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CHRIST AS THE LINKING FACTOR IN MICAH, JONAH, AND HABAKKUK AND

THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINE REVELATION GIVEN BY GOD'S SPEAKING THROUGH MAN

In the foregoing message we covered the introductory word, the first dialogue between the prophet and Jehovah, and the first part of the second dialogue between them, and in the next message we will cover the second part of this dialogue and the prophet's song to Jehovah. In this message, which is an insertion, I have the burden to say a word concerning two matters: Christ as the linking factor in the books of Micah, Jonah, and Habakkuk, and the Bible as the divine revelation given by God's speaking through man.

CHRIST AS THE LINKING FACTOR IN MICAH, JONAH, AND HABAKKUK

Apparently, the books of Micah, Jonah, and Habakkuk are separate and are not linked together by anything. However, if we get into the intrinsic contents of these three books, we will see that there is a linking factor and that this linking factor is Christ.

Christ's Origin and Birth

Micah 5:2 says, "You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, / So little to be among the thousands of Judah, / From you there will come forth to Me / He who is to be Ruler in Israel; / And His goings forth are from ancient times, / From the days of eternity." Here we see that Christ is the eternal One; His origin is in eternity. But one day He was born as a man in Bethlehem. Thus, here we have Christ's origin and birth.

Christ's Death and Resurrection

Jonah 1:17 says, "Jehovah prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah up, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights." Here Jonah is a type of Christ, who died, who was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights, and who then was resurrected (Matt. 12:40-41). Thus, in the type of Jonah, we see Christ's death and resurrection.

The Righteous One Living by His Faith

In the book of Jonah, Jehovah's salvation was brought to the most evil city of the Gentiles through the preaching of the prophet. Today God's salvation has come to us through the preaching of the gospel. We have received and applied God's salvation by faith. This is what is mentioned in the one golden verse in the book of Habakkuk, 2:4: "The righteous one will live by his faith." By faith we have received the salvation that was prepared, completed, and consummated by Christ's coming forth, and as a result we now are believers constituting the Body of Christ. Eventually, those believers who are the overcomers will be with Christ when He comes to defeat His enemies and to set up His kingdom on the earth.

The Need to See Something Intrinsic

From the foregoing we can see that Christ Himself is the linking factor in the Minor Prophets. We have seen His origin, birth, death, and resurrection. We have also seen that through His going forth after His resurrection, God's complete salvation has come to us and that we have received it by faith. Whereas we can see Christ as the linking factor, the worldly people see only the consuming factor (the locusts) and the suffering factor (Israel). For twenty-seven centuries Israel has been suffering under the locusts with their cutting, swarming, licking, and consuming (Joel 1:4). The newspapers are full of reports concerning the locusts and Israel. We need to see something more than what is reported in the newspapers. We need to see something intrinsic. This means that we need to see that Christ, the eternal One, has gone forth in His incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection and that His going forth is continuing today as more believers are added to Him. We may compare His going forth to the movement of a train that makes various stops so that more goods can be loaded onto it. Christ is the "train" and we are the "goods" that are in Him. Eventually, this train with its goods will reach its destination.

THE BIBLE AS THE DIVINE REVELATION GIVEN BY GOD'S SPEAKING THROUGH MAN

The Bible is the divine revelation through God's speaking. Regarding this, we need to realize that it is not easy for God to speak to human beings directly. In the Old Testament the incarnation had not yet been accomplished; however, God knew that He intended to become a man. His being incarnated was the first step of

all His goings forth, and God was anticipating this. The principle according to the divine revelation is that God would not do anything directly but would do everything through man, with man, and in man.

Transferred out of Adam and into Christ

The matter of God being in man is not clearly seen in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament, especially beginning from John, there are phrases like *in Me* (14:20) and *abide in Me* (15:4). We believe *into* the Lord Jesus (3:16), and now we are in Him. Before believing we were outside of Christ; we were in Adam. But one day we were transferred out of Adam and into Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God. Now we are persons in Christ. Unfortunately, not many Christians realize that genuine, living Christians are those who are actually and practically in Christ. The importance of being in Christ is stressed by Paul in his Epistles, where, especially in Ephesians, the short phrase *in Christ* is so frequently used.

Fellowship regarding financial offering

3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, How have we robbed You? In tithes and offerings.

3:10 Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse that there may be food in My house; and prove Me, if you will, by this, says Jehovah of hosts, whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out blessing for you until there is no room for it.

We must honor and fear God by bringing the whole tithe into the storehouse for the need of the church, the advancement of the gospel, the supply of the Lord's servants, and the supply of the needy saints. Although the word concerning the tithe was spoken to the Israelites in the Old Testament, in principle it applies also to the New Testament believers. If we would be faithful to live for God's administration in caring for money and material matters, there would be no financial needs in the recovery.

In Malachi 3:8-9 Jehovah refers three times to the children of Israel having robbed him. Our thought it that to rob someone is to steal something from him, but that is not the meaning here. In these verses to rob God is to not give Him what He is due. Since the children of Israel had failed to give God His due, God told them that they had robbed Him. He then charged them, saying, "Bring the whole tithe to the storehouse that there may be food in My house; and prove Me, if you will, by this, says Jehovah of hosts, whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing for you until there is

no room for it" (v.10). There is an established principle in the Old Testament that all the Israelites were supposed to give Jehovah the top tenth of the produce if their labor in the good land. The top tenth was to be given to Jehovah in the form of obligations and offering, especially burnt offerings, meal offerings, and peace offerings. These offerings were food for God. God Himself is hungry and desires food, but where does His food come from? The food must come from His people. Thus, when God's people do not bring food to the house, they are robbing God. If the house of God is empty, this means that God has been robbed, and there can be no blessing. In a normal situation, all God's people should bring their tithes to the storehouse so that God will have something to each. When we do this, God is happy, and when God is happy, He opens the windows of heaven and pours out blessing until there is no room for it.

(from 2012 Summer training message #11)

Burdens for Church Prayers

- Pray for the gospel friends of past Thanksgiving gathering.
- Pray for the English-speaking testimony and gospel preaching on West Valley College campus.
- Pray for the burden of raising up next generation for building up of the body of Christ.
- Pray for YP that they will be companions with one another to pursue the Lord together.
- For GOW training: Vital groups be raised up, attending prayer meeting, prophesying on Lord's day by daily enjoying His word and pursue the truth.

Announcement

- Morning Revival: 2012 Summer Training Msg #12.
- Bible Reading Schedule, HABAKKUK, M. 1:1-11 T.1:12-17 W. 2:1-10 Th.2:11-20 F. 3:1-15, S. 3:16-19
- Tuesday prayer meeting at Campbell meeting hall.
- Dec. 2nd, 9:30am-12:00pm, blending conference, South San Francisco Conference Center, 255 South Airport Boulevard South San Francisco, California 94080-6703 <http://goo.gl/maps/E9Pd> Direction: Take Highway 101 north to the South Airport Boulevard exit #424 (which is two miles north of the San Francisco International Airport). At the first stop light, drive straight across the intersection and directly into the Holiday Inn parking lot. The South San Francisco Conference Center is on the left.
- Thanksgiving Webcast Fri –LD (11/23-25) 2-5 pm at Santa Clara meeting hall
- Boston Training center and Church in Hayward financial need