all – and He is the evidence for all -- that is called Christianity.

### **Expecting the Revelation of Christ**

***So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, [that ye may be] blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God [is] faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. (I Cor. 1:7-9)***

Paul has just told them that, "the testimony," of Jesus was confirmed in them, meaning that the PRESENCE of Jesus was confirmed in them. Again – this is quite an encouragement for a wayward church. But now he goes on to say that Jesus Christ will continue to confirm them unto the end – blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This passage is easily misunderstood as referring to the Second Coming of Christ. It speaks of WAITING for, "the coming of the Lord." But here the Greek once again helps. The word, "waiting," ought to be translated, "expecting." And the word, "coming," ought to be translated,

“revelation.” So, this is not a matter of waiting for the second coming. Rather, it is an exhortation to expect an inward realization of Jesus Christ.

That interpretation harmonizes completely with the context. He has told them that the presence of Jesus Christ in them was confirmed – and that it shall continue to be confirmed. How? By a continual inward realization of Christ IN THEM. That is the revelation that they are told to expect. We are to expect that this ongoing journey in Christ is going to result in a continual revelation of Christ in the believer. This will happen unto the end of this age, and indeed, into the next age.

Paul wraps up his greeting in verse nine by saying:

***God is faithful, by Whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. (1 Cor. 1:9)***

So there you have again, a tremendous overall summary as to the journey. You are called to Christ, but you are called into fellowship with Christ. That is simply another way of the Christian journey.

## **Part 2**

### **Types and Shadows in the OT**

We could read through the New Testament and obviously find many other scriptures that talk at length about the Christian calling and journey. There are certainly plenty of them in 1 Corinthians. This Book has one of the highest occurrences of the word, “calling,” as in, “Christian calling,” among the books of the Bible. But what I want to do is turn to an Old Testament account which illustrates both the CALLING and the JOURNEY. The story of which I am speaking is the one about Israel’s deliverance from Egypt -- and their journey, after they were called of God, through the Red Sea, through the wilderness, and into the Promised Land.

How many understand that this account of Israel’s calling and journey is a type and shadow of the Christian journey?

This account contains Truth intended to give us some understanding as to why God does what He does in our lives -- why this or that has to happen -- why it may be His will for us. Accounts like this are given to us, according to the apostle Paul, as examples (see I Cor. 10:11) -- examples we can read in the Bible -- that are similar to the perplexing experiences we go through as believers. It is always encouraging, is it not, if we are in an experience we do not understand -- perhaps a difficult thing where we can’t seem to get an answer from God -- maybe even for a long time -- it is always encouraging to be able to go into the Bible and discover that that kind of experience is normal for one walking with God. It provides much encouragement to know that David, or Moses, or Abraham, went through years



where they had to walk with God without answers. How about Job? He went through a horrible trial – and yet all within the purpose of God for him. It is encouraging to see that these others had the same difficult journey because it tells us that we are not deceived or off the track simply because we are suffering – and God is silent. No, this is the JOURNEY. It is NORMAL for one who is on that journey in Christ.

So, let's turn to Exodus 12. Let's begin with the first Passover. Israel, as we know, was in captivity to Egypt. They were slaves. Indeed, there was no one in Israel, at this point in Exodus 12, who knew anything BUT slavery. They were all BORN into captivity – indeed, slavery was NORMAL for them. Yet, God had given them a promise – He had promised them that there would be a deliverer. They would be set free. And now that time had come.

### **The Calling of Israel From Out of Bondage**

In Exodus 12, the Lord speaks to Moses when Israel was still in slavery in Egypt. God says:

***Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth [day] of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of [their] fathers, a lamb for an house...Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take [it] out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike [it] on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they***

***shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; [and] with bitter [herbs] they shall eat it. (Ex. 12:3, 5-8)***

In summary, God is commanding Israel to have each household kill a lamb, and smear the blood of that lamb on the door posts, and on the upper part of the doorway. Each household was to follow these instructions. That lamb was the Passover lamb -- and this was the first Passover.

These instructions were a matter of life and death, as God makes clear as He continues speaking to Israel through Moses:

***For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I [am] the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye [are]: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy [you], when I smite the land of Egypt. (Ex. 12:12-13)***

God says that He will pass through the land of Egypt that night and smite all of the first born of the land of Egypt. Note that God says that He will smite ALL the first born – not just the Egyptian first born – but ALL the first born, including the first born of Israel. But the Lord assures Israel that the blood of the Lamb will protect them – indeed, ONLY the blood of the Lamb will keep back the destroyer.

This promise is repeated later in the chapter:

***For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite [you]. (Ex. 12:23)***

The essential point to see is that death was a certainty upon every house in that land -- whether you were an Egyptian or an Israelite. It did not matter if you were an Egyptian or an Israelite. What DID matter was whether or not you were under the blood. God states that very clearly. If He saw the blood, He would not let the destroyer come into your house to smite you. But if He did not see the blood, you were going to be under that destruction. It was the blood that made the difference between life and death.

What we see here is a foundational Christian Truth: The shed Blood of Christ – Who is the true Passover Lamb – it is His shed Blood, and the finality of His Cross – it is upon His finished Redemption that deliverance from death, and thus, eternal life is based.

As Paul makes it so clear in the New Testament, there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, slave nor free. As it pertains to the Exodus account, there is neither Egyptian nor Israelite. Race does not matter; standing in society does not matter. In fact, nothing about YOU matters except that you put your faith in the Lamb – because HE is what matters. What you and I are by nature is out of the picture. This is the principle of the Cross. It is not about who WE are, but about who HE IS – and about what He has done as the Lamb Who was slain.

## **The Truth of the Cross**

From the beginning of I Corinthians 1, this was the Truth – the Truth of the Cross – that Paul was trying to get across to the Corinthians. It is the Truth that believers are supposed to see and believe when we are called to Christ. And it is the Truth that we are to live in and experience throughout our journey in Christ.

Unfortunately, some of us never see the Truth of the Cross. Satan has succeeded in blinding many believers to this Truth, and in introducing much false doctrine. The Truth that all that we are in ourselves died in Christ has been replaced with the false gospel of self-esteem, and with a growing preoccupation with natural man.

Today many are preaching that freedom is the result of discovering who WE ARE. Many emphasize the value of humanity to God. Of course, this is all legitimized as being how God views us. But the Truth is, freedom is the result of discovering who CHRIST IS. We ought to be emphasizing the value of Christ. If we knew the Truth of the Cross there would be no confusion about this.

The Truth of the Cross is this: When you and I come to Jesus Christ we are joined to Him in spirit – we become one in spirit with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) That union births the NEW CREATION, or new man in Christ. The old man in Adam is buried with Christ in His death.

From that point forward our journey is exactly like that of Paul. He wrote:

***I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)***

Note: "Yet not I, but Christ." That proclamation is clearly the outcome of being crucified WITH Christ. And it is the means by which, "Christ lives IN ME."

Paul summarizes new life in Christ by saying:

***Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away (passed over – NT Greek); behold, all things are become new. And all things [are] OUT FROM God. (II Cor. 5:17-18)***

From the day you are saved, the old man in Adam is reckoned dead. A large part of our journey is to continually reckon the old man dead -- by picking up our cross daily -- and seeing the working out of that death. The old man is buried with Christ in His death. That is the Truth of the Cross – the Truth of Jesus Christ crucified. That is why in this passage Paul declares, "Old things are passed over." In other words, there is nothing that belongs to the old creation – the natural man; the soul man – that is incorporated into the new creation. No. It is all set aside; passed over. All things that are of the NEW creation are OUT FROM GOD. Nothing is out from us as the source.

This is why the power of the Cross must be brought to bear upon the old man; natural man; psychic man. It is the only way to freedom. It is

the only way to a release of the life of Christ in us.

We find this Truth of the Cross pictured through that first Passover in Egypt. The Blood of the Passover Lamb was smeared on the doorposts of the dwelling places. Then the people who had smeared the Blood of the Lamb on the doorposts of their dwelling would ENTER INTO that dwelling place. Note that a person would only do that if they had FAITH in the Passover Lamb – faith in the Blood of the Lamb. Israel spent that night within their dwelling places under the Blood of the Lamb. The death of that Lamb took the place of THEIR death that night. They would emerge the next day – symbolically with a new life.

This is a type and shadow of the Truth in Christ. The entire Adam race is under the sentence of death. This includes everyone who ever lived and will ever live in Adam. That is an absolute certainty. But there is deliverance. Those who take their place in the death of Christ do die – but they die in Christ. And because they are united with Christ in His death they are likewise raised with Christ – as a new creation. So we see that, in Christ, God is not doing a repair job, or a fixer upper, on the old man in Adam. No. God has put an end to the Adam race and has raised up a NEW creation in Christ.

What this means is that Jesus Christ did not come to bring out your greatness, to enhance you, to tap into what you are in Adam, and salvage out of that the supposed, “good stuff.” No, Jesus Christ came to put the old Adam to death by bearing the entire Adam race on the cross. God’s purpose in Adam is over; ended by the death of Christ.

This Truth is going to be worked out in each one of us. It is why Jesus said:

***If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. (Matt. 16:24-25)***

Jesus is saying, "Give all of yourself -- your natural Adam man, to Christ -- for whatever it takes to work out the reality of the Cross. If you do, you will find real life in Christ." In other words, if we die in Him, we will be raised in Him. This is a done deal pertaining to salvation itself -- but it must be worked out in the Christian life as part of this journey.

The Cross of Jesus Christ and all that He accomplished by it drew an eternal dividing line -- it is a line of death and life -- a line that separates the old creation from the new; that separates the Adam race from the new creation. Another way to state this is to say that the Cross has separated Jesus Christ from all else. God has given IN His Son everything that He has to give -- and has nothing left to give other than that. All else is under the Cross. In Christ alone there is life.

So we see that it is futile to ask God to bless the life that He says we must LOSE. No. But if we will lose ourselves to Him, we will find true life in Him.

### **The Impossible Situation**

Israel was delivered from out of Egypt through the Blood of the Lamb on Passover night. God next brought them to the Red Sea. He told them

precisely where to camp. Of course, by that time, Pharaoh has changed his mind about letting the people go. He pursued them with the intent of destroying them.

Israel was now trapped. There was no possibility that they could cross it and escape the Egyptians on their own. It was impossible.

***And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. (Ex. 14:10)***

The Egyptians marched after Israel and Israel was sore afraid. Well, wouldn't you be? The children of Israel cried out unto the Lord:

***Because [there were] no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? [Is] not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For [it had been] better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. (Ex. 14:11-12)***

Remember all of the miracles God did in delivering Israel from Egypt? Yet here they were at the Red Sea, yes trapped, but nevertheless accusing God of betraying them. This is just another proof that miracles and outward demonstrations of power do not change anyone's heart. They do not really, in the long run, give anybody faith.



When we are very young in Christ, God may do some things that are miraculous in order to encourage us. But little by little those things dissipate, and eventually He does not often do those things. It isn't that God isn't at work. But it is just that He usually doesn't work in a way that a believer can see. We do not grow in faith by outward proofs of God. We grow in faith by an inward realization of Jesus Christ. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. He is the Word that we need to hear. We have to realize Jesus. That is how faith truly comes.

Israel's accusation of God may seem like a horrible accusation -- and it is -- but at some point of our Christian walk most of us usually do the same. We do the same because it is in us to do it -- we might be delivered from out of our Egypt, but there is always a lot of Egypt that remains in us. And God will bring us into situations that will expose that -- for the purpose of bringing us to repentance.

Many believers, once they turn to Christ -- and are perhaps delivered from some terrible bondage -- make the mistake of thinking life in Christ will be problem free moving forward. They claim that suffering or trouble cannot be the will of God -- if we truly believe and obey Him. They may use different terms and examples, but in the end, their denial of the possibility of a God-ordained time of trouble echoes the spirit of Israel: "You delivered us only to bring us into worse trouble. You have brought us into a situation from which we have no escape."

God has recorded these events as examples for us -- as lessons for us to apply to life in Christ. Many believers come to Christ, not because we

know we need Him, but because we don't need we need Him. Many come to Christ for what we think we will get from Him. Therefore, God has to expose this motive – for the purpose of bringing us into a relationship with Him based upon the Truth.

If there is one thing that is guaranteed in scripture, it is that God is faithful through Christ – every time and all the time. But this must be proven, not only TO us, but IN us.

How is God faithful? By keeping us out of trouble? By delivering us immediately from out of trouble? No. God is faithful because he allows trouble so that He can accomplish through it His eternal purpose in Christ; so that He can form Christ in us. That may not be exciting for some of us. But if we go on with God we will more and more be grateful for what He is doing.

Therefore, God will allow trouble and suffering to come upon us. And God will not explain it to us. He may be silent for a long, long time. Our trial may be nothing more than boredom, inactivity, and a life that seems to be without purpose. We may then begin to despair, and even wonder, if we have made a mistake -- or if God is truly faithful to us. So, we may begin to have his kind of an accusation.

God wants to bring us to the place where we will believe Him to the complete disregard of the circumstances we are in – in fact, He wants us to believe Him to the disregard of ourselves. In other words, He wants us to be able to put aside our fear, and our emotions, our desires, and our purpose for life – He wants us to lose all of that into His hands – and to believe Him. He wants us

to do this even if we have no clue what will happen if we do trust Him. He wants us to do this even if we have no evidence at all that He is even there for us. He wants us to say, in faith, "No matter what it takes, I want God. I want to know Him. I want to experience Christ. I open myself for whatever it takes for God to accomplish this in me."

And what WILL it take? Often it will take an impossible situation. But it is exactly in an impossible situation, if we will abandon ourselves to God, that we will find Him, and be brought into a greater realization of Jesus Christ.

When we are brought into an impossible situation, one of the most common fears that arise is that we have made a terrible mistake – a mistake in believing God, or a mistake in some choice we have made that we thought was obedience. This goes back to the assumption that obedience to God always results in blessing, and disobedience always results in trouble. Despite the fact that the Bible says otherwise, the mentality of most believers is exactly along that line – and thus – if we find ourselves in great trouble, or great despair, or in a great wilderness of no purpose, we easily assume that we got there through some fault of our own.

But if there is one thing that we need to see about this impossible situation in Exodus 14, it is this: Israel did not get into this impossible situation through disobedience. They did not get into this by unbelief. No, Israel got into this impossible situation by obeying God and believing Him.

Read Exodus 14:2. God gave Israel specific instructions as to where to camp. And they

obeyed. Obedience to God had brought them into this impossible situation. They found themselves in a situation where they did not have what they needed -- and of their own resources had no way to get it. And it was all by God's hand.

Now, that ought to be encouraging. It sounds funny to say, "encouraging," because it is not a fun situation to be in. But it is encouraging because it means that what seems to be evidence that we have made a mistake, or that God is indifferent, may actually be fully within the will and purpose of God.

We can hear the enemy speaking in the words of Israel against the Lord -- this is the way in which the enemy will often speak to us in a horrible situation: "You did this...you disobeyed God...you are unbelieving. You are getting what you deserve. You got yourself into this and you must get yourself out. God is not going to help you." The enemy may infer such lies if you are suffering, or even if you find yourself in despair due to purposelessness in life. And since God is usually silent during times like that -- He needs to be -- it may seem to us that these terrible lies may be the truth.

When such a condition arises for a believer, the situations that bring about our trouble are one thing. Circumstances in life can bring trouble. But isn't the REAL trouble, and the REAL suffering, rooted in something else? Sure. For a believer, the real difficulty is that we cannot seem to find God. We cannot seem to break through to God in the situation.

Such conditions are NORMAL for the believer in times of trouble. Sure. "The trial of your faith," is

obviously a condition in which our faith in God is TRIED. This will mean that contradiction to the faithfulness of God will be all around us – but worse – contradiction to the faithfulness of God will arise IN US. Our natural man will react. Our emotions will run contrary to the Truth. But all of this is allowed for the purpose of giving us the opportunity to embrace the Cross; have our natural man come under that Cross; and to eventually come into a realization of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is OTHER THAN US. In other words, we are all used to walking as governed by our soul man. But God wants us to know Christ and to be governed by Christ – despite the fact that our natural man may fight against it every step of the way. The impossible situation is geared to giving us the opportunity of finding God in Jesus Christ.

### **God's Redemptive Purposes**

So let's map this out: We obeyed God. We believed God. But it has resulted, not in blessing, but in a catastrophe. And worse, God seems indifferent. He is silent. We cannot sense any help from Him. Worse, we may be bombarded with condemnation and fear, thinking that surely all of this is our fault. This may go on and on and on. It is what Israel faced at the Red Sea. And if we want to go on with Christ it is an absolute guarantee that we are going to face it as well.

Now, I certainly don't believe that we are ever fully blameless or sin free. Israel here had some unbelief and accusations toward God. So, I am not saying that we are ever going to have a situation where we can't look at ourselves and say, "Well, I could have done better, or I didn't

believe God as I should have.” Of course, there are always going to be those possibilities. But what I am saying is that it is possible that as far as you know, you have obeyed God, and confessed to Him any disobedience, and as far as you know, you have believed God and cried out to Him, “Help my unbelief.” As far as you know, you have walked with God. Yet, it may result in a catastrophe. How many know that this is a pattern in the Bible? Practically every major Biblical figure who God ever used for anything was led according to this pattern?

The point is, if despite all of our faults and mistakes, we continue to seek God no matter what the cost, God will redeem our mistakes and our sins. And if that is the case, then it will not matter HOW or WHY we are in our impossible situation – it will become HIS.

This was God’s pattern with Moses. Remember when Moses, way back before he led Israel out of captivity, killed that Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave? There is every reason to think that Moses had a sense of God’s purpose of calling him to be the deliverer of God’s people. But, he wasn’t ready – but he tried to take that matter into his own hands. That was a mistake. God never willed that Moses kill that Egyptian. Yet did God abandon Moses, or his purpose for him? No. Rather, God sent him out into the wilderness for forty years – this was all before Moses ever heard the call of God as deliverer of Israel. Why? To reduce Moses -- and to show him how weak and empty he really was. In other words, rather than abandon Moses, God did what was necessary to bring Moses into the relationship with Himself that would make it possible for him to be used of God.

Did Moses spend that forty years practicing miracles? Did he train how to turn his rod into a snake? Did he practice parting the Red Sea? Of course not. God spent that forty years doing a work IN Moses so that Moses could be rightly related to God. Everything else depended upon that. Moses had to be set free of his own inward Egypt before he would be faithful to God in setting Israel free from their Egypt.

Everything that God causes or allows in the life of a believer is unto the purpose that we come to realize Christ – and by faith come to live in Him and out from Him. If we really want to know Jesus Christ, this is what has to happen. That will require the work of the Cross – it will require that we come to the end of being governed by our natural man. Again, the work of the cross is part of this journey - a walk and a journey with Jesus Christ always goes through the valley before the person is brought up to the mountain top.

Then, guess what? There will be another valley and another mountain top -- and so on. The point is this: God has to set us free and deliver us personally from our old man; from our unbelief; from our self will; and personal agenda. He has to do that in order that we can walk with Christ in His will. And what He often uses is an impossible situation.

Can we see that an impossible situation is NOT a punishment? Even if we got into our situation through our own sin, once we turn to God we are on redemptive ground. We see this in this situation at the Red Sea. Nothing God was doing with Israel, not only at the Red Sea, but throughout the wilderness, was a punishment.

Instead, it was a matter of God making it possible for them to enter the Promised Land -- and to be in fellowship with Him in the inheritance He had for them. All of it was redemptive.

This is God's pattern for the saints. Look at Abraham. God told him he was going to have a son. Look what happened to him. He waited twenty six years. But during that time, God let him birth a son on his own. That was brought to nothing. And yet, despite that mistake, God did not abandon Abraham. Look at Jacob -- who was promised an inheritance. God let him try to get that in his own strength. But God had to cripple those efforts. Finally Jacob saw, "Oh I see Lord. This is about you -- and not me."

The Christian journey will lead each believer into one impossible situation after another – and often the impossible situation will be our own nature. We will be exposed as those who can do NOTHING about ourselves – so that we will agree that it is true that we can do NOTHING -- and abandon ourselves to the One Who has already done everything. God wants to bring us to where we declare by faith, and with joy, as Paul did, "Yet not I but Christ."

You cannot merely read that in a book and declare it. It doesn't even come by studying God's Word -- although we need to do that. It comes only by experiencing Jesus Christ Himself. And God will bring us into a discovery and experience of Christ Himself through an impossible situation. The impossible situation is the work of the Cross. But it is redemptive – it is all unto an inward realization of Christ.



## **Finding God in the Impossible**

Well, Israel was trapped at the Red Sea because they OBEYED God. They were in a God-ordained impossible situation. But God then declared something to them -- a fourfold answer to finding God in the impossible.

I don't like to break things down into steps because people tend to grab them and make a list – and then check off boxes – and then when all the boxes are checked they think they have it. No. These are spiritual principles that will result in an experiencing of Jesus Christ. They are direction for the Christian journey in Christ, and as such, can be applied to many aspects of that journey over and over again.

Impossible situations may involve outward circumstances. But in the end, the impossible situation is US – it is our inward inability to find God; our inability to function. So, what do you do when you find yourself to be in an impossible situation? What do you do – whether you are there through faith and obedience, or whether you are there through unbelief -- but now have turned and given yourself to God? What do you do if your impossible situation is outward, inward, or both?

God told Israel what to do. He said:

**Fear not  
Stand Still  
See Salvation  
Move Forward**

FEAR NOT -- and if you really look into that, it means believe. In other words, "Fear not what

your eyes see – i.e., the enemy - Pharaoh - the Red Sea. Do not believe the fear your emotions feel. Do not believe what your thinking demands. Instead, keep your eyes upon Jesus Christ. Believe Him to the disregard of all else.”

Then, STAND STILL. In other words, having believed, STAND immovable in your faith. REST in Jesus Christ. Do not panic. Do not run to and fro in your heart and emotions. Be not moved by your natural man. Be not moved by any situation from out of faith in Christ. Stand still because Jesus Christ is THE ROCK.

Then, SEE the SALVATION of the Lord. This may, or may not, involve your outward circumstances – depending on what is the purpose of God. But to SEE the SALVATION of the Lord means to see Jesus Christ. The LORD is our salvation.

It may not please the flesh very much, but it is a fact that to see Jesus Christ and be brought into an inward realization of Him is the only true deliverance and way of escape that there is. Of what value would there be in being delivered from difficult outward circumstances, but to have no inward revelation of Jesus Christ? No value at all. But if we are brought into an inward realization of Jesus Christ, then at the very least, we will be able to have ascendancy IN HIM over that which would govern us. To believe God and walk in Christ – even if there is no change in the situation that is impossible – is true victory. In that case, the impossible situation that is US has been conquered in Christ. God will then be free to deal with outward circumstances.

Lastly, there is MOVE FORWARD. In other words, continue the journey in Christ on the basis of seeing Jesus Christ – on the basis of what God has done in you through the impossible.

How many see that Israel was not able to, “move forward,” until they, “feared not,” and, “stood still?” You have to believe. You have to say to God, “Lord, I believe You, I am going to refuse the lie of fear and I am going to believe You.” And you have to stand still in that faith against all that would contradict faith. You may need to stand by faith for a time before you see salvation – but you will eventually see Jesus Christ. Only then can you, “move forward.” Otherwise, it would not be a journey in faith.

Earlier we read from Matthew 16 the necessity of losing ourselves to Jesus Christ in order to find Him as our life. Well, by faith we must lose ourselves to Him in any situation or we cannot move forward. How could we? We would not be moving forward in His life. It would be a dead journey.

It is significant that Israel was told to move forward BEFORE God parted the Red Sea. How many see significance of that as to spiritual principle? Move forward to where? They had the Red Sea in front of them. They had Pharaoh behind them. And they were hemmed in by the land otherwise.

Here we see that despite NOT seeing where we are going, or how we are to get there, God wants us to trust Him to know. Of course, for Israel this was physical and outward. But for us, it is primarily an inward journey. We cannot know what is on the other side of resurrection. We

cannot see what we do not yet see. We have little idea of what it means to know and experience Jesus Christ until we do. But God knows. So He says, "Move forward."

God opens the way, not before we believe, but AS we believe, doesn't He? Sure. Every step in the journey must be by faith -- even if it means that you have to fear not and stand still for twenty years. Do that and you will see Jesus Christ and move forward in God's will.

### **Jesus Christ, the Promised Land**

Israel went through the Red Sea -- and everything that Egypt represented was dead and buried. As I stated earlier, this is a type and shadow of the old man in Adam being buried with Christ in His death. It doesn't mean that the old man in Adam ceases to exist in us. No. But in Christ -- through faith -- we can come to be governed by Christ, rather than this old man.

God then brought Israel to the border of the Promised Land. Israel refused to enter and take possession. Why? Because there were insurmountable enemies in the land -- despite the promise of God that the land was theirs. How many see another impossible situation?

Israel had not grasped the Truth at this point -- despite the miracle at the Red Sea. Yet again, God would not abandon them, or His purpose for them. He would do another redemptive work. That redemptive work -- again a type of the work of the Cross -- would be a forty year journey through the wilderness.

The wilderness was not a punishment. It was, and is for us, a place where God exposes all of our unbelief, all of our faith in our natural man; in ourselves. It is where God exposes what we really are. He exposes us as being utterly weak and without resources. But God does all of this in order to bring us to where our faith will be in Him – making it possible for us to enter into fullness in Christ – making it possible to live in Christ, who IS our Promised Land.

The wilderness is a place where there is no life and no resources. That is what WE are in ourselves. So, God brings us out into many experiences where we are shown to be a wilderness without Him. As was the case with Israel, so it is with us – the wilderness is all unto the end, not as a , but to expose us in the light of Christ so that we may be set free and have our faith solely in Jesus Christ. Then we will be able by faith to take possession of the inheritance, as Israel did in type and shadow.

Israel refused to enter the land and take possession by faith in the Lord. Therefore, God had to judge them by sending them into the wilderness for forty years. But He brought them back – He redeemed His purpose for them – and forty years later they were brought back to the border of the Promised Land. Now note: Those very same insurmountable enemies were in the land. The same walled cities stood in the land. And physically, as an army, Israel had no more ability to overcome those enemies and take possession then they had forty years prior. But what DID change during those forty years in the wilderness? What changed was Israel – unbelief had become FAITH in God.

Now, how many see the purpose of the wilderness? Israel's journey through the wilderness had brought them to the end of all fake faith – to the end of all confidence in themselves. How many realize that to lament over their weakness and inability to overcome the enemy was nothing more than faith in themselves? – it was a frustrated faith in themselves, but nevertheless faith in themselves. So it is with God's purpose in sending the believer into a wilderness. It is to show us the Truth – that there is nothing in ourselves to trust, and therefore, there is no point in being frustrated over our weakness. We are weak. We are empty. There is no point arguing about it – for it is the Truth. God uses the wilderness to expose this Truth so that we will joyfully confess it and put our faith solely in Christ.

There are many of us who realize that it is folly to rely upon our own strength before God. We know we cannot appeal to our own strength before the Lord as the basis for relationship with Him. But we also need to realize that it is folly to rely upon our weakness as the basis of relationship with God. Why? Because whether we try to base relationship with God upon our strength or weakness, we are still basing our relationship with God upon ourselves. Both are faith in self. We have to come to the place where, yes, we allow God to break the delusion of our own strength, and to expose our weakness, but this is all until the end that we are out of the picture completely – and that our faith is solely in Jesus Christ. Again, our faith must proclaim, "Yet not I, but Christ!"

God uses the wilderness to accomplish this miracle in the believer. We read, in Deuteronomy

8, a description given by God after Israel's forty year journey through the wilderness, as to the purpose given for that wilderness. It is a type and shadow for the believer. He says:

***All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers. (Deut. 8:1)***

Note that this is all positive. God says that all that He was doing, including sending them into the wilderness for forty years, was so that they would be able – through a relationship with Himself – to LIVE, and POSSESS the land that God gave to them. So again, we see that God was always working a redemptive purpose.

Verse two says:

***And you shall remember all the ways which the Lord has led you these forty years in the wilderness. (Deut. 8:2)***

Rather than restrict the word, “remember,” to the meaning of MEMORY – God is referring to the fact that a revelation of Himself had been etched on their hearts. They carried with them all of their past experiences with God -- and it changed them to where He could work with them. As stated earlier, to an acceptable degree, unbelief had become faith.

Now, more specifically, what change in Israel did come about? God states what the journey through the wilderness had accomplished:

***To humble thee, [and] to prove thee, to know what [was] in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every [word] that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. (Deut. 8:2-3)***

In type and shadow, God is saying that the wilderness gets us to the place where we no longer live from out of natural man -- but from out of the Living Word of God, who is a Person – from out of Jesus Christ, who dwells in the believer.

This is what the wilderness does. Lots of people pray that God would give them strength. The wilderness is the place where God shows you that you will never be strong; that you were never intended to be strong in yourself. This is why when we cry out to God to deliver us from our wilderness or from our impossible situation there is silence. He doesn't want us out. He wants us IN – so that we might come to experience Him.

We have to get these things straight because so often, we think contrary to what God is doing. Remember Job's experience? I am sure Job had days when he cried out to God for strength. God wanted to show Job that there was no strength other than God Himself. In other words, God is not going to make us strong. He is going to expose us as weak so that Christ might be our strength. That is not just a little cliché. It is reality and truth and is what He is doing.



How many see that many of the principles of Truth that God reveals through the impossible situation at the Red Sea, are also worked out through the wilderness experience? All of it is to deliver the believer from themselves into freedom in Christ Jesus.

God's entire dealing with Israel, and His entire purpose for their journey, was to bring them into the Promised Land -- where He would be their God and they would be His people. The Promised Land is a type and a shadow of fullness in Jesus Christ; of inheritance in Jesus Christ. Thus, it is a type and shadow of God's purpose in His NT saints. God has apprehended us, called us, and taken us on this journey -- that we may fully experience His Son, and be used of Him in Christ -- not only in this age, but throughout the eternal ages.

### **Part 3**

## **Possessing the Land – God’s Eternal Purpose**

The Calling and the journey of the saint in Jesus Christ are not things unto themselves. God not only has a purpose for this age, but He has called His people to an eternal purpose in the next age. The journey doesn’t end here. It begins here. God’s purpose in Christ is eternal, and extends into the ages to come.

The eternal purpose of God begins here when we are called to Christ. It begins to be manifested and experienced as believers experience Christ Himself. But there is a purpose. That purpose is fullness in Christ. God wants His people to experience all that Christ has done and all that Christ IS.

The Old Testament type and shadow of fullness in Christ is the Promised Land. The calling and first part of Israel’s journey was to make them a people who were related to God by faith to the point where they could enter the Promised Land and take possession of it – and as they did, live as His people to His glory. So it is with the saint. Our journey is intended to bring us into a relationship with Jesus Christ – into an experiencing of Him – such that we can take possession of all that God has given in Him. But this is so that we might live with God forever and be extensions of His Son.

But again – this merely **BEGINS** now. The fullness of what God has for the believer in Christ is to be experienced throughout the ages yet to come. God has given all in His Son. And Christ is eternal. Thus, in a real sense, we will never –

not even in the eternal ages – be finished discovering Christ.

Paul, the apostle, emphasized this great purpose of God in Christ:

***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)***

Everything God has given humanity has been given in the Person of Jesus Christ Himself. In Christ are ALL spiritual blessings. God will never have anything to give outside of Jesus Christ. This is an absolute certainty -- and when we begin to stray from this, we get into error.

Paul continues:

***Accordingly, He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world.***

Included in this purpose for which God has chosen believer is that they, “be holy and without blame, in love.”

Then, in verse 5, it says:

***God has predestined (those who are in Christ) unto the adoption as children by Jesus Christ -- unto Himself -- according to the good pleasure of His will.***

Here we see that SONSHIP is fundamental to the eternal purpose of God. And of course, once we speak of SONSHIP, we are really speaking about the eternal INHERITANCE of God. Indeed, “the inheritance plan of God,” is:

## **God, the Father**

### **His only begotten son, Jesus Christ**

### **And then all who are born from above in Christ as sons and daughters**

Everything that God is doing, in this age and in the next, can be gathered up in sonship/inheritance – can be gathered up in the fact that believers are coheirs with Christ; under Him as Lord of all. God has called us out of the Adam race and into His Son that we may be coheirs with Christ -- and have Jesus as our Lord personally. But that is unto the purpose that we might reign and rule with Him. This purpose has already begun NOW – but will be fully released only in the eternal ages.

Beginning with Ephesians 1:9, Paul begins to make some incredible statements. He says:

***God has made known to us the mystery of  
His will according to His good pleasure which  
He has purposed in Himself.***

Note the phrase, “which He has purposed in HIMSELF.” In other words, this is God’s plan alone -- no-one else had any input whatsoever. But because this is a plan that is solely of God, we can be sure that it is of love and Truth -- fully to His glory and to the benefit of all.

### **God’s Ultimate Purpose in Christ**

Now we come to 10. In verse 10, Paul states, in perhaps the most general terms possible, what is the eternal purpose of God in Christ. He says:

***That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and are in earth, even in Him.***

Paul is saying that, "in the fullness of times," everything God is allowing and doing will be brought to a conclusion that fully satisfies Himself. And what will that conclusion to His satisfaction be? Just this: God intends to gather together in one all things in Christ -- both which are in heaven and are in earth -- even in Him.

This is a tremendous declaration of Jesus as Lord -- and of the full redemption of all who will accept Christ. It is the declaration of the purpose for which He has apprehended the people who come to Christ.

In verse 11, Paul expands upon God's purpose for which He has apprehended, called, and reveal His Son in believers. He says, in verse 11:

***In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, being predestined (purposed beforehand) according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His own will.***

Again, we see that we do not get to decide what the purpose of God is for us. Rather, we get to discover that purpose and yield to God in it.

Over the next few verses, Paul talks about salvation. He says in verse 12 that God wants us to be, "to the praise of His glory," because we are, "those who first trusted in Christ." Then he looks forward, in verse 14, to, "the redemption of

the purchased position; the resurrection of the body.” That really is the point at which the fullness of God’s purpose will begin to be fully released, as stated in verse 10. It will be FULL redemption unto all who are in Christ -- both spiritually and physically.

### **A Living Experiencing of Christ**

Through Ephesians 1:1-14, Paul has laid a foundation – it is the foundation of God’s eternal purpose in Christ. It is SONSHIP, inheritance, and full Redemption under Jesus Christ as Lord. These are included in the purpose of God that He began before the foundation of the world – summarized by the fact that God intends to gather all in His Son.

Now, we MUST clearly understand that Paul is not exhorting us to merely develop a theological construct, or an academic understanding. This is NOT about mere intellectual understanding. No. That is certainly included – but goes far beyond that. Rather, Christianity is, “Christ in us,” – we are to live in and out from the Living Son of God. We are to know HIM.

There is a huge difference between theological knowledge and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is really an inward realization and revelation of the Living Son of God. In short, it is good to know teaching and doctrine. But only if we realize Christ Himself can we truly grasp what it all means.

We can turn again to the example of when Israel was told to enter the Promised Land. God did not give them a travel brochure or a map etc. They could have had all of that and more, but it doesn’t

come anywhere near actually being IN that land. Likewise, we could know all Christian doctrine, and even agree that Christianity is Christ in us. We could read Ephesians 1:1-14 and even rejoice over it. But, the question is this: Have we begun to experience Jesus Christ? In a way that opens this chapter up to us in a living way -- so that we can begin to live in and out from Christ within this eternal purpose of God?

Starting in verse 15, Paul tells us that this is exactly what he prays for the saints. His prayer for the saints is that we might grasp God's purpose in the light of an inward realization of Jesus Christ.

Can we grasp the significance of this prayer of Paul? Thus far in this epistle, Paul has given much teaching. It is great teaching. He has, if you will, given much written revelation. But he knew that this was not enough. Rather, now that Paul has written much revelation, his prayer is that we might SEE the Truth in the light of a personal realization of Jesus Christ.

Paul prays, starting in verse fifteen:

***Wherefore, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.***

We are going to read a prayer of the apostle Paul for believers -- which we can be sure is God's desire. He goes on:

***I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may***

***give unto you the spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowledge of Himself.***

Notice what is at the forefront of Paul's prayer for the saints: That we receive from God a revelation, indeed, if you will, a realization, of God the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. This is right at the top of the list. This alone will open up our understanding of everything else in the plan and purpose of God. For, as noted, doctrine and academia will not get us far -- we have to see Jesus, and come into an inward realization of Him.

In 2 Corinthians 3, it says that the mind of God's chosen people were blinded unto that day -- and that there was a veil which was NOT taken away even in their reading of the Old Testament. But the veil IS taken away in Christ. Likewise, it also says that when the people of God turned to the Lord, the veil was taken away. So, it is not acceptable to just know what the Bible says -- you have to know what it means in Christ. You can memorize Truth academically, but you have to see Truth who is a Person. Indeed, Jesus said that the spirit was given that believers would be guided into all Truth. He was talking about God bringing us into an inward revelation of Himself, Jesus Christ.

We saw earlier that along that same line, in Galatians 4:19, Paul writes:

***I travail as a woman about to give birth that Christ may be formed (inwardly realized and expressed) in you.***

Paul prayed for this. Paul travailed for this. But he was merely reflecting the mind of God Himself.



That is how vital and central to God's purpose the inward revelation of Jesus Christ IS. Yet I don't think most people even know that this is God's desire, they are blinded to it. Many have never heard about it. But Paul is saying, "I don't want you to be blinded to this. I don't want you to live your Christian life blinded to the very purpose for which God has called you. Rather, I want God to give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself. That is my prayer. That is my travail.

Now, that God would give to His people a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself is the core of Paul's prayer. But then he goes on to say what will happen IF WE DO receive a spirit of wisdom of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. He says:

***The eyes of your understanding will be enlightened. (Eph. 1:18)***

In other words, "If you see Jesus, your eyes are going to be opened to all of the purpose of God IN CHRIST. Of course, this is progressive. It does not happen in five minutes. But Jesus Christ is the Light -- and He is the Truth. All discernment in the Christian life is the outcome of seeing and knowing Jesus Christ.

### **God's Inheritance in the Saints**

Paul goes on to say, "That once the eyes of your understanding are enlightened:"

***That you may KNOW what is the hope of His calling, and the riches of His glory in his inheritance in the saints. (Eph. 1:18)***

A lot of people say, "If the Bible is so clear, then why do so many people disagree about the meaning of verses? The answer is right here: "Revelation in the knowledge of Him....that you may KNOW..." People don't know the Person who constitutes Christianity: Jesus Christ. Thus, lacking this true knowledge of Him, we are left to our own brains, our own study, our own bias, our own self righteousness -- and our own unbrokenness. Therefore, you have emerging hundreds of denominations, theories, and errors.

There are many who call themselves by the name of Christ who have come up with every cockamamie theory about everything -- one fad after another -- one incredibly stupid idea after another as to how to cure what ails you. But Paul's prayer reflects the fact that God wants to bring us back to the reality of Jesus Christ -- and to the fact that Christ is in us -- and to the purpose of God that Christ be formed in us. If we are not starting there and beginning to experience Him, we are getting nowhere and never will. We will NOT be able to KNOW what is only possible to know through an inward realization of Christ. Paul, in this passage, is praying that believers be brought back to that great reality.

It is through a personal, inward knowledge of Jesus Christ that our eyes are opened and we can SEE the hope of our calling. And what IS that hope. Paul tells us in Colossians: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) His very presence in the believer is the hope of glory. Of course, this, "hope of glory," is not some hope for OUR glory. No. It is the hope, i.e., the expectation that we will fully experience HIS glory.

Paul wants believers to SEE and EXPECT that we

will fully experience the glory of Christ. But he says that, "Christ in us," is not only OUR inheritance, and OUR hope of glory, but he says that Christ in us is likewise, "God's inheritance in the saints." God has an inheritance in us -- which is available to us -- because Christ lives in us.

It is solely through Christ in us that God is going to bring humanity into His full purpose -- to be those in whom He can live and move -- and through whom He can accomplish His eternal purposes. Those purposes are beginning NOW, yes, but will be fully realized and released in the eternal ages.

### **The Power of Resurrection Life**

Paul goes on to say that he also wants us to discover and to personally know:

***The exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe. According to the mighty power – i.e., this is the same power -- which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. (Eph. 1:19-20)***

This is the power which raised Christ and is resurrection life. It is easy to think of POWER as some sort of, "force." Or an ability. But Jesus Christ Himself is the power of God. (I Cor. 1:24) As He said, "I AM the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25) This means that wherever Jesus is present – resurrection power is present. But it also means that wherever Jesus is NOT present, resurrection power is NOT present.

Resurrection life in Christ is victory over the ultimate enemy, death. That covers all. Thus, to the degree that we abide in Him by faith, and live

from out of Him, that power operates – according to the will of God. But if you think about this, it means that if we operate in Christ that there is no possibility that God will fail to get His will.

God has apprehended those in His Body for exactly that purpose – to be those through whom Christ can live and move – to be those through whom God can get His will. Obviously, God does not need to use anyone. But He has chosen to do so – it is a foretaste of His purpose that will be worked throughout the eternal ages. Jesus Christ is the Head and intends to work through the members.

Now, this picture of the body of Christ and Christ as the Head is all through the Bible. The body of Christ is to be an, “extension,” of the Head, that is, just as a human head directs all, so does Christ over His church. This applies to the power in Christ. The power of Christ is not a, “thing given,” for the body to use. The power is in the Head, and only flows through the body for the will of the Head. If the body departs from the will of the Head, there will be no power. Only in the will of Christ will the power Who IS Christ operate.

It is also a fact that Christ cannot operate THROUGH any member of His body unless He is able to operate IN that member. Unless a person is BROKEN under the work of the Cross, and is fully committed to the will, purpose, and glory of Christ – to the disregard of His own – Jesus Christ will not be able to do much through them. Christ doesn’t bypass believers to use them or live through them – He doesn’t “take us over.” No. He must have our minds and our wills. But He cannot have them unless we know Him and we are unconditionally committed to Him.

This is why Paul says that God is able to raise believers, "out from the dead ones." God has, "an exceeding [all else] power," which is UNTO us -- according to the working of that power, resurrection life -- which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. This resurrection is given to us because Christ is given to us -- we are joined to Him in spirit. Resurrection life in Christ has victory over all else. There is no greater power as regards humanity and this creation.

This power was worked in Christ when God raised Him from the dead -- and set Christ at His own right hand in the heavenliness. What you see here is a picture wherein God has gathered up all power, all victory, all triumph in a total and complete victory in the Person of His Son.

### **The Fullness of Christ**

Paul goes on to expand on his statements about all the power of God in Christ:

***The working of His mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places], Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all [things] under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all. (Eph. 1:19-23)***

Although this statement is believed to be a FACT by most, the question that needs to be asked is

this: Does it MEAN anything NOW? As to a practical, PRESENT outworking? Or is all of this, at best, to be pushed off into the eternal ages?

Here, in verse 23, regarding the church, Paul says, "The church is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Well, obviously, this is not speaking of anything we will see with our eyes NOW. We do not see a church NOW that is an FULL EXPRESSION of Jesus Christ. But does that mean that God is defeated? No. For even though we will not, in this age, see the church operating as a full expression of Jesus Christ, God is going to have that come to pass in His people.

If we would understand the Truth on this matter it would answer a great number of questions. We do not NOW see the church as a full expression of Jesus Christ. No. For even with regards to the individual members we are told by John, "It does not yet appear what we shall be." (I John 3:2) Certainly if that is the case with individual members, it is the case with the entire body. Individuals will only realize full redemption in Christ at the resurrection of the body at the return of Christ. And since the church is comprised of those individual members it is clear that the realization of the Body of Christ as the full expression of Christ can only begin at that point as well. Thus, is it NOW that God is bringing individuals into an inward realization of Jesus Christ, and in doing so, building the people who constitute His church – but this is all UNTO the full release of His purpose when Christ returns.

We must grasp this: God is NOW building the people who constitute the church – by bringing those individuals into an inward realization of

Jesus Christ. But even though there is to be an impact of that in the here and now – it is unto the greater purposes of God in the eternal ages.

The Body of Christ is to be a full and complete expression of the Person, the life, and the power of Jesus Christ. This is what we saw functioning in the early church. The preliminary work and expression of this purpose is supposed to be in this age. But we are not going to see a lot of the fruit of this work in this age – we are not going to see the fullness of Christ through His Body in this age -- because of limitations.

In the eyes of God, every person who has ever been in Christ is presently a member of His Body – whether presently physically alive or dead. We are all one in Christ -- howbeit scattered geographically and separated by thousands of years over time. Regardless, God is going to gather all of His Body up in Christ. All will be part of the fullness of the expression of Christ. Even though, yes, we, as individuals, can be an individual expression of Christ, it takes the Body to have a full orbéd expression of Him. Just as God gives gifts to one that He may not give to another, and just as we have different functions as part of the body, when Christ comes back, all believers gathered together will be the fullness of expression of the Person of Jesus Christ.

Now, none of us have ever seen much of this. We may have a revelation of what it will be like; we may even see bits and pieces worked out in various groups or churches from time to time. But we will not see the church as the full expression of Christ in this age. Yet rather than mean God has failed, it really means that God is, right now, bringing His will to pass. Jesus Christ said, “I will

build my church.” It is just that we will not see the fullness of what He is building until Christ returns.

Now, lest anyone misunderstand, let it be clear that Jesus Christ is NOT going to incorporate into His Body that which is contrary to Himself. Likewise, He is NOT going to use what we build FOR HIM. There is no possibility that Jesus is going to incorporate into His Body all of the religion and efforts of people. No. For if He was to incorporate any of that into His body it would be equal to incorporating it into HIMSELF. No. He said, “I will build MY church.” And the Bible makes it perfectly clear that all that is NOT built by Him, and all that is NOT of His will, is going to be shaken to the ground and burnt out of existence.

Jesus Christ is going to have only that which He can join to Himself – which is another way of saying that He will have only that which can be an expression or extension of HIS fullness and glory. How many understand that you and I can never be part of the full expression of Him – as a member of His body or as an individual -- unless we are NOW an expression of His will? Despite our flaws, we have to be an expression of HIS will – which begins if we have faith that is NOT in ourselves, but which is solely in Christ. Isn't THAT an expression of His will? To be brought to utter weakness so that Christ can be our only strength is an expression of His will. How different is the mind of God from the mind of humanity!

In this age we are joined to the Lord and made one SPIRIT with Him. (I Cor. 6:17) We are NOT joined to the Lord and made one physical body or



soul (psychic) man with Him. No, but those dimensions do have to come under Jesus as Lord in this age – as God gives us grace; as we grow to know Christ. Obedience will be included, but the core issue here faith in Christ -- before it works. As long as we remain in this physical body and have a body and soul, God wants those dimensions which are not united with Christ, to come under the government of Christ -- but it is all unto the end that once this body is glorified that even these dimensions might be an expression of Jesus.

### **Inheritance and Dominion in Christ**

It is the purpose of God in Christ that His Body would be a full expression of His Son – individuals within that Body, and the Body as a whole. What made this purpose possible was Jesus Christ in His finished work – which resulted in Christ being seated at the right hand of God in heavenly places. This is representative of a complete victory. There are no victories left to win. And then because of the finished Redemption in Christ, those who are joined to Him in spirit are likewise seated IN HIM. Believers are PARTAKERS of Christ – but because we are partakers of Christ – we are partakers of what it means to be seated at the right hand of God in the heavenlies.

This is God's purpose -- that, "He has purposed in Himself." It is the purpose for which He sent Jesus to captain and author. It is why He sent the Son of God to become a man – so that man could be joined to God. That is eternal inheritance – it is our inheritance in God, and it is God's inheritance in the saints.

In Ephesians, Paul lays down the fact that Christ is seated at the right hand of God – but he prays that God would give to us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself -- so that we may understand what that really MEANS.

Ephesians 2:6 tells us what it means:

***We are raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.***

If Christ is seated at the right hand of God in heavenly places, then because we are joined to Him, we are seated IN HIM in heavenly places. Again, what is true for Him is true for us. We are seated IN CHRIST far above all principality, might and dominion.

That word, “dominion,” is very important with regard to God’s purpose for humanity. God created humanity to, “have dominion,” under Himself over God’s creation. His purpose for humanity has never been changed. It is now to be undertaken and fulfilled in and through Christ – Christ as THE SON OF MAN -- and then, by extension -- through humanity that is joined to, i.e., in Christ.

All of this speaks of SONSHIP and INHERITANCE. Remember that we saw earlier that we can summarize sonship and God’s inheritance plan in this way:

**The Father**

**The Only or Uniquely Begotten Son**

**and**

## **All who are IN the Son.**

This is inheritance. But it is also dominion as well because a part of inheritance is to have dominion. If you go all the way back into the Book of Genesis, you see that God created man to have dominion. If we read, for example, Genesis 1:26, God says:

***Let us make man in our image and let him have dominion over all of the creatures of the earth..."***

It says later on in that chapter that God blessed them and said to them:

***Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over..."***

We can turn to the NT and see this same purpose that God had for humanity clearly stated. In Hebrews 2:5:

***For unto the angels God has not put into subjection the world to come whereof we speak. But one, in a certain place, testified saying, "What is man that Thou art sinful of him or the son of man that Thou visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honor and did set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet. In that He put all under subjection to him, he left nothing which is not under subjection to him. But now we see not all things yet put under him -- BUT we see Jesus.***

We have here, from out of Psalm 8, the purpose of God stated for which He created humanity: To

put all of God's creation in subjection under humanity. This passage clearly states that presently, in this age, we don't see much of this – certainly not the way God intended. In fact, we see much the opposite. BUT -- what we do see is THE MAN through Whom this purpose of God will come to pass – and through Whom the rest of humanity – those who accept Christ -- will be able to realize it: WE SEE JESUS.

Yes. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, through the suffering of death was crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God should taste death for every man." What we are seeing here is that Adam's sin caused him to lose dominion. But God sent His Son as THE MAN who would win back all things under the lordship of His Father. We SEE JESUS – and once we have Him revealed in us we can begin to see this great purpose of God through Him.

So we see Jesus as THE MAN – the Son of God become a man. We see Him as the One through Whom God would accomplish all. There was no salvation for humanity unless Jesus became a member of the human race. God had to become man so that man could be joined to God. Therefore, there could not be the fulfillment of God's purpose for humanity unless Jesus became a member of the human race.

Gather all of this up and you discover that IN CHRIST humanity has dominion restored. But it is vital to understand that we are not given dominion or anything else of God, "in addition to Christ," or, "tacked onto Christ," or even as a separate thing because of what Christ did for us. No. We are given CHRIST HIMSELF. And

because we are given Christ Himself, then we have been given ALL that is IN HIM – which includes dominion.

Note Revelation 3:21. Jesus says:

***He that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and sat down with My Father in His throne.***

There is no picture there of the believer being given a throne of his own in addition to the throne of Christ. No. We do not possess a little throne - - as compared to Jesus' big throne. Rather, Christ sits in His throne and we are given the opportunity to sit IN HIM in His throne. In other words, there is ONE throne. We are coheirs with Christ. We reign and rule only IN Him. We are given Christ, in whom God has given all else. It is only by living in Him and being in subjection to Him that we have dominion over what He has dominion over. This is God's purpose.

This takes us back to what we saw in Ephesians 1. God is calling people out of this world to His Son. By coming to Jesus, we can be adopted as sons and daughters IN the Son. But in the Bible, adoption did not mean what it means today. In that day, to be adopted as a child meant that you had to FIRST be born into the family – and then later you could be adopted. You could be adopted -- made a child in that family – made an heir -- only if you proved yourself able to be responsible for the inheritance. God has called us to Christ that we should come to the point where they we can be adopted as sons and daughters in Jesus Christ – and thus become coheirs with Him; reign and rule with Him.

Paul uses other terms to explain the same Truth in Galatians. He declares that there is only ONE seed of Abraham: Jesus Christ. But because we are in Him and have become one with Him, we are also collectively in Him the seed of Abraham. And the seed of Abraham is the one to whom all the inheritance and dominion is given. Again, God's plan of inheritance is: The Father, the Son, and all who are in the Son.

### **God's Working in this Age**

Earlier we read Paul's immense declaration of the purpose of God: That in the fullness of time, God was going to gather up all things in Christ -- and that He would be the head over all things to the church, which is His Body, "the fullness of Him who fills all in all." What we see is that God, in this age, is calling a people to Himself, in His Son -- so that those people in Christ might be an expression of Himself. And -- that Christ might live and work through them to do His will.

The full realization of this purpose will be in the next age. But there will be impacts, workings, and manifestations of this purpose in this age. For Christ does dwell in His people. And wherever the presence of Christ is allowed to be manifested through those people there is going to be an impact. We see this in the book of Acts. And if Christ had freedom in His people we would see more of it today.

In this age, God is working from the inside out. Christ must first be formed and realized IN God's people before He can be manifested through them. This is a foundational Truth that applies to all that God has given in Christ, and to all that God wants to do through Christ. It applies to all

ministry, all dominion, all power, and to all of life in Christ. For Christ IS the Life, the Truth, and the Power of God. He is that in Himself – and wants to be that both IN and THROUGH His people.

So, God has called a Body now -- to give themselves over to His Son -- so that He is able to live through them. In short, the Body ought to live and express Christ – ought to do things that He would do if He were here. That is what a body does! Again, we do not see much of this today; we don't see a lot of public demonstration of these things. (We do see a lot of fake things!) But the real begins with Christ in us working from the inside out to the point where He can live through people, and through a Body somewhere.

Many of us have blinded by tradition and human thinking on these matters. One of the biggest mistakes we make is to assume that the plan of God is going to be fully realized in THIS age. It is NOT. This age is the age of planting seeds. It is the age of laying foundations. It is the age of preparation. It is the age of separating the wheat from the tares. And of course, it is the age of suffering and adversity. It is only in the NEXT AGE after Christ returns that the actual FRUITAGE of what God is doing in this age is going to be seen and expressed fully. And God wants to express that fruitage through the Body of Christ.

Because we do not grasp the purpose of God for the next age, we easily assume that the fruitage is supposed to be fully realized in THIS age. For example, we think that if Christ were really ministering through us that we would see multitudes upon multitudes coming to Christ.

There would be revival, churches raised up, and that everywhere that our shadow touched the glory of God would be unleashed and people would come to Christ. We have this idea that if we are really in the will of God, and He is blessing us, or if our Christianity is REALLY true and real, that we will be used of God and will be able to see tremendous results with people in the world.

Some of us have no other frame of reference – to us, this kind of impact MUST be the case or else something is wrong. We must have big success in ministry or we are failures. We must be used of God or we are out of His will. But that is not necessarily the case at all. If you read scripture and look at the ministry of Jesus, or the ministry of Paul as our example, you can only conclude that if anyone is actually preaching the truth of God in Jesus Christ, they are going to have more people reject what they are teaching than accept it. That is simple what history has proven.

When Jesus Himself ascended, how many people did He have? Seventy, or maybe 120? Paul, at the end of his ministry, said that everyone had forsaken him. John was marooned on the isle of Patmos. So, if you get into the numbers game, or insist that you have to see the life of another person changed -- or insist that you must see great impacts -- before you will believe that your Christianity is real -- I think we are in error. All that God ever tells us to do in ministry is to speak the Truth; speak the Truth in love, share Christ. Open yourself so that Christ can minister His life through you. Then leave the consequences to Him.

If you walked into most churches today, if you have the freedom to do so, and got up and



preached for a couple of months the truth of God; the truth of Christ in us -- I can almost guarantee that in the majority of churches, you would have more people leave than would join. Even Jesus spent most of His time, during His last two and one half years of ministry, "weeding the garden," so to speak. Remember John 6:66, where it says that many who followed Jesus no longer did? It eventually happens that way. So we need to take our eyes off of our failures and off of what seem to be successes. This age is not the end of the story, and there are many impacts of ministry that are in the spiritual realm only. The fact of the matter is, faithfulness to God is simply a matter of speaking the truth and letting Jesus Christ have you.

Read II Cor. 4:1. Paul says, "We have this ministry." The later in the chapter he describes both the means and the definition of true ministry. The means of ministry is to, "bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest." (II Cor. 4:10) In other words, true ministry is not something I DO – true ministry is HIS LIFE being manifested. And this can only happen in one way, "Death in us, but life in you."

This means that if you never talked to even one person about Jesus Christ, and were never given to attend church, that if you are giving yourself to Jesus Christ that His life can be manifested IN YOU – and if that is the case – then you are contributing to the life of the body of Christ. The body is ONE. We are both individually joined to the Lord and collectively joined to each other. Let Christ have YOU and let Him manifest His life in YOU – and you absolutely are contributing to the body of Christ. You may never teach or preach.

But you are ministering.

As noted earlier, the body of Christ consists of every person who is IN CHRIST – whether presently dead or alive physically. We are one spirit in Christ with ALL. And the only thing that ministers is HIS LIFE. Thus, to the extent that HIS LIFE has freedom and release in one member, all benefit. And it will contribute to the full expression of Christ yet to be seen when the entire body is gathered up to Christ at His coming.

### **The Unseen Realm**

We have dominion, in Christ, over the power of the enemy, and we are one with the resurrection life of Christ. But there are going to be many seasons where it does not seem like it. It may seem as if nothing ever happens, and there will come a temptation of doubt.

Now, of course, it is possible that we want to BE someone – and that we are upset because God is not using us. If that is the case then we need to get rid of that before the Lord. It is also possible that we think MUCH is happening – but in reality it is not of God. There are lots of people who brag about all that God is doing through them, as if it is because of something about THEM, but it is all religion, emotionalism, and sometimes even spiritually corrupt. But all of that aside, it is possible for a believer do be fully in the will of God, to know the Truth, to be apt to teach, and yet not be used of God – at least not in any way they can see.

We need to realize that most of the spiritual impact of Jesus Christ is in the spiritual realm.

Indeed, if there is no impact of Christ THERE – then there isn't going to be any lasting impact at all. As we have seen, God works from the inside out – He works through the spiritual first. We are blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings in the HEAVENLIES. We are seated with Christ in the HEAVENLIES. That is where things begin and are the most important. And we cannot see with our eyes, nor feel with our emotions, the HEAVENLIES.

Two verses elsewhere in Ephesians will suffice to emphasize that it is in the unseen spiritual realm that the greatest impact of Christ is realized:

***For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]. (Eph. 6:10)***

***That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all [men] see what [is] the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly [places] might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. (Eph. 3:8-10)***

We wrestle not against flesh and blood – things we can see. But we wrestle against forces we cannot see. In addition, through the church God is judging these same evil forces. We cannot gain access through natural senses or emotions to any of this. But nevertheless in Christ there is a great impact. That impact is negative to the evil one. But it is positive in Christ.

We do not know, for instance, when we intercede for someone who God puts on our hearts, or when we stand with God and intercede for another person, or ask God on behalf of another – we do not know many of the unseen issues, or the forces behind various problems, or the spiritual needs that are involved. Often all we know is to stand in Christ. Jesus even tells us we have the authority to bind and loose in His name – which means authority to act as an extension of Him as His Body. Do we need to see something happening? Are we to believe that because we don't see something happening -- that nothing is taking place? Are we to believe that unless we see something happening that God is not interested? No. I don't believe you can pray in the will of God without something happening.

There are times when you can discern that something happened spiritually. There are other times when you cannot. But this is NOT about your ability to discern. It is about being those who are seated with Christ and given the responsibility to live in Him. Indeed, I would submit that if we saw what happened when we prayed or ministered that it would do us more harm than good. Some would grow prideful. Others would be overwhelmed. Most of it would be beyond us. The book of Revelation is a good example. Much of it is of the spiritual realm -- using physical pictures. Look at the crazy interpretations people have come up with. God knows what He is doing by hiding much from us.

If you are walking with Jesus and letting Him have you, then you may not see outward evidence of any impact -- but there is one because you are living from the throne. You are seated with Christ

in the heavenlies and you are praying according to the will of God. That moves things and things do happen in the spirit. You may never see them but it does not change the fact.

If we would realize this it would clear up much frustration and doubt. Jesus clearly promised that if we prayed according to His will He would answer. Yet if we were to go by what we see the conclusion would have to be that He usually does not answer.

Job faced this issue. In his trial he could not see. He could not know. It seemed as if God was doing NOTHING. But there was something going on in the realm of the spirit that he knew nothing about – between God and Satan. Job was completely blind to all of that. He was also blind to God's great purpose in the trial – that Job might see God Himself. What was the proof of God's faithfulness? Not something Job could physically see. But seeing God Himself -- in a way that cannot be accounted for by natural senses.

Jesus Christ never saw with His eyes the fruit of His redemptive work. Sure, He knew what the impact would be. But to those who followed Him it all seemed like a huge failure; a huge deception. Yet the fruitage continues two thousand years later. The seeds that He planted are still growing. And with Paul -- I don't think that he necessarily knew when he was writing his letters that they would become part of scripture. He wrote letters to the churches -- and we received fourteen of those in our present day. Indeed, the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. This means that to the end, there is going to be an impact of what

Christ was in them.

So never think that the fact that we do not see outward evidence of the fact that we are seated in Christ means that we are not. God says we are. Do we believe Him? Never think that because outward evidence of reality in Christ is lacking that the inward is not there -- or that nothing is happening in the spirit.

I am thinking now of Hebrews 11:13, which speaks of all the saints listed there in the, "faith chapter." It says,

***These all died not having received the promises but having seen them from afar off were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon the earth.***

This is, in fact, repeated twice in that chapter. We, as they were, are simply called to belong to Jesus Christ -- and if we do and God is forming Christ in us -- then we may not see a whole lot here, but we will, nonetheless, be a member of the Body which is to be the fullness of Him who fills all in all. God, in this age, is preparing a people for something eternally beyond what we could ever see or experience here.

### **Faith is Believing God**

We talk about reigning and ruling in Christ -- but are we able to reign and rule with Christ, in victory, in faith, even when it seems as if our life is boring and without purpose? If we cannot live in Christ, and reign and rule with Christ, when life is boring and nothing is happening, I question whether we can at all. Anyone can glory in the

fact that they are being used of God -- but what do you do when it doesn't seem like you are?

How many understand that at some point in life, we are going to face situations wherein we have nothing to go on except the fact that we have God's word and promise? How do we know that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places? Is it because we see great evidence? No, the reason we know that we are seated in Christ; the reason we know that it is finished, ultimately is because God has said that it is. He said so! So again, the question is, do we believe that? At some point, we have to decide, don't we, if we are going to believe what God said, despite the lack of any evidence if necessary?

In I John 5:4, it says, "Whosoever is born of God overcomes the world." Why? Because Christ is in them. It also says, "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." So, we have to apprehend everything that Christ is, and has done in this age, by faith. "By faith we understand." (Heb. 11:3) This faith is not something that is mindless or unreal. Rather, it is our response to what God has said to us in His Son. It is really our response to God's revelation of Christ in us. Despite not seeing with our eyes, or sensing with our natural man, we believe God.

We can be sure that God has not departed from His great purpose. He has not abandoned those in and through whom He desires to work that purpose. God intends to gather in one all things in Christ. He intends the church to be the full expression of His Son. See it or not – it is going to happen.

## **Part 4**

### **The Hope of Glory**

The work of God to bring His people into a realization of His Son in this age, and the working out of the authority of Christ in His people, and through His people, in this age, is unto a greater purpose in the eternal ages. The saint is to reign and rule with Christ. But all of that possibility is based upon the saint being able to fully experience Jesus Christ.

#### **The Realization of His Glory**

***Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. (Col. 1:26-29)***

Christianity is, "Christ in you." But you will notice that attached to, "Christ in you," is the phrase, "The hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) The word, "hope," that is translated in the English NT means, "a positive and confident expectation." Thus, the word carries no sense of uncertainty as the word often does today. No. "Hope," speaks of an expectation based on the Truth that I know. Thus, we have, "Christ in you, the expectation of glory."



Can we see that Paul is talking about the present reality of Christ in the believer – but pointing towards a greater realization?

In Romans, Paul defines his usage of this word, "hope." He says:

***For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for if a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:24-25)***

In short, "Christ in us," during this age is all unto something that will not be fully seen until the next age. That is why Christ in us is our HOPE of glory.

Christ in us NOW is, "the hope of glory." But all through the NT, we are told that this, "hope of glory," is unto, "the REALIZATION of the fullness of His glory." And we are directly involved. In fact, Paul says:

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory which shall be revealed in us**...For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:18-19)

Note: His glory – not our glory – but HIS glory is to be revealed, not merely TO US, but actually IN US. This is the full manifestation of the sons of God – when Christ, who is NOW the, "hope of glory," will be fully manifested IN HIS PEOPLE as the full, "realization of the God's glory."

This is the purpose towards which God is working through the calling and the journey. It is His

eternal purpose through the indwelling of Christ in us NOW. Jesus Christ is the inheritance of God's people. But the full realization of Jesus Christ in us is our eternal inheritance – in a resurrected body THEN.

### **Face to Face**

***For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (I Cor. 13:12)***

Here we see another contrast between the experience of those in Christ during THIS age, and what will be the case in the NEXT age. "NOW, see through a glass darkly, but THEN face to face." See what? See Jesus Christ. See God.

The glass through which we see Jesus Christ now is natural man. Not necessarily sinful man, but natural man. Even though Christ dwells in the believer, and this does equip us with the capacity to grow to see Jesus Christ, in this age, and in this body, we will never be completely free from the natural. In one way or another, we are going to see Christ through -- and even interpret Him through -- what we are in our natural man. Much of the Christian life is a matter of God setting us free from doing so. But in the end, this is why faith is so vital.

But in I Cor. 13 we are told about the future. The last phrase in the above verse says it all: "THEN I shall know even as also I am known." During this age, there are times when I cannot see God. There are other times when I do not see Him clearly. But regardless, God sees me. Right now, I am known by God. We are being told that there

will come a point at which all of the natural will be transformed and we will know God and His Son, Jesus Christ, face to face – we will know God as He already knows us.

Little children will often cover their eyes if they are shy – somehow they think that if they cannot see you, that you cannot see them. But note: In their innocent attempt to keep you from seeing them, they block their ability to see you. It is like this with God – if we think we are keeping Him from seeing us we are only blocking our own ability to see Him. This is why coming into the light and confessing our sin and need is vital – if we open ourselves to God it does nothing to help Him see us. But it makes it possible for us to see Him. There will always be limitations in this age. But God wants us to open to Him NOW, for it is His will for us to see Him THEN, face to face.

What is being described here is what it means to have God, and His Son, Jesus Christ fully revealed IN US. If we are joined to the Lord NOW (I Cor. 6:17), we are still incumbered by this natural. But at the resurrection, the natural body will be no more. We will be released from it and be able to fully experience the fullness of Jesus Christ – through the means of a resurrected body. In effect, there will no longer be a dark glass through which to experience the Lord. We will see Him and experience Him face to face.

"THEN I shall know even as also I am known." That is an unbelievable promise. God knows me so thoroughly that to Him, whether I sense it or not, I am as if totally transparent. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb.

4:13) We are being promised that when these things come to pass, we shall know GOD in this very same way that He knows us. God is NOW preparing us for such a revelation, indeed, for such a life in Himself.

### **When He Shall Appear**

***Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)***

This verse could be paraphrased:

***It has never yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when what we are in Christ is manifested, that it will be out of His likeness, and that this will enable us to see Him as He is.***

This is based on the original Greek (per M.R. Vincent).

It is an awesome thought. If you think about this, it means that what will be manifested is the new creature that we are in Christ – Christ FULLY manifested through us -- without the limits of the natural.

This is the same Truth we saw in I Cor. 13:12: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." And, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (I Cor. 2:9)

These are tremendous promises that are spoken of throughout the NT. They speak of God's eternal purposes for the ages yet to come – this is what He is preparing for His saints. Thus, it does behoove us to grasp the Truth about how God is now doing this in Christ.

God is preparing us NOW – through the revealing of Christ in us – for that day when all will come into fullness. Again -- "It has never yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when what we are in Christ is manifested, that it will be out of His likeness, and that this will enable us to see Him as He is." What we are in Christ is not yet fully seen – because we cannot fully realize Christ. But God is already working to make a home in us for Christ. The groundwork for eternal oneness with God is being laid in this age. But then, in the resurrection, we will see Christ just as He is – and because He is already revealed in us during this age, we will come into a full realization of Christ, and fully manifest Him through the resurrected body in the next age.

Hopefully, we can see that this is not about our glory. It is about His glory. We don't have any glory – and by the time God is done with us, we will not only realize this, but we won't want any glory. But we are the recipients of all that He is. Then He is able to live through us. We get to know HIM, see HIM face to face, and fully realize HIM. This is the glory – HIS glory – that is to be revealed IN US.

### **The Body of His Glory**

***For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it***

***may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (Phil 3:20-21)***

According to Greek scholar M. R. Vincent, this passage is not translated well. It could read, "Who shall fashion our present limited bodies to conform to the body of His glory." The last part of the passage suggests that this fashioning has begun NOW – but that it is all unto the point where, at the resurrection, we will be clothed upon with a body that is able to contain and manifest HIS GLORY. In short, Christianity in this age is, "Christ in you, the HOPE of glory, but then, at the resurrection, there is no more need for hope, so it will be, "Christ in us, the REALIZATION OF HIS GLORY."

There are a number of ways to say the same thing. We might say that today, through the forming of Christ in us, that we are being prepared to fully contain and manifest the fullness of Christ in a resurrected body. By comparison, this is limited in our natural, or, "vile," body – we are joined to the Lord in spirit for this age – and can manifest Him to a certain extent. But it is only then that our body will one that can fully contain and manifest Him.

It is little wonder why the apostle Paul could barely find the words to express the purpose of God for His people. One place he tried was in Romans 8:

***And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of***

***this present time are not worthy to be  
compared with the glory which shall be  
revealed in us. (Rom 8:17-18)***

There are a number of expressions in the Bible that seem a little odd to our way of speaking. For example, Paul says we are, "in Christ." He says there is life, "in Christ Jesus." (John 1:4) These seem odd to us because we tend to think of things in physical terms. Paul is speaking spiritually – when he says we are, "in Christ," he is referring to our spiritual oneness with Him. And when he says that life is, "in Christ Jesus," he is talking about Christ being the living source of all life.

In the above passage is another one of those expressions. Paul speaks of glory that will be revealed IN US. What does that mean? Well, as noted, it goes back to the fact that the core of Christianity is, "Christ in us, the HOPE of glory." (Col. 1:27) In other words, Christ already dwells in us – and HE is the hope of the glory spoken of by Paul in Romans 8. How so? If Christ is being FORMED in us (Gal. 4:19), and we are being formed together with Him (Rom. 8:29), then this is setting the stage for the time when, "we may be glorified together," with Him. In other words, He is creating IN US a spiritual union with Himself – much of it through suffering -- that is wonderful now -- although it will be released only to fullness in the eternal ages.

Note that it is not we who are glorified apart from Christ, as Xerox copies of Him, but we are glorified together with Christ – it is HIS glory revealed in us – it is all HIS body of glory. In short, God is now forming Christ in us – but when we are changed at the resurrection, we will be loosed from this natural body and be able to

realize the fullness of His life IN US – and we will manifest His glory through us. This is the great purpose of God in Christ unto the ages yet to come. If you want to know whether you will be able to manifest the fullness of Jesus Christ THEN, ask whether you are doing it NOW.

## **The Body of Christ**

God is working His purpose in individuals so that He can have a purpose through the collective Body of Christ. Never get this backwards – Christ is first in you personally. That is the only reason you are in His Body. You cannot get saved, or right with God, by going first to the Body. No. Christ must be in YOU. Christ is being formed first in individuals. That is the only reason Christ can then be seen in His greater Body.

***Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. (Eph 1:9-10)***

This passage is telling us that it is the purpose of God to gather all things in Christ – the meaning of which is to glue them all together by the Person of His Son, in the perfect will of God. Things cannot be gathered or glued within the will of God in any other way. In fact, God will unglue all else.

The Body of Christ is the first fruits of this purpose, now, in this age. God is gathering or forming a body that will hold His fullness: "God has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is



his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all." (Eph 1:22-23) But this is all unto an eternal purpose – for the ages yet to come. It is by Christ through His Body in the ages yet to come that God intends to work out the fullness of His Redemption: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Rom 8:19)

The Body of Christ that is formed in this age is to be an instrument of God's greater redemption in the next: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:7) The plan of God is rooted here, in this age, but it has a never-ending, and far-reaching impact in the ages yet to come.

### **All One In Christ**

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. (Col. 1:24)

Christ is building His Body. He has been for the last two-thousand years. The Body of Christ consists of all who have been in Christ. It is at the resurrection that all who are in Christ will be gathered together. Until then we are one with Him in Spirit, and one with each other in spirit.

The fact that Christ is using each member to contribute to His greater Body – and that much of this is for the eternal ages – is clear in scripture. For example, there can be suffering in the life of the saint that is not for that saint alone. To the extent that we are allowing God to use our sufferings to form Christ in us, we are benefiting

the entire Body of Christ. How? Paul said in II Cor. 4:

***For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death works in us, but life in you. (II Cor. 4:11-12)***

If I carry my personal Cross it will result in LIFE – His life being released, not only in me, but in His Body as a whole – for we are all one IN CHRIST.

The members of the Body of Christ are, "connected spiritually," with each other ONLY through the Vine. Thus, if Christ is revealed in me, there is an impact upon all others who are abiding in Him. The members cannot edify each other by merely abiding in each other. No. Only if I abide in Christ as my personal Vine, and you abide in Christ as your personal Vine, do we have, "communion," IN CHRIST – and the life that He makes manifest in me can then impact you, and visa versa.

Sufferings for Christ's sake NOW do contribute to the life of the Body NOW. But there is more to His Body than only the saints who are alive NOW. All who have been in Christ down through the ages constitute the Body of Christ. Thus, all the sufferings in them that produced the life of Christ contribute to ALL who are in the Body of Christ – the Body that God has been building for the eternal ages.

### **Baptized for the Dead?**

This Truth brings light to another, often confusing, passage:

***Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantages it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. (1 Cor. 15:29-32)***

To be, "baptized for the dead," means to be subjected to that which, if we yield to God, "fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake." In other words, I am immersed into the death of Christ – into a spiritual baptism – as a contribution to those who are dead in Christ. They are part of His Body and they may have done the same for me. This is talking about the fact that, yes, our suffering may be personal, and produce individual results. But any death in me will also be life unto others in the Body. And again, in this passage, we see that the greater purpose is for the ages yet to come.

### **The Resurrected Body or Soma**

***So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Cor 15:42-44)***

There seems to be a common misconception that at the resurrection we are going to have our natural bodies REPLACED with a spiritual body. But the Bible indicates that rather than replace

our natural with the spiritual, the natural will be CHANGED to a spiritual body. In other words, there is a one-on-one correspondence between the natural body and the resurrected body. It is the SAME body.

But we must understand the meaning of BODY. The word for, "body," in the Greek NT is SOMA. It can mean the physical body, but often is used to denote some of the immaterial dimensions of man's makeup. For example, Paul writes, " If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life...(Rom. 8:10) Your physical body isn't dead if Christ is in you. Paul also talks of, "the body (SOMA) of sin." (Rom. 6:6) These and other usages suggest that the more complete definition of SOMA, as used in the NT, would be, "the sum of man's earthly nature."

This opens up passages like the one above. It tells us that our entire earthly nature – physical body included – is going to be changed to that which is spiritual. Indeed, we are told elsewhere, that it is going to be changed so that it can both contain and manifest the fullness of Jesus Christ.

This only makes sense: We are certainly not going to have an earthly nature in any way once we are raised. The corruptible must put on incorruption:

***Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall***

***have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (I Cor. 15:51-54)***

From many of these passages, we can see that what will pass through death and be resurrected in Christ at the end of the age is only what is OF CHRIST – indeed, what is able to manifest the fullness of Christ. Read I Corinthians 3. That is the Truth in that passage.

### **An Eternal Inheritance**

***In whom also we have obtained an inheritance....in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:11-14)***

This translation is a bit misleading. According to M.R. Vincent, it should read, "In whom we were made a heritage people." It is only if we are IN Christ that we are MADE a heritage people. Sure. Another way to describe God's plan of inheritance is like this: The Father, the only begotten Son, and all those who are IN the Son. It is IN HIM – who is THE seed of Abraham – that we are made the seed of Abraham. (see Gal. 3:16, 28-29) All that God has to give to man is wrapped up in Christ. It only in Him that we can receive anything from God.

The inheritance that God has for us is Christ Himself. Christ in us NOW through the Spirit of God is the earnest – the down payment -- of the full inheritance. As noted, Christ in us is the

HOPE of glory. But at the resurrection, the fullness of Jesus Christ will be manifested and experienced IN US – in a resurrected body. It is then that the HOPE of glory will become the REALIZATION of glory for God in His people.

This is the eternal purpose for God's calling and journey for the saint. It is that we fully experience Jesus Christ, and be used of Him, throughout the eternal ages.

This all begin with the CALL. But that call is fulfilled as to purpose by the JOURNEY. That journey is eternal. It is an experiencing of God in His Son Jesus Christ.

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