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LIFE-STUDY OF THE PSALMS

MESSAGE FIVE

The moon and the stars in Psalm 8 indicate that it was in the night. In the nighttime, everything is dark. But the psalmist lifted up his eyes to look at our Father's heavens. In the night he saw the moon and the stars which God had ordained. The scientific experts can bear witness to this ordination. The divine ordination of the moon and the stars is truly a wonder.

After the psalmist turned his view from the messy earth to the bright heavens, he said, "What is man, that You remember him,/And the son of man, that You visit him?" (v. 4). He turned his view from the moon and the stars in the heavens back to man on this earth. First, God remembers man. Second, He visits man. We have to understand this in a poetic way. God in the heavens remembered man before He became incarnated. Then He came to visit man by becoming a man through His incarnation. The Triune God came to visit us. Before coming to us, He remembered us. The Triune God was very busy, yet He remembered us. Then according to His remembrance of us, He became incarnated to visit us.

As believers of Jesus, we surely have been visited by Him. Each day when I pray, I experience the Lord's visitation. He comes to me in the way of incarnation; in the way of His human living; in the way of His crucifixion; in the way of His resurrection; in the way of His ascension; and in the way of His descension. The Lord is there in my study room as I spend time with Him in prayer. We all need to enjoy the Lord's visitation day by day. If the Lord Jesus had never gone through all the above processes, how could He be with us today? He is now with us. In order to visit us, the Lord did not simply drop down from the heavens. He took a long journey. The Lord has remembered us and also visited us. He is with us all the time. If we did not have the visitation of the Lord, we would be pitiful.

Psalm 8:5 says, "You have made him somewhat lower than angels/And have crowned him with glory and honor." The word angels in Hebrew is Elohim, which is normally translated God (Gen. 1:1). The Septuagint translated Elohim here into angels. In Hebrews 2:7 Paul quoted this verse, not according to the Hebrew version but according to the Septuagint version. God made him somewhat lower than the angels. Who is "him" in this verse? "Him" actually refers to the man Jesus. God has made the man Jesus somewhat lower than the angels. To make Jesus lower than

the angels refers to His incarnation with His human living. In the sense of being in the flesh, He was somewhat lower than the angels.

After His human living, He was resurrected, and in His resurrection, He was glorified. Then He ascended to the heavens, and in His ascension, He was honored. "Crowned...with glory and honor" indicates or implies two steps: Christ's resurrection and His ascension. Before His resurrection and ascension, there was the death of Christ. If there is no death, there is no resurrection, and if there is no resurrection, there is no ascension. Furthermore, without His incarnation and human living, He was not qualified to die. He had to become a man and live for thirty-three and a half years. Thus, in Psalm 8:5 we can see all the steps of the Triune God's process: incarnation, human living for thirty-three and a half years, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Verses 6-8 say, "For You have caused him to rule over the works of Your hands;/You have put all things under his feet:/All sheep and oxen,/As well as the beasts of the field,/The birds of heaven and the fish of the sea,/Whatever passes through the paths of the seas." Whatever passes through the paths of the seas are the sea animals other than the fish. These verses refer to the kingdom in which Christ will rule over all the created things and to the restoration in this one-thousand-year kingdom, the millennium.

Psalm 8 is a short psalm, but it comprises and implies Christ's incarnation, human living, death, resurrection, ascension, and His being crowned to be the Lord and Christ and the King of kings, the unique Ruler of the entire universe. The day will come when He will be in the kingdom for a thousand years to rule over all the creatures. This is the revelation in Psalm 8.

The last verse of this psalm repeats the first part of the first verse by saying, "O Jehovah our Lord,/How excellent is Your name/In all the earth!" At the end of the psalm, David does not say anything further about the heavens, because eventually the earth will be as excellent as the heavens.

The Lord's name is excellent in all the earth, and His splendor has been set above the heavens. I want to say again that this psalm tries the best to join the earth to the heavens and to bring the heavens down to the earth, making the earth and the heavens one.

THE CHURCH BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST

In this message we will speak on the Body of Christ. In the New Testament, Paul was the only apostle who used the expression the Body of Christ to denote the church. In other places in the New Testament, the church is called the temple of God, the household of God, etc. But Paul specifically said that the church is the Body of Christ. The subject here is not us becoming the sons of God or becoming Christians. We are talking about how the church becomes the Body of Christ. We can say that the church is Christ in a different form. Christ was the only begotten Son of God. Now He has become the Firstborn. Christ plus all the sons—the church—is the one Body. There are no individual persons in the church; there is only Christ in the church. Anything that issues from Christ is the church. The church comes fully out of Christ and is one with Christ. There is no need for a Christian to do anything or change anything in order to be in Christ. As long as a man is regenerated, he is in Christ and becomes a part of the Body of Christ.

THE BODY OF CHRIST BEING A MATTER OF LIFE

The church as the Body of Christ is absolutely a matter of life. The church as the Body of Christ is not a doctrine; it is of life. A man cannot become a part of the Body of Christ just by understanding it. He becomes a part of the Body of Christ through regeneration. This is absolutely a matter of life; it has nothing to do with knowledge or doctrine. As Christians we need very much to see the Body of Christ. But the only way we can see the Body of Christ is by God's revelation. We cannot understand the Body of Christ with our mind. Even if we have all the knowledge there is about the Body of Christ, we still may not have seen the Body of Christ or touched the reality of the Body. Only those who have received revelation from God will see the Body of Christ, and only they will enter the reality of the Body.

Romans 12 tells us that the church is the Body of Christ, but it does not explain how the church becomes the Body of Christ. In order to understand how the church becomes the Body of Christ, we have to understand Romans 5 through 8. Chapter five tells us that all men are joined to Adam and that man derives his life from Adam. Through Adam's fall, all men have become sinners and have been joined to the old man. Chapter six tells us that the old man has to be dealt with; it has to be crucified with Christ. Through Christ's redemption, we have died and resurrected. Chapter seven says that a man should no longer live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Chapter eight goes on to explain how we live according to the Spirit.

THE BODY OF CHRIST BEING THE CONSUMMATION OF THE WORK OF THE CROSS

The consummation of the work of the cross is the church. The work of the cross goes as far as the Body of Christ and consummates with the Body of Christ. Hence, the knowledge of the cross brings us to the knowledge of the Body of Christ. The cross brings a man to a state of weakness and inability, one in which he totally loses hope in the old creation. When he is brought to this point, he is delivered in a real way from the old creation and brought into the new creation. Everything in the old creation has been condemned and terminated by the cross. The Body of Christ is the new creation; it has nothing to do with the old creation. If we resort to human methods, tactics, and skills (which we have used in the past) to deal with the affairs of the church, the result will only be disastrous. God does not approve of anything that is from the old creation, and He will not allow anything from the old creation to remain in the new creation. Everything of the old creation must pass through the cross and remain on the cross. The church has no use for anything that comes from the old man. The church only takes that which issues from Christ.

Today the church is divided because Christians are living in the wrong realm and the wrong sphere. Christians are not living in the new creation or in the reality of the Body of Christ. They are living only in the superficiality of doctrines, which belongs to man's natural life and is part of man's oldness. If every Christian was willing to be dealt with and to leave the natural things and the old creation behind, and if every one of them was willing to live in the reality of the Body of Christ, there would be no more divisions. May the Lord be merciful to us to see what the Body of Christ is. May the work of the cross usher us into the Body of Christ.

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for the young people to sanctify their time to pursue the Lord with their companions.
- Pray for us to be a fruitful bearing branch.
- Pray for the growth of the feeling of the Body of Christ.
- Pray for spreading to nearby cities
- For daily exercise in GOW training: prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth and attend Lord's day meeting on time.
- For gospel preaching on West Valley College campus, as well as for English-speaking testimony in Campbell.

Announcement

- Morning Revival on Psalms Week 3
- YP Bible reading : Luke chapter. 22.
- Prayer meeting 7:30PM on Tuesday (10/4) at brother Tai's house.
- College student retreat will be held at Alliance Redwood on 10/28-30. Please register with br. Tai.
- Young people Fall conference, Alliance Redwood on 11/11-13. Registration deadline, 10/29, fee \$95
- GOW training 10/15, please sanctify this weekend