
The
Preparation
of the Bride

Watchman Nee
Witness Lee

The Holy Word for Morning Revival

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

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The Holy Word for Morning Revival -
The Preparation of the Bride

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The Holy Word for Morning Revival

2025 Memorial Day Blending Conference

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Preface

1. This book is intended as an aid to believers in developing a daily time of morning revival with the Lord in His word. At the same time, it provides a limited review of the Memorial Day blending conference held in Phoenix, Arizona, on May 23-26, 2025. The general subject of the conference was “The Preparation of the Bride” Through intimate contact with the Lord in His word, the believers can be constituted with life and truth and thereby equipped to prophesy in the meetings of the church unto the building up of the Body of Christ.
2. The book is divided into weeks. One conference message is covered per week. Each week presents first the message outline, followed by six daily portions, a hymn, and then some space for writing. The message outline has been divided into days, corresponding to the six daily portions. Each daily portion covers certain points and begins with a section entitled “Morning Nourishment.” This section contains selected verses and a short reading that can provide rich spiritual nourishment through intimate fellowship with the Lord. The “Morning Nourishment” is followed by a section entitled “Today’s Reading,” a longer portion of ministry related to the day’s main points. Each day’s portion concludes with a short list of references for further reading and some space for the saints to make notes concerning their spiritual inspiration, enlightenment, and enjoyment to serve as a reminder of what they have received of the Lord that day.
3. The space provided at the end of each week is for composing a short prophecy. This prophecy can be composed by considering all of our daily notes, the “harvest” of our inspirations during the week, and preparing a main point with some sub-points to be spoken in the church meetings for the organic building up of the Body of Christ.
4. The content of this book is taken primarily from the conference message outlines, the text and footnotes of the Recovery Version of the Bible, selections from the writings of Witness Lee and Watchman Nee, and *Hymns*, all of which are published by Living Stream Ministry.
5. The conference message outlines were compiled by Living Stream Ministry from the writings of Witness Lee and Watchman Nee. The outlines, footnotes, and cross-references in the Recovery Version of the Bible are by Witness Lee. Unless otherwise noted, the references cited in this publication are by Witness Lee.
6. For the sake of space, references to *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee* and *The Collected Works of Witness Lee* are abbreviated to *CWWN* and *CWWL*,

respectively.

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(May 23-26, 2025)

General Subject:

The Preparation of the Bride

Key Statements:

**The Bible is a romance,
in the most pure and the most holy sense,
of a universal couple—
God in Christ as the Bridegroom
and God's redeemed people as the bride—
the goal of the Lord's recovery.**

**The Lord's primary work in the recovery
is His genuine work to prepare us
to be His glorious bride; apart from the continual,
dispositional sanctification spoken of
in [Ephesians 5:26](#), there is no way
for the bride to be prepared and, hence,
no way for [Revelation 19:7-9](#) to be fulfilled.**

**As used in the New Testament, the word *mature*
refers to the believers' being full-grown
and perfected in the life of Christ,
which they received at the time of regeneration.**

**The Lord's recovery is for the preparation
of the bride of Christ; ultimately, we will be
conformed to be the wonderful Shulammite,
who, as the duplication of Solomon,
is the greatest and ultimate figure
of the New Jerusalem
as the counterpart, the bride, of Christ.**

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WEEK 1 — OUTLINE

The Bride—the Goal of the Lord's Recovery

Scripture Reading: [Rev. 19:7-9](#); [John 1:29](#); [3:29](#); [S.S. 1:2-3](#); [8:14](#)

Day 1 >>

I. The Bible is a romance, in the most pure and the most holy sense, of a universal couple—God in Christ as the Bridegroom and God's redeemed people as the bride—[John 3:29](#); [Matt. 25:6](#); [Rev. 19:7](#); [21:2](#); [22:17](#):

A. Throughout the centuries God has had a romance with man; He created man with the purpose of having a counterpart—[Gen. 1:26](#).

B. God is a lover, and He created man in the image of Himself as a lover; this means that He created us so that we would love Him—[Mark 12:30](#); [Eph. 3:14-19](#).

C. The entire Bible is a divine romance, and Song of Songs is an abridged form of this romance—[1:2-3](#); [8:14](#):

1. The Bible is a romantic book, and our relationship with the Lord should become more and more romantic.

2. If there is no romance between us and the Lord Jesus, then we are religious Christians, not romantic Christians—[S.S. 1:2-3](#).

3. *Romance* is a word of the divine courtship; in the Bible we see that God is seeking our love—[2 Cor. 11:2](#).

4. Song of Songs is more than a romance; it is a fantastic romance.

D. Whatever we love, our whole heart, even our entire being, is set on and occupied and possessed by—[1 Tim. 6:10-11](#); [2 Tim. 3:2-4](#); [4:8](#), [10a](#); [Titus 1:8](#):

1. “To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body, with the heart, soul, mind, and strength ([Mark 12:30](#))—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him” (footnote 3 on [1 Cor. 2:9](#)).

2. To love the Lord Jesus is to appreciate Him, to direct our being to Him, to open to Him, to enjoy Him, to give Him the first place, to be one with Him, to live Him, and to become Him—[Matt. 26:6-13](#); [2 Cor. 3:16](#); [Mark 12:30](#); [Col. 1:18](#); [1 Cor. 6:17](#); [Phil. 1:20-21](#); *Hymns*, #477, stanza 2.

II. Revelation 19:7-9 unveils Christ as the Bridegroom:

- A. The marriage of the Lamb is the issue of the completion of God's New Testament economy, which is to obtain for Christ a bride, the church, through His judicial redemption and by the organic salvation in His divine life—[Gen. 2:22](#); [Rom. 5:10](#); [Rev. 19:7-9](#); [21:2](#), [9-11](#).
- B. The bride of Christ in [Revelation 19](#) is composed of all the overcomers—[vv. 7-9](#); cf. [Gen. 2:22](#); [Matt. 16:18](#).
- C. All the overcomers will be the New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ for one thousand years in its initial and fresh stage—[Rev. 19:7](#).
- D. Eventually, all the believers will join the overcomers to consummate and complete the New Jerusalem in full as the wife of Christ in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—[21:2](#), [9-11](#).

III. The bride is the goal of the Lord's recovery—[19:7-9](#):

- A. "The marriage of the Lamb has come"—[v. 7b](#):
 - 1. In the beginning of his Gospel, John speaks of the Lamb and the Bridegroom, and in Revelation he says that the marriage of the Lamb has come—[John 1:29](#); [3:29](#).
 - 2. After the rapture of the majority of the saints ([Rev. 14:16](#); [1 Thes. 4:15-16](#)) and the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ for the giving of the reward ([Rev. 11:18](#); [2 Cor. 5:10](#)), the events that immediately follow should include the marriage of the Lamb ([Rev. 19:7b](#)):
 - a. If we are rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ, we will participate in the wedding feast.
 - b. If we are not rewarded but are disapproved of by the Lord, we will not perish but will suffer a loss like that described in [1 Corinthians 3:15](#).
- B. "His wife has made herself ready"—[Rev. 19:7c](#):
 - 1. *His wife* refers to the church ([Eph. 5:24-25](#), [31-32](#)), the bride of Christ ([John 3:29](#)).
 - 2. According to [Revelation 19:8-9](#), the wife, the bride of Christ, consists only of the overcoming believers during the millennium, whereas the bride, the wife, in [21:2](#) is composed of all the saved saints after the millennium for eternity.

3. The readiness of the bride depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers—[19:7](#); [Heb. 6:1](#); [Phil. 3:12-15](#); [Eph. 4:13](#).
4. We need to adorn and consummate the New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ with God the Father as the gold, God the Son as the pearl, and God the Spirit as the precious stones—[Rev. 21:2, 19a](#); [1 Cor. 3:12](#); [S.S. 1:10-11](#).
5. The overcomers are not separate individuals but a corporate bride.
6. The overcomers not only are mature in life but also are built together as one bride.

« Day 5 »

- C. “It was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints”—[Rev. 19:8](#):
1. *Clean* refers to the nature, and *bright* refers to the expression.
 2. The Greek word translated “righteousnesses” may also be rendered “righteous acts.”
 3. The righteousnesses do not refer to the righteousness that we received for our salvation—[1 Cor. 1:30](#).
 4. The righteousness we received for our salvation is objective and enables us to meet the requirement of the righteous God, whereas in [Revelation 19:8](#) the righteousnesses of the overcoming saints are subjective ([Phil. 3:9](#)) and enable them to meet the requirement of the overcoming Christ.
 5. Thus, the fine linen indicates our overcoming life, our overcoming living; it is the Christ whom we live out of our being.

« Day 6 »

- D. “Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb...These are the true words of God”—[Rev. 19:9](#):
1. The marriage dinner of the Lamb is the wedding feast, the kingdom of one thousand years, which is one day in the eyes of God, as a reward to the overcoming believers—[v. 9](#); [Matt. 22:2, 11-14](#); [2 Pet. 3:8](#).
 2. To be called to the marriage dinner of Christ, which will usher the overcoming believers into the enjoyment of the millennium, is to be blessed—[Rev. 19:9](#).
 3. The marriage dinner of the Lamb in [Revelation 19:9](#) is the wedding feast in [Matthew 22:2](#); it will be a reward to the overcoming believers:

- a. To be called is to receive salvation ([Rom. 1:7](#); [1 Cor. 1:2](#); [Eph. 4:1](#)), whereas to be chosen is to receive a reward.
- b. Only the overcomers will be called to the marriage dinner as a reward to them; not all the saved ones will participate in it.
- c. The overcoming believers, who will be called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb, will also be the bride of the Lamb—[Rev. 19:8-9](#).

« *Hymn*

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« WEEK 1 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 25:6

But at midnight there was a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Go forth to meet him!

2 Cor. 11:2

For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present *you as* a pure virgin to Christ.

In [1 Corinthians 2:9](#) Paul says, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man’s heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” To realize and participate in the deep and hidden things God has ordained and prepared for us requires us not only to believe in Him but also to love Him. To fear God, to worship God, and to believe in God (that is, to receive God) are all inadequate; to love Him is the indispensable requirement. To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body, with the heart, soul, mind, and strength ([Mark 12:30](#))—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life. In this way we have the closest and most intimate fellowship with God, and we are able to enter into His heart and apprehend all its secrets ([Psa. 73:25](#); [25:14](#)). Thus, we not only realize but also experience, enjoy, and fully participate in these deep and hidden things of God. (*Life-study of 1 Corinthians*, p. 144)

Today’s Reading

If you have entered into the deep thought of the Bible, you will realize that the Bible is a romance, in the most pure and the most holy sense, of a universal couple.

The male of this couple is God Himself...This very God, after a long process, has resulted in Christ as the Bridegroom.

The female of this couple is a corporate human being, God’s redeemed people, including all the saints of the Old Testament and the New Testament. After a long process this corporate person results in the New Jerusalem as the bride.

This holy romance is repeatedly revealed throughout the Old Testament...Several times...God referred to Himself as the Husband and to His people as His wife ([Isa. 54:5](#); [62:5](#); [Jer. 2:2](#); [3:1](#), [14](#); [31:32](#); [Ezek. 16:8](#); [23:5](#); [Hosea 2:7](#), [19](#))...Many times the prophets spoke of God as the Husband and of His people as His wife. Humanly speaking, we always think of God in a religious way as the Almighty, feeling compelled to worship Him. But do you married brothers expect this from your wives? Suppose your wife thought of you as a big body, as a giant, approaching you adoringly, bowing herself, and kneeling down to worship you. What would you say? You would say, “Silly wife, I don’t need such a worshipper. I need a dear wife to embrace me and kiss me. If you will simply give me a little kiss, I will soar in the air.” Our God certainly is the almighty God, and, as His creatures, we must worship Him. Many verses speak about worshipping God in this way. However, have you never read in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea that God desires to be a husband? In ancient times God’s people built the temple and established a system of worship complete with priesthood and sacrifices. One day God intervened and spoke through Isaiah saying, “I am tired of this. I am weary with your sacrifices. I want you to love Me. I am your Husband, and you must be My wife. I want to have a marriage life. I am lonely. I need you. I need you, My chosen people, to be My wife.”

Song of Songs is more than a romance; it is a fantastic romance...It speaks of two people who fall in love...In Song of Songs we find a woman falling in love with a man, saying, “Oh, that he might kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. I am thirsty for this.” Immediately, her beloved is at hand, and the pronoun changes from *he* to *you* ([1:2-3](#)). “Your name is sweet, and your love is better than wine. Draw me, my beloved. Don’t teach me; draw me. I don’t need a pastor or a preacher. I don’t need an elder or even an apostle. I need you to draw me. Draw me; we will run after you.” What a romance! (*Life-study of Romans*, pp. 1-4)

Further Reading: Life-study of Romans, msg. 1

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« WEEK 1 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 21:2

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev. 21:9-10

...Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

The Gospels give us a full record of Christ as our Savior. However, have you noticed that the four Gospels also tell us that Christ has come as the Bridegroom ([Matt. 9:15](#); [Mark 2:19](#); [Luke 5:34](#); [John 3:29](#))? He has come for His bride. When the disciples of John the Baptist saw many people forsaking John to follow the Lord Jesus, John told them not to be troubled, that Christ is the Bridegroom, and that all the increase belongs to Him ([v. 30](#))...The bride is the increase of Christ.

In the Epistles Christ and the church are portrayed as husband and wife ([Eph. 5:25-32](#); [2 Cor. 11:2](#))...If we know what is unfolded in the Epistles, we will see that Christ is revealed in them as our Husband and that the believers are revealed as His counterpart, as His wife. (*Life-study of Romans*, pp. 5-6)

Today's Reading

In [Revelation 19](#) we see that Christ will enjoy a wedding feast, and in [chapter 21](#) we see that the New Jerusalem will be His wife...The ultimate consummation of the whole Bible is this universal couple—the Husband and the wife.

Furthermore, the Bible tells us that this couple with the two persons are one flesh ([Gen. 2:24](#); [Eph. 5:31](#)). Adam and Eve were one flesh. Since they were one flesh, they were also one man. Christ and His chosen people are one, universal, corporate man with Christ, the Husband, as the Head ([4:15](#)) and with the church, the wife, as the Body ([1:22-23](#)). Eventually, these two become one, all-inclusive, universal, corporate man. In [Ephesians 5](#) the church is presented as a wife, and in [Ephesians 1](#) the church is presented as the Body of Christ. She is Christ's wife and Christ's Body. Christ is her Husband and her Head. So Christ and the church are a universal, corporate man. This is the kernel of the divine revelation in the Word of God. (*Life-study of Romans*, p. 6)

Eventually, all the overcomers will be the New Jerusalem, as the bride of Christ for one thousand years, in its initial and fresh stage. These one thousand years will be counted as one day ([2 Pet. 3:8](#)), the wedding day. This will be the initial and fresh stage of the New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ.

Eventually, the New Jerusalem will be consummated and completed in full, as the tabernacle of God and the wife of Christ in the new heaven and new earth for eternity ([Rev. 21:1-3, 9-10](#)). In the kingdom of one thousand years, the New Jerusalem will be composed only of the overcomers. Besides the overcomers there will be a great number of immature saints, but after the thousand-year kingdom, all the believers will be matured...If we do not get matured in this age, we will be matured in the next age. The process of being matured in the next age, however, will be very severe. Eventually, all the believers will join the overcomers to make the New Jerusalem larger than it was in the thousand-year kingdom. That will consummate and complete the New Jerusalem in full, as the tabernacle of God and the wife of Christ in the new heaven and new earth for eternity.

In eternity the New Jerusalem will be the wife of Christ. On the wedding day the wife is the bride, but after the wedding day she is no longer the bride but simply the wife...The New Jerusalem in eternity future will be with the addition of all the saints perfected for their maturity in the divine life through the discipline in the kingdom age ([vv. 2, 12, 14](#)). This will be for the eternal expression, to its fullest extent, of the processed Triune God in, with, and through all the regenerated, transformed, and glorified tripartite saints in eternity ([vv. 10-11](#)). (*CWWL, 1991–1992*, vol. 4, “The Overcomers,” pp. 267-268)

Further Reading: Life-study of Revelation, msg. 54

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« WEEK 1 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 19:7

Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

John 3:29

He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

Revelation 19:7-9 unveils that the Lord Jesus is the Lamb as the Bridegroom. Similarly, in the Gospel of John, Christ is presented both as the Lamb and as the Bridegroom. One day John the Baptist declared, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (1:29). This verse clearly reveals that Christ came as the Lamb to take away the sin of the world. Later, John the Baptist also indicated that Christ is the Bridegroom [3:29]...Hence, in the Gospel of John, Christ is revealed both as the Lamb who came to take away sin and as the Bridegroom who came that He might have the bride...The Lamb is for redemption, and the Bridegroom is for the wedding. The redemption was accomplished by Christ as the Lamb of God, and the wedding will take place when Christ as the coming Bridegroom takes His bride. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, p. 4319)

Today's Reading

Christ's goal is not to remove sin—it is to have the bride. In the book of Revelation, which is also written by the apostle John, we see again that Christ our Redeemer is the Lamb and the coming Bridegroom. Therefore, as the Bridegroom, He must have a wedding. The wedding of the Lamb will be a universal wedding. It will be the marriage of the Redeemer and the redeemed. At the end of the Bible we see a city, the New Jerusalem. This city is the wife (21:2, 9-10), and the redeeming God is the Husband. Our position is that of the bride, and the position of the coming Christ is that of the Bridegroom. We are on the earth being prepared to become the bride to meet Him, and He is on the throne in the third heaven prepared to come as the Bridegroom to meet us. Thus, He is coming as the Bridegroom, and we are going as the bride (**Matt.**

25:1). The bride and the Bridegroom will meet, neither in heaven nor on the earth but in the air. When we meet Him in the air, we will have a wedding.

[Revelation 19:1-6](#) is the praise of the great multitude of the saints, the angels, and all creatures. [Revelation 19:7](#) continues, “Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” Here *His wife* refers to the church ([Eph. 5:24-25, 31-32](#)), the bride of Christ ([John 3:29](#)). However, according to [Revelation 19:8-9](#), the wife, the bride of Christ, consists only of the overcoming believers during the millennium, whereas the bride in [21:2](#) is composed of all the saved saints after the millennium for eternity...The readiness of the bride depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers. Furthermore, the overcomers are not separate individuals but a corporate bride. For this aspect, building is needed...Christ will not marry each believer individually; instead, He will marry His corporate bride composed of His overcoming believers. When we have been fully saturated with the Triune God so that He flows out of us, we will be completely built and fitted together to become the glorious church, the beloved bride of the Lord Jesus.

Only the church as the golden lampstand can be the bride of Christ ([1:20](#)). This indicates that we need to live out the life of Christ...We should not focus on caring for the goodness or wickedness that comes out of us. Instead, we need to care for the tree of life, the Triune God, and Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit. Whether we are at home with our family or in the church meetings with the brothers and sisters, we all need to live out Christ. If we live by Christ, what we live out is God, who is Spirit, signified by the pure gold that shines forth the light; then we will become the bride of Christ who satisfies His desire. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 4319-4321)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 424

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« WEEK 1 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 19:7

...The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Heb. 6:1

Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity...

We need to pay attention to the phrase *His wife has made herself ready*. [Matthew 25:1-13](#) speaks of the parable of the ten virgins. In this parable the prudent virgins who took oil in their vessels—who had the Spirit of God filling and saturating their souls—were those who “were ready” and thus went in with the bridegroom “to the wedding feast,” into the enjoyment of the marriage dinner of the Lamb at His coming back ([v. 10](#)). This indicates that God’s work throughout the generations is to build Himself into man...When He builds Himself into us, He constitutes the nature of God and the element of heaven into us. The more we allow Him to work Himself into us, the more we will have the element of God and the element of heaven in us...When we submit to the Holy Spirit, allowing God to work Himself into us, we have the presence of God and the taste of heaven within us. We can grow as God builds Himself into us. God’s building and our growth are for the preparation of the bride...The bride having made herself ready means that the church has been completely built up and has grown to maturity. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, p. 4323)

Today’s Reading

To be ready in [Matthew 25:10](#) [cf. [24:44](#)] means that the bride has made herself ready, that God has completed His building work in man, and that we have grown and matured in the Lord’s life...These three matters are actually one matter.

The church today is a miniature of the glorious New Jerusalem in the future, and it will continually grow until the day that it is fully grown. We grow through God’s continuous building work in us. The more God builds Himself into us, the more we grow...Our growing is actually God’s building ([Eph. 4:12-13](#)).

There is no doubt that [Revelation 19](#) will be completely fulfilled...The bride, however, cannot be prepared quickly. This preparation is a gradual work that takes

place over a period of time...This preparation involves the work of a corporate building. Those who make up the bride must not only be mature in life; they must also be built together as the one bride. The primary work of the Lord in His recovery is to prepare His bride. In His recovery He is calling out a remnant of those who love Him and who are faithful to Him. He is sending out the call to overcome the degradation of Christianity so that a number of those who seek Him may be prepared as His bride.

The bride, the wife, of Christ will be prepared in full by Him for His wedding as His pleasure and satisfaction. The preparation of the bride is by Christ's redemption, organic salvation, and the intensified work of His organic salvation. [Revelation 19](#) says that the bride is prepared fully by being properly adorned. Christ is now adorning us to make us His bride. Christ's pleasure and satisfaction are His bride, prepared, adorned, in full. The coming of the marriage dinner of the Lamb in [Revelation 19:7](#) refers to Christ's marrying the New Jerusalem as His bride in the millennium.

God in the beginning was merely God. He was alone. But it is not good for God to be alone ([Gen. 2:18](#)). He desires a counterpart. Jesus came not merely to be the Redeemer but to be the Bridegroom, and as such He needs a bride ([John 3:29](#)). Paul says that he had betrothed the Corinthian believers as a pure virgin to Christ ([2 Cor. 11:2](#)). [Ephesians 5](#) reveals that the church is the wife of Christ, and Christ is the Husband. Then in the book of Revelation we are told that the wife has made herself ready and that the marriage of the Lamb has come ([19:7](#)). This will be a universal marriage in which the overcomers will marry Christ, our God. From that time God will never be alone. Our God will be a married God. He will marry the holy city, the New Jerusalem, as His bride. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 4323-4325)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 424

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« WEEK 1 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 19:8

And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.

Phil. 3:9

And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God *and* based on faith.

[In] [Revelation 19:8](#)...the fine linen, which is the righteousnesses of the saints, refers to Christ lived out of us in our daily life. This indicates that while the church is under great degradation, we should be the overcomers to live Christ and even live Him out as our subjective righteousness day by day.

In [verse 8](#) the word *clean* refers to the nature, whereas *bright* refers to the expression. The Greek word translated “righteousnesses” may also be rendered “righteous acts.” The righteousnesses do not refer to the righteousness (which is Christ) that we received for our salvation ([1 Cor. 1:30](#)). The righteousness we received for our salvation is objective and enables us to meet the requirement of the righteous God, whereas here the righteousnesses of the overcoming saints are subjective ([Phil. 3:9](#)) and enable us to meet the requirement of the overcoming Christ. Hence, the fine linen indicates Christ, as our overcoming life, whom we live out of our being. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, p. 4325)

Today's Reading

The righteousness that is Christ Himself is sufficient for us to be justified and saved; this righteousness is singular in number. The use of *righteousnesses* in [Revelation 19:8](#) is in the plural, however, and proves that what is mentioned in this verse is not Christ as our righteousness for us to be justified. Rather, it is righteous deeds, the daily walk, the Christian living, which Christ as our life works out through us. This outworking of the inner life is the white linen with which we are clothed. In order to attend a feast, especially a wedding feast, we must dress in a proper way. In the same way, we need the proper clothing in order to attend the wedding feast of the Lamb.

According to the revelation of the whole Bible, we, the saved ones, need two garments—one for our salvation and one for our reward. For our salvation we need a robe to cover us. This robe is the robe put on the prodigal son in [Luke 15](#). Upon his return, the prodigal son...thought himself unworthy to be in the presence of the father [[v. 21](#)]. But the father said to his servants, “Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him” ([v. 22](#))...We all have this first robe, which is Christ as our righteousness, our justification, that enables us to stand before the righteous God.

However, we also need the second garment. This garment is not for our salvation; rather, it is for our reward, qualifying us to attend the wedding feast of the Son of God. The first garment qualifies us to meet God for our salvation...This second garment is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. It is actually the Christ by whom we live and whom we live out. It is the Christ expressed through us in our daily living.

This is...illustrated by the wedding garment in [Matthew 22:11 and 12](#). In this parable the Lord spoke of a man who comes into the wedding feast without a wedding garment. The king, seeing the man, says, “Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?” The guest is speechless. Then the king says to his servants, “Bind his feet and hands, and cast him out into the outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth” ([v. 13](#))...According to the custom of the ancient Jews, no one could attend a wedding feast without a special wedding garment...If we would be qualified to attend the wedding feast of Christ, we need to live by Christ and live Him out in our daily living. This Christ, the subjective Christ, will be the wedding garment to qualify us to be admitted into the wedding feast. Therefore, we need both the justifying garment and the wedding garment. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 4325-4327)

Further Reading: Truth Lessons—Level Four, vol. 1, lsn. 17

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« WEEK 1 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 19:9

And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Matt. 22:2

The kingdom of the heavens has become like a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son.

Matt. 22:14

For many are called but few are chosen.

The bride of the Lamb and the guests invited to the marriage dinner of the Lamb [in [Revelation 19:9](#)] refer to the same group of persons. In other words, those who constitute the bride of Christ are the guests invited to the wedding feast.

The marriage dinner of the Lamb [[v. 9](#)] is the wedding feast in [Matthew 22:2](#). It will be a reward to the overcoming believers...The five foolish virgins in [Matthew 25:8-13](#) will miss it. However, after being dealt with by the Lord in the kingdom age, they will participate in the New Jerusalem for eternity. Hence, to be invited to the wedding feast of Christ, which will usher the overcoming believers into the enjoyment of the millennium, is to be blessed. The overcoming believers invited to the marriage dinner of the Lamb will also be the bride of the Lamb...To be invited to attend the wedding feast is to have the privilege of sharing the millennial kingdom as co-kings with Christ. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 4329-4330)

Today's Reading

[Matthew 22:14](#) says, “Many are called but few are chosen,” and [Revelation 17:14](#) says, “They who are with Him, the called and chosen and faithful.” To be called is one thing, but to be chosen is another. Those who will follow the Lord to fight against Antichrist will not only be called but also chosen. Although we have the assurance that we have been called, we do not yet have the assurance that we will be chosen...After we have been raptured, we will stand before the Lord at the judgment seat, and He will

decide whether or not we are qualified to be chosen. Only those who are chosen will be invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb.

The marriage of the Lamb will follow the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ. If we are not rewarded but are disapproved by the Lord, we will not perish; however, we will suffer a loss like that described in [1 Corinthians 3:15](#), which says, “If anyone’s work is consumed, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” The saved ones who suffer loss will certainly miss the wedding feast. The judgment at the judgment seat of Christ will not determine whether we will be saved or perish; it will decide whether we will receive a reward from the Lord or suffer a loss.

Eventually, when Christ comes, the overcoming believers will join Him to feast at the marriage dinner of the Lamb ([Rev. 19:7, 9](#)). That unique, universal wedding feast will last one thousand years. During those thousand years the church is the bride, and after the one thousand years the church is the wife ([21:9-10](#))...On the wedding day there is the bridegroom and the bride; on the following day there is the husband and the wife. The millennial kingdom of one thousand years will be a wedding day to Christ, in which the overcoming believers will be with Christ, enjoying His wedding feast.

In the Gospel of Matthew the Lord said that the kingdom of the heavens is likened to a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son and who sent his slaves to call the invited ones to come to the feast ([22:2-4](#)). Then [Revelation 19](#) speaks of the coming of the marriage of the Lamb and the marriage dinner of the Lamb ([vv. 7, 9](#)). This indicates that the New Testament not only begins with a feast but also ends with a feast. When we attend a proper church meeting, we are enjoying a foretaste of the marriage dinner of the Lamb, the wedding feast prepared by God the Father for His Son. At the Lord’s return, the overcoming believers will enjoy the marriage dinner of the Lamb. At the marriage dinner of the Lamb, the believers will enjoy a special portion of Christ...At that time, the Lord Himself will be a special portion for the overcomers to enjoy. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 4330-4332)

Further Reading: Truth Lessons—Level Four, vol. 1, lsn. 17

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« WEEK 1 — HYMN

Hymns, #1316

- 1 Our Bridegroom soon is coming
To claim His holy bride,
The one whom He has wooed, won,
And wholly sanctified.
O Lord, we would be ready
And get our hearts in tune
For the wedding day that's coming
Very soon.

Oh, the wedding day is coming,
Is coming very soon,
When the bride shall be prepared
And shall marry her Bridegroom.
Oh, what love and consecration
Should all our hearts attune
For that wedding day that's coming
Very soon.
- 2 Oh, that fine linen garment
Which on that day we'll wear
E'en now, Lord, work within us
And stitch by stitch prepare.
For this we would redeem
Every moment opportune
For the wedding day that's coming
Very soon.
- 3 Lord, may Your portion in us
Continually increase
That we may be invited
Unto that wedding feast.
And keep us always watching—
At morning, night, or noon—
For the wedding day that's coming
Very soon.

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WEEK 2 — OUTLINE

The Building of the Bride

Scripture Reading: [Gen. 1:26; 2:7-10, 18-25; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9-11](#)

Day 1 >>

I. The building of God is the central matter in the entire Bible; the bride of Christ is the building of the Triune God—“Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man”—[Gen. 2:22](#):

- A. The entire Bible may be likened to a building manual; the revelation concerning the garden of Eden, as the beginning of the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures, and the revelation concerning the New Jerusalem, as the ending of the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures, reflect each other.
- B. What is revealed in these two parts of the Scriptures is the central thought of God, the central line of the divine revelation, and a controlling principle of the interpreting and understanding of the Holy Scriptures:
 - 1. [Genesis 1 and 2](#) are the blueprint of God’s organic architectural plan to have His divine building ([Heb. 11:10](#)); God’s desire is to build Christ into our intrinsic constitution so that our entire being will be reconstituted with Christ; in this way God may gain a corporate man to express Him in His image and to represent Him with His authority ([Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 3:9; Matt. 16:18; 2 Sam. 7:12-14a](#)).
 - 2. [Revelation 21 and 22](#) are the photograph of the finished building, the corporate expression of the Triune God; the New Jerusalem is the reflection and fulfillment of the divine revelation concerning the garden of Eden.
 - 3. Christ will come back as the Bridegroom to marry His bride, who will be the totality of the overcomers; this building up by the overcomers in this age is for the initial consummation of the New Jerusalem in the kingdom age ([19:7-9](#)) and eventually for the full consummation of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth ([21:2](#)).

<< *Day 2* >>

- 4. By the continual working of the Holy Spirit through all the centuries, this goal will be attained at the end of this age; then the bride, the

overcoming believers, will be ready, and the kingdom of God will come—[Matt. 26:29](#); [13:43](#).

5. The corporate bride, the New Jerusalem, will fulfill the two aspects of the purpose of God ([Gen. 1:26](#)); first, the New Jerusalem will be the full expression of God in God's full image for His glory ([Rev. 21:11](#); cf. [4:3](#)); second, this New Jerusalem will subdue the enemy, conquer the earth, and exercise God's authority with His dominion over the entire universe ([Gen. 1:26](#); [Rev. 22:5](#); cf. [20:10](#), [14-15](#)).

- C. When we as God's people enter into a love relationship with God, we receive His life, just as Eve received the life of Adam; it is this life that enables us to become one with God and makes Him one with us—[Gen. 2:21-22](#).

« *Day 3* »

II. For God and His people to be one, there must be a mutual love between them; the love between God and His people unfolded in the Bible is primarily like the affectionate love between a man and a woman—[John 14:21, 23](#); [Jer. 2:2](#); [31:3](#):

- A. As God's people love God and spend time to fellowship with Him in His word, God infuses them with His divine element, making them one with Him as His spouse, the same as He is in life, nature, and expression—[Psa. 119:140, 15-16](#).
- B. God first loved us in that He infused us with His love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and the brothers—[1 John 4:19-21](#).
- C. The life which we have received from God is a life of love; Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life so that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is—[3:14](#); [5:1](#); [2:5-6](#); [4:17](#).
- D. Our natural love must be put on the cross; one difference between God's love and our natural love is that it is very easy for our natural love to be offended.
- E. We must be persons who are flooded with and carried away by the love of Christ; the divine love should be like the rushing tide of great waters toward us, impelling us to live to Him beyond our own control—[2 Cor. 5:14](#).
- F. The commandment regarding brotherly love is both old and new: old, because the believers have had it from the beginning of their Christian life; new, because in their Christian walk it dawns with new light and shines with new

enlightenment and fresh power again and again—[1 John 2:7-8](#); [3:11](#), [23](#); cf. [John 13:34](#).

- G. The Body builds itself up in love to become Christ's bride ([Eph. 4:16](#)); our God-given, regenerated spirit is a spirit of love; we need a burning spirit of love to conquer the degradation of today's church ([2 Tim. 1:7](#)).
- H. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" ([1 Cor. 8:1b](#); cf. [2 Cor. 3:6](#)); loving one another is a sign that we belong to Christ ([John 13:34-35](#)); loving to be first in the church is versus loving all the brothers ([3 John 9](#)).
- I. Just as the Lord Jesus laid down His soul-life so that we might have the divine life, we need to lose our soul-life and deny the self to love the brothers and minister life to them in the practice of the Body life for the preparation of Christ's bride—[1 John 3:16](#); [4:17](#) and footnote 5; [John 10:11](#), [17-18](#); [15:13](#); [Eph. 4:29—5:2](#); [2 Cor. 12:15](#); [Rom. 12:9-13](#).
- J. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything or do anything for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ—[1 Cor. 12:31b—13:8a](#).

« *Day 4* »

III. We need to see what God did in order to produce a counterpart for Himself; [Genesis 2](#) reveals a picture of Christ and His bride in the types of Adam and Eve:

- A. Adam typifies God in Christ as the real, universal Husband, who is seeking a wife for Himself—[Rom. 5:14](#); cf. [John 3:29](#); [2 Cor. 11:2](#); [Eph. 5:31-32](#); [Rev. 19:7-9](#); [21:9-11](#).
- B. "Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart"—[Gen. 2:18](#):
 - 1. Adam's need for a wife typifies and portrays God's need, in His economy, to have a wife as His counterpart, His complement (lit., His parallel); although God, Christ, is absolutely and eternally perfect, He is not complete without the church as His wife.
 - 2. God desires to have both Adam, typifying Christ, and Eve, typifying the church; His purpose is to "let them have dominion" ([1:26](#)); it is to have a victorious Christ plus a victorious church, a Christ who has overcome the work of the devil plus a church which has overthrown the work of the devil; God wants Christ and the church to have dominion ([Rom. 5:17](#); [16:20](#); [Eph. 1:22-23](#)).

- C. From the ground God formed every animal of the field and every bird of heaven and brought them to Adam, “and the man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of heaven and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper as his counterpart”—[Gen. 2:19-20](#).
- D. The wife must be the same as the husband in life, nature, and expression; among the cattle, the birds, and the animals Adam did not find a complement for himself, one that could match him—[v. 23](#).

« *Day 5* »

- E. In order to produce a complement for Himself, God first became a man, as typified by God’s creation of Adam—[John 1:14](#); [Rom. 5:14](#).
- F. “Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place”—[Gen. 2:21](#):
1. Adam’s deep sleep for the producing of Eve as his wife typifies Christ’s death on the cross for the producing of the church as His counterpart—[Eph. 5:25-27](#).
 2. In the Bible, sleep means death—[1 Cor. 15:18](#); [1 Thes. 4:13-16](#); [John 11:11-14](#).
 3. Christ’s death is the life-releasing, life-imparting, life-propagating, life-multiplying, and life-reproducing death, which is signified by the grain of wheat falling into the ground to die and to grow up in order to produce many grains ([12:24](#)) for the making of the loaf which is the Body, the church ([1 Cor. 10:17](#)).
 4. Through Christ’s death the divine life within Him was released, and through His resurrection His released divine life was imparted into His believers for the constituting of the church—[Luke 12:49-50](#); cf. [Rom. 12:11](#); [Rev. 4:5](#).
 5. Through such a process God in Christ has been wrought into man with His life and nature so that man can be the same as God in life and nature in order to match Him as His counterpart.

« *Day 6* »

- G. “And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man”—[Gen. 2:22](#):
1. The rib taken from Adam’s opened side typifies the unbreakable, indestructible eternal life of Christ ([Heb. 7:16](#); [John 19:32-33, 36](#); [Exo. 12:46](#); [Psa. 34:20](#)), which flowed out of His pierced side ([John 19:34](#))

to impart life to His believers for the producing and building up of the church as His counterpart:

- a. Out of Christ's side came blood and water, but all that came out of Adam's side was the rib without the blood.
 - b. This is because at Adam's time there was no need of redemption through the blood, because there was no sin; by the time that Christ was "sleeping" on the cross, there was the problem of sin; thus, the blood that came out of Christ's side was for our judicial redemption.
 - c. Following the blood, the water came out, which is the flowing life of God for our organic salvation ([Exo. 17:6](#); [1 Cor. 10:4](#); [Num. 20:8](#)); this divine, flowing, uncreated life is typified by the rib taken out of Adam's side ([Rom. 5:10](#)).
2. [Genesis 2:22](#) does not say that Eve was created but that she was built; the building of Eve with the rib taken from Adam's side typifies the building of the church with the resurrection life released from Christ through His death on the cross and imparted into His believers in His resurrection—[John 12:24](#); [1 Pet. 1:3](#).
 3. The church as the real Eve is the totality of Christ in all His believers; the church is the reproduction of Christ; other than Christ's element, there should be no other element in the church—[Gen. 5:2](#).
- H. Only that which comes out of Christ with His resurrection life can be His complement as His bride ([1 Cor. 12:12](#); [Eph. 2:6](#); [5:28-30](#)); the church is a pure product out of Christ; the church is "Christly," "resurrectionly," and heavenly.
- I. Adam and Eve, being one, lived a married life together as husband and wife ([Gen. 2:24-25](#)); this portrays that in the New Jerusalem the processed and consummated Triune God as the universal Husband will live a married life with the redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified humanity as the wife, forever ([Rev. 22:17a](#)).
- J. In the eternity that is without end, by the divine, eternal, and surpassingly glorious life, they will live a life that is the mingling of God and man as one spirit, a life that is superexcellent and that overflows with blessings and joy.

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« WEEK 2 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 2:22

And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

Rev. 21:2

And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The result of Adam's sleep in which his side was opened to release a rib was that he gained Eve as his complement to match him. This signifies that the result of Christ's death with His side pierced to release His divine life was that He obtained the church as His complement. Henceforth, God is no longer alone. Christ has gained a bride to match Him.

Adam and Eve eventually became one flesh, one complete unit. This was a figure of God and man being joined as one. God's desire is to be one with man. He has reached this goal through Christ's death and resurrection which produced the church, representing the proper humanity to match Him as the Husband...The coming New Jerusalem will be just the unity of God and man, a living, complete unit composed with divinity and humanity.

Adam and Eve, being one, lived together. This portrayed that God, the universal Husband, will live with regenerated humanity forever...In eternity, God in Christ will be the center, reality, and life of man's living, and man will live by God in Christ as life. Man will express God's glory and will exercise God's authority over the new earth. God and man, man and God will live together in a marriage life forever. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 224-225)

Today's Reading

There are four corresponding items seen both in the beginning and at the end of the Scriptures: a bride, the tree of life, a flowing river, and three precious materials—gold, pearl, and precious stones...[Genesis 1 and 2](#) are like the blueprint in the beginning of a manual of building instructions. [Revelation 21 and 22](#) are like a photo of the finished structure inserted at the end of the manual. First we look at the blueprint; then we read

the building instructions and go to work; finally, at the end, we attain the finished structure, similar in every detail to the photo in the manual.

We must be deeply impressed that we are a vessel made with a spirit, an inner recipient to receive God. We must learn how to exercise our spirit continually to contact and receive God. Next we must realize that God in Christ by the Spirit is the tree of life, the real food for us to eat and enjoy. As we enjoy Christ in such a way, we will have the flowing of the living water within us, and by this flowing we will be transformed from clay into precious materials. Then as transformed materials we must be built up with others...We must learn to be related with others and very dependent. Finally, such a building will be the bride on this earth, the bride which will satisfy Christ.

It is only when we are enjoying Christ as our food that we may be transformed, and it is only as we are being transformed that we may be built up with others, and it is only as we are built up with others that Christ will have full satisfaction with us. We will be the expression and representative of God as well as the bride of Christ.

In our natural life...we can never be one with others. Every natural man is a peculiar man, a separate man...Our natural life must be swallowed up by Christ. We must learn how to contact and feed on Christ in our spirit. We must learn how to deny our self, rejecting our natural life, and live by Christ. Then the Lord will flow within, transforming us from clay into precious stone. As we are united, related, and built up with others, God's goal will be attained. (*CWWL*, 1964, vol. 4, "The Vision of God's Building," pp. 176-177)

Further Reading: *CWWL*, 1964, vol. 4, "The Vision of God's Building," chs. 1—2; *CWWL*, 1994–1997, vol. 3, "The Triune God's Revelation and His Move," ch. 7

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« WEEK 2 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 19:7-8

Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.

In [Revelation 19:7 and 8](#) we see that Christ and His counterpart, His bride, will be married at His coming back...The marriage of the Lamb is the issue of the completion of God's New Testament economy. God's economy in the New Testament is to obtain for Christ a bride, the church, through His redemption and divine life. By the continual working of the Holy Spirit through all the centuries, this goal will be attained at the end of this age. Then the bride will be ready.

The words "His wife" in [Revelation 19:7](#) refer to the church ([Eph. 5:24-25, 31-32](#)), the bride of Christ. However, according to [Revelation 19:8 and 9](#), the wife, the bride of Christ, here consists only of the overcoming believers during the millennium, whereas the bride, the wife, in [Revelation 21:2](#) is composed of all the saved saints after the millennium for eternity. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2277-2278)

Today's Reading

The Gospel of John reveals that Christ is the Lamb who came to take away sin ([1:29](#)) and also the Bridegroom who came that He might have the bride [cf. [3:29](#)]. Christ's goal is not to remove sin; His goal is to have the bride...As the Bridegroom, He must have a wedding.

We are on earth preparing to become the bride to meet Him, and He is on the throne in the third heaven prepared to come as the Bridegroom to meet us. Therefore, He is coming as the Bridegroom, and we are going as the bride. When we meet Him at His coming back, we shall have a wedding.

The readiness of the bride [[Rev. 19:7b](#)] depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers. Furthermore, the overcomers are not separate individuals but a corporate bride. For this, building is needed. The overcomers are not only mature in life but are also built together as one bride.

The consummation of the church as the counterpart of Christ will be the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth for eternity...The New Jerusalem is a living composition of all the saints redeemed by God throughout all generations. It is the bride of Christ as His counterpart [cf. [Rev. 21:2](#)]. As the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem comes out of Christ and becomes His counterpart. She is prepared by participating in the riches of the life and nature of Christ...The bride in the millennium will include only the overcoming saints, but the wife in the new heaven and new earth will include all the redeemed and regenerated sons of God ([v. 7](#)). (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2278-2280)

The life seen in [Genesis 2](#) is the flowing life, the transforming life, and the building life. This life flows within us, transforms us, and eventually builds us up as the bride of Christ. This bride, the New Jerusalem, will fulfill the two aspects of the purpose of God. First, the New Jerusalem will be the full expression of God in God's full image ([Rev. 21:11](#); cf. [4:3](#)). Second, this New Jerusalem will subdue the enemy, conquer the earth, and exercise God's authority over the entire universe, especially over the creeping things ([22:5](#); [21:15](#); cf. [v. 8](#); [20:10](#), [14-15](#))...Thus, God's purpose is fully fulfilled by the New Jerusalem, which is the result, the issue, the ultimate consummation of life. What we believers need is life, and this life is nothing less than the Triune God Himself, the Father in the Son and the Son as the Spirit. May we all be brought into the enjoyment and experience of this flowing, transforming, and building life to be prepared as the bride that will bring Christ back. (*CWWL*, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," p. 402)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 213—215; *CWWL*, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," ch. 2

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« WEEK 2 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

1 John 4:21

And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.

2 Cor. 5:14

For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died.

We are God's species because we have been born of Him to have His life and nature ([John 1:12-13](#)). We have been regenerated to be God's species, God's kind, and God is love. Since we become God in His life and nature, we also should be love...As His species, we should be love because He is love.

God does not want us to love with our natural love but with Him as our love. God created man in His image ([Gen. 1:26](#)), which means that He created man according to what He is...According to the revelation in the Holy Scriptures, God's first attribute is love...Although created man does not have the reality of love, there is something in his created being that wants to love others...But that is just a human virtue, the very expression of the divine attribute of love. When we were regenerated, God infused us with Himself as love. We love Him because He first loved us [[1 John 4:8, 19](#)]. He initiated this love. (*CWWL, 1994–1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," p. 121*)

Today's Reading

God's predestination of us unto the divine sonship was motivated by the divine love...God predestinated us unto sonship in love [[Eph. 1:4-5](#)]. [John 3:16](#) says that God so loved the world. He loved us before the foundation of the world.

God's giving of His only begotten Son to us that we may be saved from perdition judicially through His death and have the eternal life organically in His resurrection was motivated by the divine love ([3:16](#); [1 John 4:9-10](#))...[First John 4:10](#) says that God sent His Son to us as a propitiation for our sins. This is judicial through His death. [Verse 9](#) says that God sent His Son to us that we may have life and live through Him. This is organic in His resurrection. [John 3:16](#) should be read with [1 John 4:9-10](#).

God's love is the source of the grace of Christ dispensed to us through the fellowship of the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). This is for us to enjoy the processed and consummated Triune God.

God's love motivates us, His children, to love our enemies that we may be perfect as He is; He loves the fallen human race, who became His enemies, by causing His sun (signifying Christ) to rise on the evil and the good indiscriminately and sending rain (signifying the Spirit) on the just and the unjust equally; thus, we may become the sons of the heavenly Father who are sanctified from the tax collectors and the Gentiles (Matt. 5:43-48). The entire human race became His enemies, but God still loves the human race. If God sent Christ to us with discrimination, we would be disqualified from receiving His salvation. He causes His sun to rise first on the evil and then on the good without discrimination.

We should be like God in our love for others...The Lord said, "If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?" (v. 46). If we love only those who love us, we are of the same species as the tax collectors. But we are of the super, divine species, so we love the evil ones, our enemies, as well as the good ones. This shows how God as love prevails.

A proof that our vital group is prevailing is that we love people without any discrimination...While Christ was being crucified on the cross, two robbers were crucified with Him (27:38). One of them said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (v. 43). The first one saved by Christ through His crucifixion was not a gentleman but a criminal, a robber, sentenced to death.

Teaching without love may puff us up [1 Cor. 8:1b]. We may listen to the messages of the ministry and become puffed up with mere knowledge. This does not build up. Love builds up. (CWWL, 1994–1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," pp. 121-123)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1994–1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," ch. 8

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« WEEK 2 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 2:18

And Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart.

Gen. 2:20

And the man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of heaven and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper as his counterpart.

God desired to have both Adam *and Eve* [cf. [Gen. 2:18](#)]. His purpose is to have a victorious Christ plus a victorious church, a Christ who has overcome the work of the devil plus a church which has overthrown the work of the devil. His purpose is to have a ruling Christ and a ruling church. This is what God planned for His own pleasure, and He has performed it for His own satisfaction...God desired to have Christ, and God also desired to have a church which is exactly like Christ. God not only desired that Christ would have dominion; He also wants the church to have dominion. God allows the devil on earth because He said, “Let them,” Christ and the church, “have dominion” [[1:26](#)]. God purposed that the church, as Christ’s counterpart, should take part in dealing with Satan. If the church does not match Christ, God’s purpose will not be fulfilled. In warfare Christ needs a help meet, and even in glory He also needs a help meet. God requires the church to be the same as Christ in every respect. It is God’s desire that Christ should have a help meet. (*CWWN*, vol. 34, “The Glorious Church,” p. 26)

Today’s Reading

Although man was perfect, he was not complete. For example, a human head is perfect, but without the body it is incomplete...Although [a person] is perfect, he needs a counterpart to complete him...A man and wife, resembling the two halves of a watermelon, together make a complete unit. This is why I frequently tell the young people to get married. If you are unmarried, though you may be a perfect person you are incomplete. Thus, as God looked at Adam, He seemed to say, “Adam, you are perfect,

but you are only a half a unit. You are too lonely. I will make a complement for you. I will make you a counterpart.”

Man is a type of God, the real, universal Husband. Before God had secured the proper man, He was alone. It was not good for God to be alone. Although God is absolutely and eternally perfect, He is not complete. To say that God is imperfect is to speak blasphemy. Our God is eternally perfect. Nevertheless, without the church He is incomplete. Without the church He is like a husband without a wife or like a head without a body. Therefore, when God said that it was not good for Adam to be alone, it meant that God Himself was incomplete and that it was not good for Him to be alone. Adam’s need for a wife typifies and portrays God’s need to have a complement. If we see this, every aspect of [Genesis 2](#) will be clear.

Out of the ground God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them to Adam ([Gen. 2:19](#)). When God brought a horse to Adam, perhaps Adam said, “This is a horse. This animal can never match me because it has four feet and I have two.” When God brought a cow before Adam, perhaps Adam said, “This is a cow. It has two horns. It does not resemble me and it cannot be a complement to me.” God brought item after item to Adam, and Adam gave names to all the cattle, to all the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field, but he did not find among them a complement for himself ([Gen. 2:20](#)), one that could match him. Although Adam, having wisdom, named all the creatures, he seemed to say, “All of them are far removed from me. They don’t look like me. How can I have any of them as my counterpart?” After fulfilling the task of naming all the creatures, Adam, in a sense, was disappointed. Among the entire creation he could not find one to match him, to complement him. However, God knew exactly what He was doing. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 216-217)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1991–1992, vol. 1, “The Central Line of the Divine Revelation,” ch. 7; CWWN, vol. 34, “The Glorious Church,” chs. 2—3

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« WEEK 2 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 2:21

And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place.

John 12:24

Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

One day the real Adam was put to sleep on the cross where He slept for six hours, from nine o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon ([Mark 15:25, 33](#)). This was signified by the phrase in [Genesis 2](#) which said that “God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man” and that “He took one of his ribs” to build him a wife ([Gen. 2:21](#)). That sleep of Adam’s was a type of Christ’s death on the cross for producing the church. This is the life-releasing, life-imparting, life-propagating, life-multiplying, and life-reproducing death of Christ, which is signified by a grain of wheat falling into the ground to die and to grow up in order to produce many grains ([John 12:24](#)) for the making of the loaf which is the Body, the church ([1 Cor. 10:17](#)). By producing the church in this way God in Christ has been wrought into man as life. First, God became a man. Then this man with the divine life and nature was multiplied through death and resurrection into many believers who become the many members to compose the real Eve to match Him and to complement Him. It is through this process that God in Christ has been wrought into man with His life and nature that man in life and nature can be the same as He is in order to match Him as His complement. (*Life-study of Genesis*, p. 219)

Today’s Reading

At the end of Christ’s crucifixion, the Jews, who did not want the bodies of the crucified criminals to remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, asked Pilate to have their legs broken ([John 19:31](#)). When the soldiers came to Jesus to break His legs, they found that He had died already and that there was no need for them to break His bones. This fulfilled the Scripture which said, “No bone of His shall be broken” ([John 19:32-33, 36](#); [Exo. 12:46](#); [Num. 9:12](#); [Psa. 34:20](#)). Nevertheless, the soldiers pierced His

side and blood and water came out ([John 19:34](#)). The blood was for redemption ([Heb. 9:22](#); [1 Pet. 1:18-19](#)). What does the water signify? In [Exodus 17:6](#) we find the type of the smitten rock ([1 Cor. 10:4](#)). After the rock was smitten, it was cleft, and living water came forth. Jesus on the cross was smitten with the rod of Moses, that is, by the law of God. He was cleft. His side was pierced, and water came forth. This water was the flow of His divine life signifying the life which produces the church.

This life was typified by the rib, a piece of bone taken out of Adam's opened side, of which Eve was produced and built. Hence, the bone typifies the divine life that is signified by the water flowing out of Christ's side. None of His bones was broken. This signifies that His divine life cannot be broken. His physical life was killed, but nothing could break His divine life which flows out to produce the church.

As Adam's sleep typifies the death of Christ, so his waking signifies the resurrection of Christ. After waking, Adam became another person with Eve produced out of him. After His resurrection Christ also became another person with the church brought forth out of Him. As Adam eventually awoke from his sleep to take Eve as his counterpart, so Christ was also resurrected from the dead to take the church as His complement.

When Adam awoke from his sleep, he immediately discovered that Eve, who was builded with his rib, was present. Likewise, when Christ was resurrected from the dead ([1 Cor. 15:20](#)), the church was brought forth with His divine life. Through His death the divine life within Him was released and through His resurrection this released, divine life was imparted into us who believe in Him...As regenerated ones [cf. [1 Pet. 1:3](#)] who have Him as life and who live by Him, we compose His church, the real Eve in resurrection. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 219-220)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msg. 17; *CWWL*, 1963, vol. 2, "The Central Thought of God," chs. 1—2, 4

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« WEEK 2 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 2:23

And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman because out of Man this one was taken.

Eph. 5:32

This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

In [Genesis 2](#) there is the picture of how the bride of Christ comes into being. Before God prepared a bride for Adam, He brought all the animals to Adam, and Adam named each one. But none of these created things matched Adam, and they could not be his counterpart ([vv. 19-20](#)). Then God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam ([v. 21](#)). Adam is a type of Christ ([Rom. 5:14](#)), and his sleep is a type of Christ's death.

During Adam's sleep, God took one of his ribs from his side. Likewise, when Christ was sleeping on the cross, something came out of His side. [John 19:34](#) tells us that when the soldier pierced His side, out came blood and water. At Adam's time there was no sin, so there was no need of redemption. It was not until [Genesis 3](#) that sin came in. Thus, all that came out of Adam's side was the rib without the blood. However, by the time that Christ was sleeping on the cross, there was the problem of sin. Thus, His death must deal with this sin problem. The blood came out of Christ's side for redemption. Following the blood, the water came out, which is the flowing life to produce the church. This divine, flowing, uncreated life is typified by the rib taken out of Adam's side.

The rib taken out of Adam signifies the resurrection life, and God built a woman with the rib of Adam. Now God builds up the church with the resurrection life of Christ...Eve was bone of Adam's bones and flesh of Adam's flesh. Today we as the church are a part of Christ ([Eph. 5:30-32](#)). (*CWWL*, 1969, vol. 2, "The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures," pp. 401-402)

Today's Reading

The church is nothing more than a pure product out of Christ...Eve was fully, completely, and purely produced out of Adam ([Gen. 2:21-24](#))...Whatever was in Eve and whatever Eve was, was Adam. Eve was a full reproduction of Adam. Adam and

Eve are a type of Christ and the church ([Eph. 5:30-32](#); [Gen. 2:22-24](#)). The church must also be one element—the element of Christ.

After Christ terminated the entire old creation through His all-inclusive death, the church was produced in His resurrection ([1 Pet. 1:3](#); [Eph. 2:6](#))...The church is a new creation created in Christ's resurrection and by the resurrected Christ. We must see this vision. In addition to seeing that the church was produced in Christ's resurrection, we must also see where the church is. The church today is in Christ in ascension. [Ephesians 2:6](#) tells us that the church has been resurrected with Christ, and now the church is seated in the heavenlies with Christ. Therefore, the church is absolutely and purely of the element of Christ, absolutely in resurrection, and absolutely remaining in the heavenlies with Christ. The English language does not give us adequate adjective forms for the nouns *Christ* and *resurrection*. We must, therefore, invent some new vocabulary words to communicate such a vision of the church. We may say that today the church is “Christly,” “resurrectionly,” and heavenly. These three adjectives describe the fact conveyed in the Bible. The church is of Christ; the church is of resurrection; the church is of the heavens. The church is Christly, resurrectionly, and heavenly. With the church there is no element other than Christ. Such a vision will govern you to the uttermost and will rule out everything that is not Christly (of Christ), resurrectionly (of resurrection), or heavenly (of the heavens). With the believers there is still the flesh of sin, but with the church there is no flesh of sin because the church was born in resurrection ([1 Pet. 1:3](#)). The church is a matter in Christ, in resurrection, and in Christ's ascension in the heavenlies. (*CWWL*, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 2: The Vision of the Lord’s Recovery,” pp. 115-116)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 2: The Vision of the Lord’s Recovery,” ch. 3

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« WEEK 2 — HYMN

Hymns, #840

- 1 Freed from self and Adam's nature,
Lord, I would be built by Thee
With the saints into Thy temple,
Where Thy glory we shall see.
From peculiar traits deliver,
From my independent ways,
That a dwelling place for Thee, Lord,
We will be through all our days.
- 2 By Thy life and by its flowing,
I can grow and be transformed,
With the saints coordinated,
Built up, to Thee conformed;
Keep the order in the Body,
There to function in Thy will,
Ever serving, helping others,
All Thy purpose to fulfill.
- 3 In my knowledge and experience
I would not exalted be,
But submitting and accepting,
Let the Body balance me.
Holding fast the Head, and growing
With His increase, in His way,
By the joints and bands supplying,
Knit together day by day.
- 4 By Thy Spirit daily strengthened
In the inner man with might,
I would know Thy love surpassing,
Know Thy breadth and length and height;
Ever of Thy riches taking,
Unto all Thy fullness filled,
Ever growing into manhood,
That Thy Body Thou may build.

5 In God's house and in Thy Body
Built up I long to be,
That within this corporate vessel
All shall then Thy glory see,
That Thy bride, the glorious city,
May appear upon the earth,
As a lampstand brightly beaming
To express to all Thy worth.

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WEEK 3 — OUTLINE

The Maturity of the Bride

Scripture Reading: [Rev. 19:6-9](#); [John 3:29](#); [James 5:7](#); [Matt. 5:48](#); [Col. 1:28-29](#); [3:10-11](#)

Day 1 >>

I. The meaning of the word *mature* in Greek is “at the end point”:

- A. To be transformed is to be metabolically changed in our natural life; to be matured is to be filled with the divine life that changes us—[Heb. 6:1](#); [Col. 4:12](#); [Rom. 12:2](#); [2 Pet. 1:3](#).
- B. The last stage of transformation is maturity, the fullness of life—[v. 4](#).
- C. A mature believer knows and cares for the Body of Christ, being Body-conscious and Body-centered—[1 Cor. 12:16, 18-19, 21, 24](#).

<< Day 2 >>

II. As used in the New Testament, the word *mature* refers to the believers’ being full-grown and perfected in the life of Christ, which they received at the time of regeneration—[Titus 3:5](#); [1 Pet. 1:3, 23](#); [Matt. 5:48](#):

- A. We should never be content with ourselves but pursue growth and maturity in the life of Christ—[Phil. 3:12, 14](#).
- B. We need to go on, to be brought on, to maturity by forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, pursuing toward the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ for the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom—[vv. 12-15](#).
- C. The prerequisite for maturity in the spiritual life is to grow continually in the divine life—[Eph. 4:15](#).
- D. The ultimate issue of the believers’ growth and maturity in the life of Christ is the full-grown man—the church as the Body of Christ growing into a mature man—[v. 13](#).

<< Day 3 >>

III. In his Epistle, James uses the illustration of a farmer awaiting with long-suffering the precious fruit of the earth—[5:7](#):

- A. The Lord Jesus is actually the real Farmer, the unique Farmer—[Matt. 13:3](#).
- B. While we are awaiting with long-suffering the Lord’s coming, He, as the real Farmer, is awaiting with patience our maturity in life, as the firstfruits and

harvest of His field—[Rev. 14:4, 14-15](#).

C. If we pray, “Lord, come back quickly,” the Lord may say, “While you are awaiting My coming back, I am awaiting your maturity; only your maturity can hasten My coming back.”

D. It is a great help for us to realize that if we are serious about awaiting the Lord’s coming back, we need to grow in life unto maturity.

IV. To be mature is to have Christ fully formed in us; it also means that we have been fully transformed into His image—[Gal. 4:19](#); [2 Cor. 3:18](#):

A. Since the time of our regeneration, the Lord has been working in us so that we may have His image—[v. 18](#); [Rom. 8:29](#).

B. When the Lord has fully worked His image into us and is fully expressed through us, we will be mature in life—[Eph. 3:16-17](#).

V. [Chapter 3 of Song of Songs](#) shows us the maturity of the seeking one, and [chapter 4](#) continues by explaining that such maturity is reached by the subduing of the will; the secret of the maturity of the seeking one is that her will has been completely subdued and resurrected—[v. 4](#):

A. The neck signifies the human will under God; the Lord considers the submission of our will a most beautiful thing—[vv. 1a, 4](#).

B. If we have a submissive will, our will is expressed like the tower of David that holds all kinds of weapons:

1. First, our will must be subdued; then it will be strong in resurrection and like the tower of David, the armory for the spiritual warfare—[Eph. 6:10](#).

2. The weapons for spiritual warfare are kept in our subdued and resurrected will—[2 Cor. 10:3-5](#).

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VI. The goal of Paul’s ministry was to present every man mature, full-grown, in Christ for the one new man—[Col. 1:28-29](#); [3:10-11](#):

A. The Greek word rendered “full-grown” in [Colossians 1:28](#) may also be translated “perfect,” “complete,” or “mature.”

B. Paul’s ministry was to dispense Christ into others so that they would be perfect and complete by maturing in Christ unto full growth.

VII. [Genesis 37—47](#) is a record of the process of Jacob’s maturity:

A. In [Genesis 27](#) we see a supplanter; in [chapter 37](#), a transformed man; and at the end of [chapter 47](#), a mature person.

B. The last stage of transformation is maturity, the fullness of life:

1. God's eternal purpose can only be accomplished through our transformation and maturity—[1:26](#); [Col. 1:28](#); [2:19](#).
 2. Maturity is a matter of having the divine life imparted into us again and again until we have the fullness of life—[John 10:10](#).
- C. Maturity is a matter of the enlargement of capacity—[Psa. 4:1](#):
1. Maturity in life is the sum total of receiving the discipline of the Holy Spirit—[Heb. 12:5-11](#).
 2. Others may see a person who has matured in life, but they cannot see the accumulated discipline of the Holy Spirit which that person has received secretly day after day throughout the years—[2 Cor. 1:8-10](#); [Gen. 47:7, 10](#).

<< Day 5 >>

- D. God will sovereignly use persons, things, and events to empty us of everything that has filled us and to take away every preoccupation so that we may have an increased capacity to be filled with God—[Luke 1:53](#); [Matt. 5:6](#).
- E. The life of Jacob reveals that everything that happens to us is under God's sovereignty for our transformation and maturity; nothing is accidental:
1. In order to become mature, Jacob first had to suffer the loss of Joseph, the treasure of his heart—[Gen. 37:31-35](#).
 2. A mature believer has learned that God is merciful and all-sufficient to meet his needs in every kind of situation—[43:11, 13-14](#); [17:1](#); [Phil. 1:19-21a](#); [4:11-12](#); cf. [1 Tim. 6:6-8](#).
 3. His trust and rest are altogether in the mercy of his all-sufficient God, no longer in himself or in his ability—[Rom. 9:16](#).
 4. The strongest sign of Jacob's maturity was his blessing others—[Gen. 47:7, 10](#); [48:14-16](#); [Heb. 7:7](#).

<< Day 6 >>

VIII. The mature bride is the goal of God's will and purpose—[Rev. 19:7-9](#):

- A. The readiness of the corporate bride depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers—[v. 7](#); [Heb. 6:1](#); [Phil. 3:12-15](#); [Eph. 4:13](#).
- B. The marriage of the Lamb is the issue of the completion of God's New Testament economy, which is to obtain for Christ a bride, the church, through His judicial redemption and by His organic salvation in His divine life—[Gen. 2:22](#); [Rom. 5:10](#); [Rev. 19:7-9](#); [21:2](#).
- C. In the Gospel of John, Christ is revealed both as the Lamb who came to take away sin and as the Bridegroom who came that He might have the bride—

[3:29](#).

D. Christ's goal is not to remove sin; it is to have the bride:

1. In the book of Revelation, we see that Christ is the Lamb and the coming Bridegroom; therefore, as the Bridegroom, He must have a wedding—[19:7-9](#).
2. The wedding of the Lamb will be a universal wedding; it will be the marriage of the Redeemer and the redeemed.
3. Christ is coming as the Bridegroom, and we are going as the bride.

E. A very crucial matter is the readiness of the bride—[v. 7](#):

1. According to [Revelation 19:8 and 9](#), the wife, the bride of Christ, here consists only of the overcoming believers during the millennium.
2. The readiness of the bride depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers, who are not separate individuals but the corporate bride.
3. In [Revelation 19:6](#) the voice of the great multitude proclaims, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns”:
 - a. The reign of God, the kingdom, is related to the marriage of the Lamb.
 - b. The wedding will bring in the reign of the Lord, the kingdom, because all the guests called to the wedding will be both the corporate bride and the co-kings of the Bridegroom; all His co-kings will be His corporate bride.
 - c. To the overcomers, the thousand years of the millennial kingdom will be a wedding feast.
 - d. Everyone invited to the wedding feast will also participate in the thousand-year reign as kings.
 - e. For the overcomers, reigning with Christ in the kingdom will be the wedding feast—[v. 9](#).

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Morning Nourishment

Heb. 6:1

Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity...

Rom. 12:2

And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

We need to point out the difference between transformation and maturity. The last stage of transformation is maturity. Maturity means the fullness of life...The more life we have, the more mature we are. An infant is obviously not mature, but a grown man is mature. For a human being to be mature means that his life has come into fullness.

Transformation is a metabolic change in life. Thus, transformation is not a matter of fullness; it is a matter of change...Only through transformation can we reach maturity. We have a natural life, but this life is not good for God's economy. Although our natural life does not need to be replaced, it does need to be metabolically changed. We must not only have an outward change in appearance, but also an inward change in nature. Although our human life is necessary for God's economy, it should not remain a natural human life; it should be a human life that has been transformed in nature so that the divine life may be mingled with the transformed human life to become one. This is a deep matter. (*Life-study of Genesis*, p. 1191)

Today's Reading

At least two verses in the New Testament unveil the matter of transformation...The Greek word translated "transformed" in [Romans 12:2](#) also appears in [2 Corinthians 3:18](#). According to the Greek, this verse should be rendered, "But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit." The word "transformed" in these verses indicates that in our Christian life we need a metabolic

change. We do not need outward correction and alteration; rather, we need an inward change in nature and in life.

This metabolic change begins with regeneration...At regeneration a new life, the divine life, was put into our spirit. From the time of our regeneration, this life has been transforming our natural life. As the divine life changes our natural life, it imparts more and more of the divine life into our being. Therefore, transformation is the change of our natural life. When this change reaches the point of fullness, the time of maturity has come...Maturity is not a matter of our being changed; it is a matter of having the divine life imparted to us again and again until we have the fullness of life.

Now we must consider how Jacob, a transformed person, could be filled with life. Human beings are vessels.

From the selling of Joseph to the sending of Jacob's sons to Egypt was a period of at least twenty years.

During these silent years Jacob was a person without any ambitions, interests, or things to do. This must have been the time God imparted Himself into Jacob more and more.

The only thing that could not be taken away from Jacob was God's presence. At Hebron Jacob constantly lived in fellowship with God. Through the loss of Joseph, Jacob became a jar that was absolutely open to God...Now, after the loss of Joseph, Jacob was free from every frustration and was completely open to the Lord. Undoubtedly, Jacob thought about Joseph day after day. He had concluded that Joseph had been devoured by an evil beast, but this had not been confirmed. Hence, Jacob might have thought that perhaps he would see Joseph again. This pressed Jacob to God and opened him up to God. The more he thought about Joseph, the more open he was. During all these years, Jacob was a jar open to the heavens, and the heavenly rain was continuously falling into him. In this period of time Jacob was daily in the presence of God, being filled with the divine life. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 1191-1195)

Further Reading: Life-study of Hebrews, msg. 30; Life-study of Genesis, msg. 62

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« WEEK 3 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Phil. 3:12-15

...I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus...One thing *I do*: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called *me* upward. Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind...

The apostle Paul tells us in [Philippians 3:12-15](#) how he pursued growth and maturity in the life of Christ. In this matter, he was never contented with himself but always pursued, forgetting the things which were behind and stretching forward to the things which were before, pressing toward Christ, who is the goal and the mark. This he did in order to gain Christ that he might grow and mature in His life. With his own pursuit as the pattern, he exhorted the believers whom he was leading and caring for to be like him, to pursue in the life of Christ, and to gain Christ fully in order that they might grow and mature. Finally, Paul said that as many of us as are (relatively) full-grown should have this mind and set this as the goal. (*Life Lessons*, vol. 4, pp. 71-72)

Today's Reading

The Lord commands us to be perfect (in life) as our heavenly Father is perfect [[Matt. 5:48](#)]. To be perfect in life is to grow and mature in life. The Lord commands us in this way in the conclusion of the law of the new life in the kingdom of the heavens because we are children born of our Father with our Father's life. This life is able to make us perfect in the life of our Father, as our Father is perfect. Therefore, this commandment of the Lord is based upon the divine life of the Father. It is also fulfilled by the divine life of the Father. The divine life of the Father is able to make us perfect in life as He is perfect. This is not only the Lord's commandment to us but also the Lord's expectation concerning us. We should care for the Lord's heart's desire, keep His commandment, and grow and mature by the Father's life within us, thus accomplishing the will of the Triune God.

“The word of the beginning of Christ” [[Heb. 6:1](#)] refers to the word in the gospel concerning Christ's saving us and regenerating us, that is, the word in God's salvation

which initiates us in the spiritual life. This verse exhorts us to leave the word of the beginning, that is, to leave the beginning of our spiritual life, and to be brought on to perfection in the spiritual life. This is to grow and mature in the spiritual life.

The prerequisite for maturity in the spiritual life is to grow continually in this life. As soon as a believer is regenerated and becomes a newborn babe spiritually, he should long for God's word in the Bible as the guileless milk that he may grow in his spiritual life [[1 Pet. 2:2](#)].

In the spiritual life, a believer is, on the one hand, a person with the spiritual life and, on the other hand, like a plant cultivated on God's farm ([1 Cor. 3:5-9](#)). Whether as a person or like a plant, a believer needs to grow that he may become mature. Therefore, continuing growth is a prerequisite for becoming full-grown and mature.

“But holding to truth [Christ] in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ” ([Eph. 4:15](#)). We grow in the spiritual life by holding in love to Christ as the truth and growing up into Christ as the Head in all things. This kind of growth, which takes Christ as the truth and which grows into Christ, is a further prerequisite for our becoming full-grown and mature.

[Colossians 2:19](#) indicates that the church as the Body of Christ grows with the growth of God by holding Christ as the Head, by receiving the rich supply from Him, the Head, through the joints of His Body, and by being knit together by the bands of His Body. This growth in the Body of Christ is also a prerequisite for our growth and maturity in the life of Christ. This prerequisite consummates in the growth of this Body of Christ. (*Life Lessons*, vol. 4, pp. 70-73)

Further Reading: Life Lessons, vol. 4, lsn. 46

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« WEEK 3 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

James 5:7

Therefore be long-suffering, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer eagerly awaits the precious fruit of the earth, exercising long-suffering over it until it receives the early and late rain.

S.S. 4:4

Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory: A thousand bucklers hang on it, all the shields of the mighty men.

In [James 5:7](#) James uses the illustration of a farmer eagerly awaiting with long-suffering the precious fruit of the earth...The Lord Jesus is actually the real Farmer, the unique Farmer. As we are awaiting His coming, He, as the real Farmer, is awaiting our maturity. We may pray, “Lord, come back quickly.” However, He may say, “My children, mature quicker. While you are awaiting My coming back, I am awaiting your maturity. Do you know why it has been nearly two thousand years and I have not yet come back? The reason is that My people are not yet matured. Only your maturity can hasten My coming back.”

It is a great help for us to realize that if we are serious about awaiting the Lord’s coming back, we need to grow in life. Most Christians today view the Lord’s coming in an altogether objective way, in a way that has nothing to do with our spiritual condition or spiritual growth. Their expectation is that one day the Lord will suddenly come and that His coming will have nothing to do with their maturity. (*Life-study of James*, pp. 92-93)

Today’s Reading

[In [Song of Songs 4:4](#)] the Lord likens [the seeking one’s] neck to the tower of David...Hair signifies our will [[v. 1](#)], and...our neck also signifies our will. Those who are rebellious toward God in the Bible are called stiff-necked ([Exo. 32:9](#); [Acts 7:51](#))...A flock of goats appearing on the mountain shows the subduing of her will, and the tower of David illustrates how strong her will is in resurrection. First of all, our will must be subdued; then it must be strong in resurrection. The natural will must be dealt with, and then we will have a resurrected will. The crucified and subdued will is

just like a flock of goats standing on a mountainside, but the resurrected will must be like the tower of David builded up as an armory.

First, our will must be subdued; then it will be resurrected like the tower of David, the armory for the spiritual warfare...If our will has never been subdued by the Lord, it can never be a strong armory to keep all the weapons for spiritual warfare. All the weapons are mostly defensive, not offensive...Bucklers and shields are all for protection in order to stand. In spiritual warfare, we are not so much on the offensive as we are on the defensive, standing against all the devilish, subtle attacks of the enemy. Most of the items of the armor mentioned in [Ephesians 6](#) are also defensive. There is really no need for us to fight; the Lord has won the battle already.

We simply need to stand and resist all the enemy's attacks. The bucklers and the shields that protect us against the arrows of the enemy are kept in this tower, which is the subdued and resurrected will of the Lord's seeking one. This is the real maturity in life.

An unsubdued will is, on the one hand, stubborn, and on the other hand, weak. When the enemy comes, the stubborn, unsubdued will always makes an unconditional surrender. We all know this by our own experience...But if we have a submissive will, a will that has been subdued like a flock of goats on a mountainside, our will is expressed like a tower of David. When the enemy comes, our will is like the tower of David that holds all kinds of weapons against his attacks.

The secret of the maturity of the seeking one in [Song of Songs 3](#) is that her will has been completely subdued and resurrected. (*CWWL*, 1972, vol. 1, "Life and Building as Portrayed in the Song of Songs," pp. 273-274)

Further Reading: *CWWL*, 1972, vol. 1, "Life and Building as Portrayed in the Song of Songs," ch. 6

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<< WEEK 3 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Col. 1:28

Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ.

Heb. 12:10

For they disciplined for a few days as it seemed good to them; but He, for what is profitable that we might partake of His holiness.

The meaning of the word *mature* in Greek is “at the end point.”...This word is used many times in the New Testament, referring to the believers’ being full-grown, mature, and perfected in the life of God...Although we receive the life of God when we are regenerated, after regeneration we still need to grow and mature unto perfection in this life.

Colossians 1:28 and **4:12** show us that the laboring of the apostles in Christ for the believers and their struggling in prayers for them are all for the believers’ growth and maturity, that they may be presented and displayed full-grown and mature before Christ. (*Life Lessons*, vol. 4, pp. 69-70)

Today’s Reading

The discipline of the Holy Spirit refers to what the Holy Spirit is doing in our outward environment; it refers to His arranging of all people, things, and happenings, through which we are being disciplined.

The major work of God toward us through the Holy Spirit, aside from the Holy Spirit as the anointing, is in His outward discipline...For example, **Romans 8**, which speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit, first tells us that the Holy Spirit, which contains the law of life, is able to set us free from sin and that by Him we can put to death the practices of the body. This chapter also tells us that the Holy Spirit guides us so that we may live according to Him and finally, that He helps us in our weaknesses and prays for us. All these activities are the work of the Holy Spirit within us as the anointing. In the latter part of this chapter we read that “all things work together for good to those who love God” (v. 28). This speaks of the discipline of the Holy Spirit in our outward environment. The work of this outward discipline coordinates with His inward moving and leading. The Holy Spirit arranges and determines all that comes upon us according

to the will of God. Although in many instances this causes temporal pain and trouble, in the end it is for the good of those who love God, that they may be conformed to the image of His Son. This arrangement is what we mean by the discipline of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit moves and anoints within us and we obey the feeling that He imparts, God's will is accomplished, and His attributes are increased within us. Therefore, the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit is to some extent sufficient for the obedient ones. However, if we are stubborn, if we do not obey the inner anointing and rebel time after time, the Holy Spirit is compelled to raise up an environment to chasten and discipline us, thereby causing us to submit. Therefore, the anointing of the Holy Spirit within us is a sweet act of God's love toward us and is His original desire, while the outward discipline of the Holy Spirit is an act of God's hand, an act that He is compelled to perform. (*CWWL*, 1953, vol. 3, "The Experience of Life," pp. 429-430)

Maturity is a matter of the enlargement of capacity...To escape God's arrangement just one time is to lose an opportunity to have our capacity enlarged...A believer can never be the same after passing through suffering...For this reason, when believers are passing through suffering, they must pay attention and they must realize that maturity in life is the sum total of receiving the discipline of the Holy Spirit. People may see a person who has matured in life, but they cannot see the accumulated discipline of the Holy Spirit which that person has received secretly day by day throughout the years. (*Watchman Nee—a Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age*, pp. 143-144)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, "The Experience of Life," ch. 12

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« WEEK 3 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 43:14

And may the All-sufficient God grant you mercy before the man...

Gen. 48:15-16

And he blessed Joseph and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has shepherded me all my life to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys...

Jacob's history must also become our biography. We must believe that everything in our daily life is under God's sovereign hand. Everything that happened to Jacob was for his transformation and maturity. In order to be transformed, Jacob had to be pressed into situations that gave him no choice except to undergo a change...God will sovereignly use persons, things, and events to empty us of everything that has filled us and to take away every preoccupation so that we may have an increased capacity to be filled with God...The two main aspects of Jacob's experience are transformation and maturity...The Lord is working among us, on us, and in us to transform us and to cause us to mature. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 1199-1200)

Today's Reading

From Jacob's experience we see that everything that happens to us is under God's sovereignty for our transformation and maturity. Nothing is accidental. God's eternal purpose can only be accomplished through our transformation and maturity.

In his early days Jacob always trusted in his own skill and ability. However, after the dealings in the last stage, his trust was no longer in himself, but in God. Jacob had come to know God's mercy. In his experiences through all his life, he eventually realized that it was God's mercy, not his skill and ability, that had counted in his situations. And he had also learned that this merciful God is all-sufficient, not only almighty, to meet his needs in every kind of situation. Hence, Jacob said to his sons, "May the All-sufficient God grant you mercy before the man" ([Gen. 43:14](#)). Now his trust and rest are altogether in the mercy of his all-sufficient God, no longer in himself and in his ability. Here we see a man who has been fully transformed for maturity.

When Jacob went to Egypt, he did not engage in any activity for himself. This also is a manifestation of his maturity...He was fully satisfied and rested absolutely in God's sovereignty. He did not depend upon his own endeavors. From his experience through the years, he had come to know that his destiny was in the hands of God, not in his own hands. As Jacob was about to bless the two sons of Joseph, he spoke of God as the One who had shepherded him all his life long (48:15-16). Jacob's word in 48:15 and 16 is a reference to the Triune God. Here we see the Triune God in Jacob's experience, not in doctrine...Here we see a threefold mention of God: the God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who shepherded Jacob his whole life long, and the Angel who delivered him from evil. The God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked must be the Father; the God who shepherded Jacob his whole life must be the Spirit; and the Angel who redeemed him from all evil must be the Son. This is the Triune God in Jacob's experience.

Now we come to the strongest sign of Jacob's maturity: his blessing of others. The first thing Jacob did after arriving in Egypt was bless Pharaoh (47:7, 10). Although Pharaoh was the highest person on earth, he was under Jacob's blessing hand. According to Hebrews 7:7, "the lesser is blessed by the greater." Thus, the fact that Jacob blessed Pharaoh was a proof that he was greater than Pharaoh. After Jacob had been ushered into Pharaoh's presence, he did not speak to him in a polite, political way. He stretched forth his hand and blessed him. This is absolutely different from human culture and religion. As Jacob was leaving Pharaoh's presence, he blessed him again.

Blessing is the overflow of life, the overflow of God through someone's maturity in life. In order to bless others, we must be filled to the brim with life so that life overflows to them. (Gen. 48:8-20). (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 1201, 1210-1211)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msg. 93

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<< WEEK 3 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 19:7

...The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Rev. 19:9

And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb...

Rev. 20:6

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

The mature life becomes the reigning life...We all should have the aspect of maturity and the aspect of reigning. Actually, it was not Joseph who was reigning in Egypt—it was Jacob, Israel. If you could have asked an Egyptian who was reigning over him, he would have said that a Hebrew, an Israelite, was reigning. Israel was reigning in Egypt because Israel had matured in life. Only a matured life can be used by God for His kingdom, for His reigning. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 1200-1201)

Today's Reading

The marriage of the Lamb will come after the rapture of the majority of the believers (1 [Thes. 4:15-17](#))...The marriage of the Lamb will also follow the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ (2 [Cor. 5:10](#)). After all the raptures and before the wedding, there will be the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ to determine which believers will be qualified for the wedding feast. If you are rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ, you will participate in the wedding feast. If you are not rewarded but are disapproved of by the Lord, you will not perish; yet you will suffer a loss like that described in 1 [Corinthians 3:15](#). This verse says, “If anyone’s work is consumed, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” The saved ones who suffer loss will certainly miss the wedding feast. According to [Matthew 25:1-13](#), the five prudent virgins will be admitted to the wedding feast, and the five foolish ones will be rejected.

The judgment at the judgment seat of Christ will not determine whether or not we will be saved or perish; it will decide whether we will receive a reward from the Lord or suffer a loss. Only the saved will appear before this judgment seat. As the Lord is coming down from heaven to earth, He will linger for a time in the air, where He will take care of certain matters. The judgment seat of Christ will be set up in the air, and the wedding will also take place there. After this judgment and after the wedding, Christ will descend with His chosen ones as His army to fight against Antichrist in the war at Armageddon. Hence, both the judgment seat and the wedding will take place in the air. Therefore, the wedding will take place after the destruction of the harlot, after all the raptures, and after the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ. As we will see, those who are chosen at the judgment seat will be the bride and also the guests at the feast. The guests will be the corporate bride.

In [Revelation 19:5-7](#) we have the praise of a great multitude...[Verse 6](#) describes the voice of the great multitude “like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunders.” The praise like the sound of many waters proceeds continually, and like the sound of mighty thunders it displays solemnity.

Now we come to a very crucial matter—the matter of the readiness of the bride. [Verse 7](#) says, “Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” *His wife* refers to the church ([Eph. 5:24-25, 31-32](#)), the bride of Christ ([John 3:29](#)). However, according to [Revelation 19:8 and 9](#), the wife, the bride of Christ, here consists only of the overcoming believers during the millennium; whereas the bride, the wife, in [21:2](#) is composed of all the saved saints after the millennium for eternity. The readiness of the bride depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers. Furthermore, the overcomers are not separate individuals but a corporate bride. For this aspect, building is needed. The overcomers are not only mature in life but are also builded together as one bride. (*Life-study of Revelation*, pp. 603-606)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msg. 94

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« WEEK 3 — HYMN

Hymns, #1212

- 1 The Lord of all has shown His plan
Unto each faithful one,
Who leaves behind the worldly things
As virgins for His Son.
To be His bride we must match Him,
Within and outwardly;
To be this one who matches Him,
Enjoy Him constantly.
- 2 Like virgins who so single are,
They love the Groom so much,
They in His presence ever stay—
Lord Jesus, make us such.
Lord, make us those who are so wise,
Who gain You every day,
The wise ones who enjoy the feast,
Who all the price will pay.
- 3 The virgins are mature in life,
They grow so normally.
They daily eat and drink the Lord,
Their lot eternally.
Our need today is growth in life,
Christ's inward work indeed;
Not knowledge, teachings, gifts, nor pow'r—
But life is all we need.
- 4 Lord, as the seed of life within,
Grow more in us each day;
By spreading from our deepest part,
Gain us in every way.
Lord, strengthen Thou our inner man;
Make home in all our heart.
Fill us completely with Thyself
In every inward part.

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WEEK 4 — OUTLINE

The Beauty of the Bride

Scripture Reading: [Rom. 6:19, 22](#); [Eph. 5:25-27](#); [Rev. 19:7-9](#); [1 Thes. 5:23](#); [S.S. 8:13-14](#)

Day 1 >>

I. The process of dispositional sanctification is the process of our organic salvation as our beautification to become the beautiful, holy, and glorious bride for Christ—[1 Thes. 4:3a](#); [1 Pet. 1:15-16](#); [Eph. 1:4-5](#); [5:25-27](#); [1 Thes. 5:23-24](#); [Rom. 6:19, 22](#):

A. [Ephesians 5:25-27](#) reveals the entirety of God's complete salvation in presenting Christ to us in three stages:

1. In the past, Christ as the Redeemer gave Himself up for the church for our judicial redemption—"Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"—[v. 25](#).
2. In the present, Christ as the life-giving Spirit is dispositionally sanctifying the church by saturating her with His element so that she may be His counterpart; this is organic salvation as bride beautification and bride preparation—"That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word"—[v. 26](#).
3. In the future, Christ as the Bridegroom will present the church to Himself as His counterpart for His satisfaction—"That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish"—this is our glorification for bride presentation—[v. 27](#).
4. In the past, Christ gave Himself up for the church; in the present, He is sanctifying the church; and in the future, He will present the church to Himself as His counterpart for His satisfaction; therefore, His loving the church is to sanctify her, and His sanctifying the church is for His presenting the church to Himself glorious.

<< Day 2 >>

B. The beauty of the bride comes from the very Christ who is wrought into the church and shining out from the church to be expressed through the church—[Isa. 43:7](#); [Eph. 3:21](#).

C. Christ is a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people—[Isa. 28:5](#):

1. A crown is like a hat or turban, whereas the diadem is the headband as the most beautiful, glorious part of the crown—[Exo. 28:36-39](#); [29:6](#); [Isa. 62:3](#).
2. We need to continually behold the beauty of the Lord in the church as the house of His beauty so that we may be transformed from glory to glory, beautified by the Lord, to become His beautiful bride with Him as our diadem of beauty—[2 Cor. 3:18](#); [Rev. 19:7-9](#); [Isa. 28:5](#); [Psa. 27:4](#); [Isa. 60:1, 7, 9, 13, 19](#); [62:3](#); [Rev. 21:11](#).

« Day 3 & Day 4 »

II. The Lord's primary work in the recovery is His genuine work to prepare us to be His glorious bride; apart from the continual, dispositional sanctification spoken of in [Ephesians 5:26](#), there is no way for the bride to be prepared and, hence, no way for [Revelation 19:7-9](#) to be fulfilled:

- A. The church is being beautified through the process of sanctification by Christ as the life-giving Spirit cleansing us by the washing of the water in His word—[Eph. 5:26-27](#):
1. This indicates that in the word of Christ is the Spirit as the water of life; the words that He speaks to us are spirit and life—[John 6:63](#).
 2. As the life-giving Spirit, Christ is the speaking Spirit; whatever He speaks is the word that washes us; this does not refer to *logos*, the constant word, but to *rhema*, which denotes an instant word, the word that the Lord presently speaks to us—[Matt. 4:4](#); [John 6:63](#); [Rev. 2:7](#); [22:17a](#); cf. [Isa. 6:9-10](#); [Matt. 13:14-15](#); [Acts 28:25-31](#).
 3. Christ's speaking is the Spirit; His speaking is the very presence of the life-giving Spirit—[John 6:63](#); [Eph. 6:17](#).
 4. The indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit is always speaking an instant, present, living word to metabolically cleanse away the old and replace it with the new, causing an inward transformation.
- B. Through such a washing process we are saturated with Christ and beautified by Christ to be His holy, beautiful, God-expressing bride, a bride without blemish or imperfection—[Rev. 19:7](#); cf. [S.S. 6:13](#); [8:13-14](#).
- C. Christ as the life-giving Spirit sanctifies the church by cleansing her according to the washing of the water in the word; according to the divine concept, *water* here refers to the flowing life of God typified by flowing

water ([Exo. 17:6](#); [1 Cor. 10:4](#); [John 7:37-39](#); [Rev. 7:17](#); [21:6](#); [22:1, 17](#)); we are now in such a washing process in order that the church may be holy and without blemish.

- D. The Greek word for *washing* in [Ephesians 5:26](#) is literally *laver*; in the Old Testament the priests used the laver to wash away their earthly defilement ([Exo. 30:18-21](#)); day by day, morning and evening, we need to come to the Bible and be cleansed by the laver of the water in the word.
- E. Paul uses the Greek word *rhema* when he speaks of the word with its washing process ([Eph. 5:26](#)); *logos* is God's Word objectively recorded in the Bible; *rhema* is the word of God spoken to us on a specific occasion ([Mark 14:72](#); [Luke 1:35-38](#); [5:5](#); [24:1-8](#)).
- F. The *rhema* reveals something to us personally and directly; it shows us what we need to deal with and what we need to be cleansed from (the laver of bronze was a mirror that could reflect and expose—[Exo. 38:8](#)); the important thing for each one of us is this—is God speaking His word to me today?
- G. One thing that we always treasure is that the Lord still speaks to us personally and directly today; true growth in life depends upon our receiving the word directly from God; only His speaking in us has true spiritual value—[Heb. 3:7-11, 15](#); [4:7](#); [Psa. 95:7-8](#).
- H. The central point of our prayers should be our longing for the Lord's speaking, which enables us to fulfill the goal of His eternal economy according to His heart's desire to have a bride as His counterpart—[Rev. 2:7](#); cf. [1 Sam. 3:1, 21](#); [Amos 3:7](#).
- I. In a very practical sense, the Lord's presence is one with His speaking; whenever He speaks, we realize His presence within us; Christ's speaking is the very presence of the life-giving Spirit.
- J. The speaking of the indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit within us is the cleansing water that deposits a new element into us to replace the old element in our nature and disposition; this metabolic cleansing causes a genuine and inward change in life, which is the reality of dispositional sanctification and transformation.
- K. We must be beautified by Christ as the life-giving, speaking Spirit in our spirit; through the Lord's speaking within us as the life-giving Spirit, we are becoming His glorious church—[Eph. 5:26-27](#); [Rev. 2:7](#).

III. [Ephesians 5:27](#) reveals that the church as the bride of Christ will eventually become a glorious church, a God-expressing church, “not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish”:

- A. Our only beauty is the shining out of Christ from within us; what Christ appreciates within us is the expression of Himself—[Psa. 50:2](#); [2 Cor. 3:15-18](#); cf. [Exo. 28:2](#):
 - 1. “Your eyes will see the King in His beauty” ([Isa. 33:17a](#)); “the King will desire your beauty” ([Psa. 45:11a](#)).
 - 2. “You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, / As lovely as Jerusalem, / As terrible as an army with banners”—[S.S. 6:4](#).
- B. For the bride to be prepared means that she is clothed in “fine linen, bright and clean,” which is “the righteousnesses of the saints” ([Rev. 19:8](#)); this fine linen is the beauty of the bride.
- C. On the day of his wedding, a bridegroom cares much more for the beauty of his bride than for her ability; the Lord Jesus, our God, cares primarily for the beauty of Himself expressed through our humanity; we need to be beautified by Christ day by day so that we can be prepared to be presented to Him as His lovely bride.
- D. Whenever we take time to behold the beauty of the Lord in His word by pray-reading and musing upon His word ([Eph. 6:17-18](#); [Psa. 119:15](#)), He becomes our beauty, and we are beautified by Him to become the house of His beauty so that He also may be beautified ([27:4](#); [2 Cor. 3:18](#); [Isa. 60:7b, 9b, 13b, 19b, 21b](#)).
- E. The washing of the water in the word in [Ephesians 5:26](#) deals mainly with spots and wrinkles; spots refer to something of the natural life, and wrinkles are related to oldness; only the water of life can metabolically wash away such defects by the transformation of life.
- F. To be holy is to be saturated with Christ and transformed by Christ, and to be without blemish is to be spotless and without wrinkle, having nothing of the natural life of our old man—cf. [S.S. 4:7](#).
- G. Also, the church will not have “any such things,” which means that she will not have “this or that kind of defect”; God will bring the church to the place where nothing can be said against her in any respect—[Eph. 5:27](#).

IV. [Ephesians 5:26-27](#) matches [Song of Songs 8:13-14](#); both reveal that it is by the Lord’s speaking to us that we are prepared to be His glorious bride with

the desire for His second coming—“O you who dwell in the gardens, / My companions listen for your voice; / Let me hear it. / Make haste, my beloved, / And be like a gazelle or a young hart / Upon the mountains of spices”:

- A. In Song of Songs the loving seeker of Christ asks Him who dwells in the believers as His gardens to let her hear His voice while her companions listen for His voice—[8:13](#); cf. [4:13-16](#); [5:1](#); [6:2](#):
1. This indicates that in the work that we as the lovers of Christ do for Him as our Beloved, we need to maintain our fellowship with Him, always listening to Him—[Luke 10:38-42](#).
 2. Our lives depend on the Lord’s words, and our work depends on His commands ([Rev. 2:7](#); [1 Sam. 3:9-10](#); cf. [Isa. 50:4-5](#); [Exo. 21:6](#)); without the Lord’s words we will not have any revelation, light, or personal knowledge of Christ as our King ([Isa. 6:1, 5](#)), our Lord ([2 Cor. 5:14-15](#)), our Head ([Col. 2:19](#)), and our Husband ([2 Cor. 11:2](#)); the life of the believers hinges totally upon the Lord’s speaking ([Eph. 5:26-27](#)).
- B. As the concluding prayer of this poetic book, the Song of Songs, the lover of Christ prays that her Beloved would make haste to come back in the power of His resurrection (gazelle and young hart) to set up His sweet and beautiful kingdom (mountains of spices), which will fill the whole earth—[8:14](#); [Rev. 11:15](#); [Dan. 2:35](#):
1. Such a prayer portrays the union and communion between Christ as the Bridegroom and His lovers as the bride in their bridal love, in the way that the prayer of John, a lover of Christ, as the concluding word of the Holy Scriptures, reveals God’s eternal economy concerning Christ and the church in His divine love—[Rev. 22:20](#).
 2. “Come, Lord Jesus!” is the last prayer in the Bible ([v. 20](#)); the entire Bible concludes with the desire for the Lord’s coming expressed as a prayer.

« *Hymn*

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« WEEK 4 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 5:25-27

...[Christ] loved the church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word, that He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

[Ephesians 5:25 through 27](#) is actually one long sentence. In these verses Paul is saying that husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. He did this that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of water in the word, in order that He might present the church to Himself glorious, without spot, wrinkle, or any such things. Christ's purpose in loving the church and in giving Himself up for the church was to sanctify her by the washing of the water in the word. Sanctifying is by cleansing, cleansing is by washing, washing is by water, and water is in the word. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 442)

Today's Reading

In the past, Christ as the Redeemer gave Himself up for the church for redemption and the impartation of life ([John 19:34](#)); in the present, He as the life-giving Spirit is sanctifying the church through separation, saturation, transformation, growth, and building up; and in the future, He as the Bridegroom will present the church to Himself as His counterpart for His satisfaction. Therefore, Christ's loving the church is to separate and sanctify her, and His separating and sanctifying the church are to present her to Himself.

Blood and water came out of the Lord's pierced side. The blood was for redemption, and the water was for the impartation of life so that the church might come into existence. In [Ephesians 5:25](#) we have the church coming into existence through Christ's loving her and giving Himself up for her.

After the church has come into existence, the church needs the sanctifying. The process of sanctification includes saturation, transformation, growth, and building up...The church needs to be saturated with all that Christ is. Saturation is accompanied by transformation, growth, and building. Through such a process of sanctification with

all these aspects, the church becomes complete and perfect, the reality of what is typified by Eve in [Genesis 2](#).

After Eve had been prepared for Adam by being built out of Adam's rib, she was presented to Adam, the source from which she came. In like manner, the church will be presented to Christ, who is her source...[Ephesians 5:27](#) says that Christ will present the church to Himself glorious. Hence, He will be both the presenter and the receiver.

Without separation, saturation, transformation, growth, and building, the church cannot be perfected and grow into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Only through an all-inclusive process of sanctification can the church become complete and attain to the measure of the stature of Christ's fullness so that Christ can present a perfect church to Himself.

First, the church is brought into existence. Second, the church is sanctified and thereby perfected and completed. Finally, the church is presented to Christ as a glorious church without spot, wrinkle, or any such things. It is presented to Him holy and without blemish. We are presently in the second stage of the production of the church, the stage of sanctification. When this stage is complete, we will be presented to Christ as a glorious church.

[Transformation] comes through the nourishing and the cherishing. If you faithfully come to the meetings to be nourished and cherished, spontaneously you will be separated from the world and saturated with the riches of Christ. Then with you there will be growth, transformation, and building...Eventually, the bride will be complete, perfect, and grown to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Then the Lord Jesus will come and present this prepared bride to Himself. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 442-445)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 53

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<< WEEK 4 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

Isa. 28:5

In that day Jehovah of hosts will become a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people.

Psa. 27:4

One thing I have asked from Jehovah; that do I seek: To dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire in His temple.

In [Isaiah 28:5](#) Christ is revealed as a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty. We need to consider the difference between a crown and a diadem. We may think that these are the same, but these items are not in apposition in [verse 5](#). There is a conjunction between them—a crown of glory *and* a diadem of beauty. This is Isaiah's marvelous writing. A crown is like a hat or turban, whereas the diadem is the most beautiful, glorious part of the crown. It is the headband. Generally speaking, a crown signifies glory, but its beauty is in its diadem, which may be full of jewels and precious stones. The diadem is the beauty of the glorious crown.

Christ will be a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of Israel, God's chosen people, in the age of restoration after all the dealings of God. He will be His chosen people's glorification. Glory and beauty are two distinct things. Something may be very glorious but not that beautiful. Christ will be both glory and beauty to His elect people. (*Life-study of Isaiah*, pp. 300-301)

Today's Reading

We need to remember that the age of grace is a miniature and a foretaste of the coming age of restoration. Today we enjoy a foretaste of Christ as our crown and diadem. Regretfully, many do not feel glorious to tell people that they are Christians. Some Christians may talk about other persons or things in a glorious way, but when they come to the subject of Christ, they may feel shameful. This is not right. When we talk about Christ and when we tell people that we are Christians, we should consider that Christ is our crown and diadem, our glory and beauty.

I experienced Christ in this way about fifty years ago when Japan invaded China and I was imprisoned by the Japanese army. On the one hand, they shamed me, judged me,

and tortured me. On the other hand, they respected and regarded me because I behaved as a Christian. Paul said in the book of Philippians, while he was imprisoned in Rome, that he had the earnest expectation and hope not to be put to shame but to magnify Christ (1:20). Paul magnified Christ to such an extent that even some in Caesar's household became believers in Christ (4:22). In Paul's experience, he had Christ as a crown with a diadem. We should feel glorious that we are Christians. When we are defeated, we feel ashamed, but when we repent and receive the dispensing Christ in a fresh way, we feel glorious. (*Life-study of Isaiah*, p. 301)

The spots and wrinkles do not affect the function of the church. However, they very much detract from the beauty of the church. What a man looks for in a bride is not first ability; it is beauty. The church as Christ's bride must also be beautiful...We may function properly and have an excellent daily living according to the spirit of the mind but still not be beautiful in the eyes of the Lord because of our spots and wrinkles. After saying so much about the church in [Ephesians chapters 1 through 4](#), Paul goes on in [chapter 5](#) to speak about the church as the bride. In this chapter he says nothing concerning the creation of the church, the growth of the church, or the daily living of the church. Instead, he speaks of the beauty of the church. When Christ presents the church to Himself, the church will not be a strong man; she will be a beautiful bride. Christ is the universal man. As this universal man, He needs the church to be His bride to match Him. In order to be the bride of Christ, the church must become beautiful and have all the spots and wrinkles removed. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 776-777)

Further Reading: Life-study of Isaiah, msg. 43; *CWWL*, 1994–1997, vol. 5, “The Vital Groups,” ch. 8

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« WEEK 4 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 5:26

That He might sanctify her, cleansing *her* by the washing of the water in the word.

Rev. 19:7

Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Revelation 19 will be completely fulfilled. Furthermore, we believe that the process of fulfillment is taking place today. Since Jerusalem has been restored to the nation of Israel, the coming back of the Lord Jesus should not be far off. The bride, however, cannot be prepared quickly. This preparation is a gradual work that takes place over a period of time. Certainly the Lord must be doing a work on earth to prepare His bride...He is coming to present to Himself the bride who has already been prepared. This preparation, I believe, involves the work of building corporately. Those who make up the bride must not only be mature in life; they must also be built together as the one bride.

The work in the recovery is the Lord's genuine work to prepare His bride...The primary work of the Lord in His recovery is not to preach the gospel throughout the earth; it is to prepare His bride. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 780-781)

Today's Reading

According to **Ephesians 5:26**, Christ gave Himself up for the church so that "He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word." After the Lord Jesus gave Himself for us in the flesh, He was resurrected and in resurrection became the life-giving Spirit (**1 Cor. 15:45**). As the life-giving Spirit, He is the speaking Spirit. Whatever He speaks is the word that washes us. The Greek word rendered "word" in **Ephesians 5:26** is not *logos*, the constant word, but *rhema*, which denotes the instant word, the word the Lord presently speaks to us. As the life-giving Spirit, the Lord is not silent; He is constantly speaking. If you take Him as your person, you will discover how much He desires to speak within you...How can we know that Christ as our person is present with us? We know it by His speaking. If we do not have His speaking within us, we do not have His presence. But if we turn to Him to mean

business to take Christ as our life and our person, His speaking will begin again. His speaking is the living word, the living word is the Spirit, and the Spirit is our wonderful Christ Himself. How practical, subjective, intimate, and real He is as the speaking Spirit!

This Spirit is the water that washes us...Every time He speaks within us, we should experience cleansing.

This cleansing is a metabolic cleansing that removes what is old and replaces it with what is new...It is by the inward, metabolic cleansing that we have transformation. By the metabolic cleansing that comes from the speaking of Christ as the life-giving Spirit, we are truly changed, transformed.

God's way in His economy is not to change us outwardly. His way is for Christ to give Himself up for us and then to come into us as the life-giving Spirit. In a very practical sense, the Lord's presence is one with His speaking. Whenever He speaks, we realize His presence within us. This speaking of the life-giving Spirit within is the water that cleanses our inner being. This cleansing water deposits a new element into us to replace the old element in our nature and disposition. This metabolic cleansing causes a genuine change in life. This change is what we mean by *transformation*...What the church needs is the inward metabolic cleansing that comes from allowing Christ as the life-giving Spirit to be our life and our person.

The life-giving Spirit is the speaking Spirit. Christ's speaking is the Spirit; it is the very presence of the life-giving Spirit. If we honor the speaking of the Spirit within us, the Spirit's speaking will become the water that cleanses, purifies, sanctifies, and supplies us with the element of Christ. This element replaces and discharges our old element and brings about genuine transformation. In this way we are purified and sanctified; in this way we also experience the practicality of the church life. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 453-455)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msgs. 55—56

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<< WEEK 4 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

John 7:38-39

He who believes into Me,...out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this He said concerning the Spirit...

Rev. 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

In [Ephesians 5:26](#) Paul says that Christ sanctifies the church by cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word. According to the divine concept, water here refers to the flowing life of God, which is typified by flowing water (...[John 7:38-39](#); [Rev. 21:6](#); [22:1, 17](#)). The washing of the water here is different from the washing of the redeeming blood of Christ. The redeeming blood washes away our sins ([1 John 1:7](#); [Rev. 7:14](#)), whereas the water of life washes away the blemishes of the natural life of our old man, such as “spot or wrinkle or any such things” ([Eph. 5:27](#)). In separating and sanctifying the church, the Lord first washes away our sins with His blood ([Heb. 13:12](#)) and then washes away our natural blemishes with His life. We are now in such a washing process, that the church may be holy and without blemish. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 445)

Today's Reading

The cleansing is the sanctifying. The cleansing by the washing of the water of life is in the word. The Greek word for *word* in [Ephesians 5:26](#) denotes an instant word. The indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit is always speaking an instant, present, living word to metabolically cleanse away the old and replace it with the new, causing an inward transformation. This indicates that in the word there is the water of life, which is typified by the laver between the altar and the tabernacle ([Exo. 38:8](#); [40:7](#)). In Greek the word rendered “washing” in [Ephesians 5:26](#) means “laver.” This Greek word is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word for *laver*. In the Old Testament, the priests washed themselves from earthly defilement in the laver ([Exo. 30:18-21](#)). Now the laver, the washing of the water, washes us from defilement.

In a very real sense, the word of God is a laver. According to the Old Testament, the priests who served God in the tabernacle had to have their sins dealt with by the blood

on the altar, and they had to have their defilement dealt with by washing in the laver. I believe that Paul's concept here is that the church is cleansed by the laver of the water in the word. Hallelujah, we have the real laver! (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 446)

In the New Testament two Greek words are used to denote *word*. One is *logos*, referring to the word in a general sense; the other is *rhema*, which although translated as *word* in Scripture, means something quite different from *logos*. *Logos* refers both to things which have been eternally determined and to things used in an objective way...But *rhema* refers to words which are spoken...Both *logos* and *rhema* are the Word of God, but the former is God's Word objectively recorded in the Bible, while the latter is the word of God spoken to us at a specific occasion.

The *rhema* reveals something to us personally and directly; it shows us what we need to deal with and what we need to be cleansed from. We must specifically seek after this very matter, because our Christian life is based on this *rhema*. What word has God really spoken to us, and how has He spoken to us?...The important thing is this: Is God speaking that very word to us today?

True growth depends upon our receiving the word directly from God. God is using His *rhema* to do His work, and He desires to speak to us...If we desire to be useful in the Lord's hands, we must be spoken to by the Lord...When God speaks to us through His word, we are enlightened; through His word we are sanctified; and through His word we are made to grow...If we have *rhema*, the living word of God, we can be cleansed and sanctified. (*CWWN*, vol. 34, "The Glorious Church," pp. 51-54, 57-58)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msgs. 54, 57, 59; *CWWN*, vol. 34, "The Glorious Church," ch. 3

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« WEEK 4 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 19:8-9

And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints. And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Christ is now preparing us to be His bride. The time is coming when He will present the bride to Himself...In His bride Christ will behold nothing but beauty. This beauty will be the reflection of what He is...The beauty of the bride...comes from the very Christ who is wrought into the church and who is then expressed through the church. Our beauty is not our behavior. Our only beauty is the reflection of Christ, the shining out of Christ from within us. What Christ appreciates in us is the expression of Himself in us. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 778)

Today's Reading

First, Christ must come into us and then be assimilated by us. Then He will be able to shine out of us. This shining is the glory of the bride, the manifestation of divinity through humanity. Real beauty is the expression of the divine attributes through humanity. Nothing in the universe is as beautiful as this expression. Therefore, the beauty of the bride is Christ shining out of us. It is a matter of divinity expressed through humanity.

On the day of his wedding, a bridegroom cares much more for the beauty of his bride than for her ability. In like manner, in the church life our beauty will eventually be much more important to the Lord than our function. At the beginning of the church life, we may emphasize ability and function. But eventually, we will place more emphasis on beauty...Do not pay that much attention to becoming capable, qualified, and gifted in function. At first, this may count for something in the church life. But eventually, the Lord will show us that what He cares for is not our ability; He cares for the beauty of Himself expressed through our humanity. Christ does not intend to present a capable church to Himself. The church that will be presented to Him will be glorious and beautiful, a church without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing. If our blemishes and imperfections are to be removed, we need to take in more and more of Christ. He

should not simply energize us for our function but also beautify us that we may be His bride.

The church is being beautified by partaking of Christ, by digesting Christ, and by assimilating Christ! The more we experience the indwelling Christ in this way, the more He will replace our spots and wrinkles with His element, and the more His riches with the divine attributes will become our beauty. Then we will be prepared to be presented to Christ as His lovely bride.

The experience of [Ephesians 5](#) is necessary for the fulfillment of [Revelation 19](#). Ephesians shows how Christ prepares the bride by sanctifying, cleansing, nourishing, and cherishing us with Himself. In this way we are metabolically transformed, and we become beautiful and glorious, ready to be presented to Christ according to [Revelation 19](#).

Because the bride is clothed [“in fine linen, bright and clean” ([Rev. 19:8](#))], the declaration can be made that she “has made herself ready” ([v. 7](#)). This indicates that by the time of [Revelation 19](#) the bride will have been prepared. For the bride to be prepared means that she has the “fine linen, bright and clean.” *Clean* refers to nature, whereas *bright* refers to expression. This fine linen is “the righteousnesses of the saints.”...The righteousnesses of the bride here denote the subjective righteousness ([Phil. 3:9](#)), Christ as the righteousness which has been constituted into our being. The more this subjective righteousness is wrought into the church, the more she is prepared to become the bride. Those who compose the bride have been redeemed and regenerated. But they need to have the subjective righteousness interwoven into their very being in order to have the fine linen, bright and clean. Actually, it is this linen that is the beauty of the bride. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 778-780)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msgs. 95, 58

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« WEEK 4 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

S.S. 8:13-14

O you who dwell in the gardens, *my* companions listen for your voice; let me hear *it*. Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

The lover of her Beloved asks Him who dwells in the believers as His gardens to let her hear His voice as her companions listen for His voice [S.S. 8:13]. This indicates that in the work, which we as the lovers of Christ who express Him as our living outwardly do for Him as our Beloved who indwells us as our life inwardly, we should fellowship with Him in His speaking. As we are working with Him, we need to maintain our fellowship with Him, always listening to Him.

The lover of her Beloved prays that He would make haste [v. 14] to come back in the power of His resurrection to set up His sweet and beautiful kingdom which will fill the whole earth (Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:35). Here we should note that the prayer of this lover of her Beloved is the concluding word of this poetic book, portraying the union and communion between Christ as the Bridegroom and His lovers as the bride in their bridal love, as the prayer of John, a lover of Christ, is the concluding word of the Holy Scripture, revealing God's eternal economy concerning Christ and the church in His divine love (Rev. 22:20). (*Life-study of Song of Songs*, p. 68)

Today's Reading

In [Song of Songs 8:13](#)...“You” refers to the Lord. “The gardens” are plural in number. He is not only dwelling in the garden of the maiden ([6:2](#)) but dwelling in many other gardens as well. He is the Lord who dwells in the hearts of men. He is not only dwelling in the heart of one who follows Him absolutely, but He is dwelling in the hearts of all those whom He delights in. The maiden addresses Him according to this relationship. She says to Him, “My companions listen for your voice” [[8:13](#)]. The word “listen” means that everyone is listening. All those who are seeking the Lord together with her adopt the same attitude. They have been dealt with, and they know the futility of speaking and the profit of listening. They know that they have to be slow to speak in order to be quick to hear...They no longer insist on speaking like others do, and they no

longer speak for the sake of speaking. Those who cannot stop talking about trivial things still have the earthly life reigning within them. But these are listening; they adopt the attitude of a hearer. They know that their lives depend on the Lord's words and their work depends on the Lord's commands. They will only listen, because they cannot and will not move by themselves any longer. Without the Lord's words, they will not have any revelation, light, or knowledge. The life of the believers hinges totally upon the Lord's speaking.

“O Lord, while we are waiting to listen, make us hear. If those who seek find, and if those who knock have the door opened to them, make us hear, and make us able to hear. If Jehovah will not speak to us, we will be like those who are dead...Please allow us to hear Your voice, because only this can guide us until Your return.” She has learned her lessons by now; therefore, she offers up such a profound prayer toward the end.

[Verse 14](#)...describes the condition of the Lord's coming and His kingdom. At that time, it will be a marvelous world, one like the mountains of spices.

Then the maiden's experience will be like a drop of water that has disappeared into the ocean; there will be no more room for advancement, though the tide can always go deeper. All that is left in the world is just her body. Everything else has gone to another world. Therefore, she cannot help but cry, “Make haste, my beloved.” “Come as quickly as the gazelle or a young hart. Just as a gazelle or a young hart appears on the mountains of spices, may You come in Your kingdom.” Although the love is perfect, something is still lacking. When He comes, faith will be turned to facts, and praise will replace prayer. Love will consummate in a shadowless perfection, and we will serve Him in the sinless domain. What a day that will be! Lord Jesus, come quickly! (*CWWN*, vol. 23, “The Song of Songs,” pp. 124-126)

Further Reading: Life-study of Song of Songs, msg. 9; *CWWN*, vol. 23, “The Song of Songs,” pp. 116-121, 124-126

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« WEEK 4 — HYMN

Hymns, #1159

- 1 Jesus Lord, I'm captured by Thy beauty,
All my heart to Thee I open wide;
Now set free from all religious duty,
Only let me in Thyself abide.
As I'm gazing here upon Thy glory,
Fill my heart with radiancy divine;
Saturate me, Lord, I now implore Thee,
Mingle now Thy Spirit, Lord, with mine.
- 2 Shining One—how clear the sky above me!
Son of Man, I see Thee on the throne!
Holy One, the flames of God consume me,
Till my being glows with Thee alone.
Lord, when first I saw Thee in Thy splendor,
All self-love and glory sank in shame;
Now my heart its love and praises render,
Tasting all the sweetness of Thy name.
- 3 Precious Lord, my flask of alabaster
Gladly now I break in love for Thee;
I anoint Thy head, Beloved Master;
Lord, behold, I've saved the best for Thee.
Dearest Lord, I waste myself upon Thee;
Loving Thee, I'm deeply satisfied.
Love outpoured from hidden depths within me,
Costly oil, dear Lord, I would provide.
- 4 My Beloved, come on spices' mountain;
How I yearn to see Thee face to face.
Drink, dear Lord, from my heart's flowing fountain,
Till I rest fore'er in Thine embrace.
Not alone, O Lord, do I adore Thee,
But with all the saints as Thy dear bride;
Quickly come, our love is waiting for Thee;
Jesus Lord, Thou wilt be satisfied.

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WEEK 5 — OUTLINE

The Righteousness of the Bride

Scripture Reading: [Rev. 19:7-9](#); [Matt. 5:20](#); [6:33](#); [22:2](#); [2 Cor. 5:21](#); [1 John 1:7](#), [9](#);
[Rev. 15:3](#)

Day 1 & Day 2 >>

I. The righteousness of God is what God is in His action with respect to justice and righteousness—[Rev. 15:3](#); [Rom. 1:16b-17a](#); [John 3:16](#); [1 John 1:9](#):

- A. Our experience of Christ rests upon the foundation of God's righteousness.
- B. The foundation is God's righteousness, the unshakable foundation of God's throne—[Psa. 89:14](#).

II. There are four aspects of the definition of righteousness:

- A. Righteousness is to be right with persons, things, and matters before God according to His righteous and strict requirements—[Matt. 5:20](#).
- B. Righteousness is the outward expression of the Christ who lives in us as the Spirit—[2 Cor. 3:8-9](#):
 - 1. This is righteousness as God's image—[Eph. 4:24](#); [Col. 3:10](#).
 - 2. The ministry of righteousness is a ministry of the Lord's image—[2 Cor. 3:9](#).
- C. Righteousness is a matter of God's kingdom—[Matt. 6:33](#); [Psa. 89:14](#):
 - 1. God's kingdom is righteousness.
 - 2. Righteousness is related to God's government, administration, and rule.
- D. Righteousness is a matter of our being right with God in our being—[2 Cor. 5:21](#):
 - 1. To be right with God in our being is to have an inner being that is transparent and crystal clear, an inner being that is in the mind and will of God.
 - 2. This is a matter of our being the righteousness of God in Christ—[v. 21](#).

III. Righteousness is related to God's outward acts, ways, actions, and activities—[Rev. 15:3](#):

- A. Everything God does is righteous—[Rom. 1:16-17](#).
- B. Whatever God is in His justice and righteousness constitutes His righteousness.

<< *Day 3 & Day 4* >>

IV. God is righteous in the blood of Jesus His Son—1 John 1:7, 9:

- A. God is faithful in His word ([v. 10](#)) and righteous in the blood of Jesus His Son.
- B. His word is the word of the truth of His gospel ([Eph. 1:13](#)), which tells us that He will forgive us our sins because of Christ ([Acts 10:43](#)); the blood of Christ has fulfilled His righteous requirements that He might forgive us our sins ([Matt. 26:28](#)).
- C. To forgive us is to release us from the offense of our sins, whereas to cleanse us is to wash us from the stain of our unrighteousness.

V. Righteousness is related to the kingdom of God—Rom. 14:17:

- A. The church life is the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God is righteousness.
- B. God's throne is established with righteousness as the foundation—[Psa. 89:14](#).
- C. Where God's righteousness is, there His kingdom is also—[Isa. 32:1](#); [Heb. 1:8-9](#).
- D. In the Old Testament, righteousness is often synonymous with the kingdom.
- E. Where there is righteousness, everything is headed up in a proper way; this is the kingdom.
- F. Righteousness first issues in the image of God, and then righteousness establishes the kingdom of God:
 - 1. In [Romans 8](#) we have righteousness and God's image.
 - 2. In [Romans 14](#) we have righteousness and God's kingdom.
 - 3. Both the image and the kingdom are based on righteousness.
- G. To say that righteousness will dwell in the new heavens and new earth ([2 Pet. 3:13](#)) means that everything will be in order, headed up, and regulated:
 - 1. Everything will be governed, controlled, and under the proper rule, for the throne of God, the kingdom, the divine administration, will be there.
 - 2. The result will be peace and joy.

« [Day 5 & Day 6](#) »

VI. In Revelation 19:7-8 we see the righteousness of the bride:

- A. There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness to the believers:
 - 1. The first aspect is to be the believers' righteousness for them to be justified before God objectively at the time of their repenting unto God and believing into Christ—[Rom. 3:24-26](#); [Acts 13:39](#); [Gal. 3:24b, 27](#).
 - 2. The second aspect is to be the believers' righteousness lived out of them as the manifestation of God, who is the righteousness in Christ given to

the believers for them to be justified by God subjectively—[Rom. 4:25](#); [1 Pet. 2:24a](#); [James 2:24](#); [Matt. 5:20](#); [Rev. 19:8](#).

3. As our objective righteousness, Christ is the One in whom we are justified by God—[Rom. 3:24, 28](#); [4:25](#); [5:1, 9, 16, 18](#).

4. As our subjective righteousness, Christ is the One dwelling in us to live for us a life that can be justified by God and that is always acceptable to God—[Matt. 5:6, 20](#).

B. Christ lived out of the saints as their subjective righteousness becomes their wedding garment—[Rev. 19:8](#):

1. The righteousness we received for our salvation is objective and enables us to meet the requirement of the righteous God, whereas the righteousnesses of the overcoming saints are subjective and enable them to meet the requirement of the overcoming Christ—[1 Cor. 1:30](#); [Phil. 3:9](#).

2. The wedding garment in [Matthew 22:11-12](#) signifies the Christ whom we live out and who is expressed through us in our daily living as our surpassing righteousness—[5:20](#); [Rev. 3:4-5, 18](#).

C. The Lord's bride, His wife, "has made herself ready. And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints"—[19:7b-8](#):

1. [Revelation 19:8](#) clearly associates clothing with righteousness.

2. The word *righteousnesses* in [verse 8](#) is plural and can be translated as "righteous acts."

3. The righteousnesses do not refer to Christ as our righteousness, whom we received for our salvation—[1 Cor. 1:30](#).

4. The fine linen indicates our overcoming life, our overcoming living.

5. The fine linen is the Christ whom we live out of our being.

D. "Blessed are they [the overcoming saints] who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb"—[Rev. 19:9](#):

1. The marriage dinner of the Lamb here is the wedding feast in [Matthew 22:2](#).

2. To be called to the marriage dinner of Christ is to be blessed.

3. The overcoming believers, who will be called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb, will also be the bride of the Lamb—[Rev. 19:7](#).

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<< WEEK 5 — DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Cor. 3:8-9

How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory? For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.

God is righteous as well as holy. Whereas holiness is related to God's inward nature, righteousness is related to God's outward acts, ways, actions, and activities. Everything God does is righteous.

The righteousness of God is what God is in His action with respect to justice and righteousness...Whatever God is in His justice and righteousness constitutes His righteousness.

Our experience of Christ rests on the foundation of God's righteousness. The foundation is not our fervency or victory; it is God's righteousness, the unshakable foundation of God's throne ([Psa. 89:14](#)). God has shown forth His righteousness by forgiving us of our sins. In this way God has proved that He is righteous. Now such righteousness of God is our solid foundation. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 87, 90)

Today's Reading

In 2 Corinthians Paul does not speak of gifts or miracles, but he does say that the Spirit gives life...He does not say a word about speaking in tongues. The emphasis in this book is on the Spirit as the life supply. The ministry of the new covenant is a matter of the Spirit as the supply inwardly and of righteousness as God's expression outwardly...In [3:8](#) Paul speaks of the ministry of the Spirit, and in [verse 9](#), of the ministry of righteousness.

If we would understand what the ministry of righteousness is, we must first have a proper understanding of righteousness. Righteousness is a matter of being right. When we have the Spirit living, moving, and acting within us in a way that is real and substantial, we are automatically right with God, with others, and with ourselves. This

understanding of righteousness is correct, but it is not adequate. Hence, we must go on to see something further regarding righteousness.

In [1 Corinthians 15:34](#) Paul says, “Awake from the drunken stupor righteously and do not sin, for some of you are ignorant of God.”...What does it mean to awake from a drunken stupor righteously? It means to become sober in such a way that we are right with God, with others, and with ourselves. A believer who is sober righteously will be right with his wife, with his children, with his neighbors, with all the saints, with the church, and also with himself. Those who are not right in all these ways are in a drunken stupor.

If we did not have the new covenant ministry, we would not have the Spirit, and we would not have righteousness...Many of us can testify that after coming into the church life, we began to realize that there is something within us that is living, real, and substantial. This is the Spirit within us working and making us joyful, peaceful, and restful. This is the Spirit of life ministered into us as the life supply by the ministry in the Lord’s recovery.

Before you experienced the Spirit in this way, it may have been very easy for you to argue with your wife or husband. But if you experience the Spirit as your life supply, something within restrains you when you want to argue. For example, a sister may be tempted to blame her husband, but deep within she realizes that she should go into her room and pray. This experience comes from the Spirit as the life supply that is ministered into us through the new covenant ministry.

Perhaps in a church meeting not a word is spoken concerning the Spirit as the life supply...Although nothing is said concerning this, it is nevertheless a fact that in the meeting the Spirit is ministered to you. There is a ministry in the recovery that inscribes the processed Triune God as the life-giving Spirit into our being. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, pp. 236-239)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 9

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« WEEK 5 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 5:21

Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Eph. 4:24

And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness...

Col. 3:10

And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.

Because I receive the supply of the life-giving Spirit in the church meetings, I very rarely miss a meeting...My only desire is to be in the meeting and to receive the supply. In particular, I enjoy the prayer meeting of the church in Anaheim. During that meeting I am infused and saturated with the Spirit. Afterward, it seems that everything is golden and that within me the tree of life is growing and the river of life is flowing.

As a result of experiencing the Spirit living and working within us, we become righteous. Spontaneously, our inner being is transparent, crystal clear, and we know the heart of God. Immediately, without effort, we know the mind of the Lord and have a clear understanding concerning His will and work. Then what we do is according to the Lord's mind and will. This is righteousness. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, p. 239)

Today's Reading

Many Christians have the concept that when we do something wrong, we are not right with God. This concept of righteousness is too superficial. Even when we do not do anything wrong, we still may not be right with God, for our being may not be in the mind and will of the Lord. Apparently, we are not wrong in any way; however, our entire being may be far short of being right with God. We may not be according to the Lord's mind, and what we are doing may not be His will. As long as we are not doing God's will, we are not right.

Suppose a young person at school does not do anything wrong. But he does not study properly. Furthermore, when he sits in class, he is absent-minded...Outwardly, he may not be wrong, but inwardly, his whole being is wrong. In the same principle, outwardly, many saints are not wrong in anything. Actually, their being is not in the will of the Lord.

If you are infused and saturated by the life-giving Spirit, your inner being will become transparent. Then you will know what is in the Lord's mind. You will also understand what the will of the Lord is. Spontaneously, you will be in His will and do His will. As a result, you become right with Him. Moreover, you will realize how you should act toward others and even how you should deal with your material possessions. Then you will become a righteous person, one who is right in small things as well as in great things, one who is right with God, with others, and with himself. This is a person who expresses God, for his righteousness is the image of God, God expressed.

If we walk according to the Spirit, we will also fulfill the commandments forbidding murder, fornication, stealing, giving false testimony, and coveting...In [Romans 7](#) Paul tells us that he tried to overcome coveting, but he was not able to do so. Rather, he was killed by this commandment. Then he condemned himself and cried out, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me?" ([v. 24](#)). Then in [Romans 8](#) he could declare, "There is now then no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death" ([vv. 1-2](#)). Paul also came to realize that the righteous requirements of the law were fulfilled in him automatically when he walked according to the Spirit of life. This also can be our experience today. There is no need for us to purpose to fulfill the Ten Commandments. Once again I say that if we walk according to the Spirit of life, every commandment will be fulfilled in us unconsciously and spontaneously. Each commandment will be thoroughly fulfilled in us. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, pp. 239-240, 252-253)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1932–1949, vol. 4, "Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, volume 4," ch. 35

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« WEEK 5 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Rom. 8:4

That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

When the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us because we walk according to the Spirit, then we have righteousness...When we have righteousness, we have the expression of the God we serve and worship. Because we have this expression as the spontaneous righteousness that we live out by the Spirit of life, others can be convinced and subdued.

In [Romans 8:4](#) Paul speaks of the righteous requirement of the law, and in [verse 29](#) he speaks of the image of God's Son: "Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers." If we put this verse together with [verses 2](#) and [4](#), we have the Spirit, righteousness, and the image. Day by day we need to walk according to the Spirit of life so that we may fulfill the righteousness of the law. This is equal to being conformed to the image of God's Son. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, p. 253)

Today's Reading

The way to be conformed to His image is to walk according to the Spirit of life so that the righteous requirements of the law may be fulfilled in us. Then we will have righteousness, and this righteousness is the very image of the Son of God. Therefore, the Spirit produces righteousness, and righteousness is the image.

In [Romans 8](#) we have righteousness related to the Spirit of life and issuing in the image of the Son of God. But in [Romans 14:17](#) righteousness is related to the kingdom of God. In this chapter the kingdom of God denotes the church life. The meetings of the church are an exhibition of the kingdom of God...The church life is the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God is righteousness.

Paul's word in [Romans 14:17](#) corresponds to what is written in the Old Testament. According to [Psalm 89:14](#), righteousness is the foundation of God's throne...God's throne is established with righteousness as the foundation...[Isaiah 32:1](#) says, "Indeed a King will reign according to righteousness." Here righteousness is again related to the kingdom...Furthermore, [Hebrews 1:8 and 9](#) say, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness." These verses are a quotation from [Psalm 45](#).

In the Old Testament *righteousness* is often synonymous with *the kingdom*. Therefore, righteousness is related to government, administration, regulation, and rule...Where there is righteousness, everything is headed up in a proper way.

Righteousness first issues in the image of God. Then righteousness establishes the kingdom of God. In [Romans 8](#) we have righteousness and God's image, and in [Romans 14](#) we have righteousness and God's kingdom. Both the image and the kingdom are based on righteousness.

Let us now apply this aspect of righteousness to our family life and our church life. When a husband and wife are not happy with each other and the situation at home is not pleasant, there is no righteousness, no image of the Son, in their family life. Likewise, the kingdom of God is not present, for God's kingdom is righteousness. Others observing the situation will not receive any impression of the image of Christ, the expression of God. However, suppose a brother and his wife live in the Spirit and walk according to the Spirit. They will be happy, and their children will be happy also. What a glorious family life that would be! Others will be able to see the image of God and realize that the kingdom of God is present in that family. This is righteousness in the family life. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, pp. 254-255)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 28, "The Gospel of God (1)," ch. 5

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<< WEEK 5 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

1 Pet. 2:24

Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose bruise you were healed.

2 Pet. 3:13

But according to His promise we are expecting new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Suppose [that] in a particular church...instead of murmuring, criticizing, or gossiping, there are forbearance, praise, calling on the Lord, and fellowship. Moreover, suppose the meetings are living, in good order, and rich in function. Surely, in such a church we can see the kingdom of God full of righteousness. Everything there is orderly and peaceful.

The goal of the new covenant ministry is to minister the all-inclusive Spirit of the processed Triune God into others to be their supply. Simultaneously, this ministry dispenses Christ into the believers as their righteousness. Then as the believers live and walk according to the Spirit, they will be in a condition that expresses God and that gives an impression of the Son of God. Furthermore, they will actually be the kingdom of God established in righteousness, set in order, and properly headed up. They will also have peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This is the result of the new covenant ministry. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, pp. 255-256)

Today's Reading

Ultimately, the bride in [Revelation 19](#) will become the New Jerusalem in [Revelation 21 and 22](#)...According to [Revelation 21:18](#), “the building work of its wall was jasper.” Also, the first foundation of the New Jerusalem will be jasper ([v. 19](#)). Therefore, the appearance of the city will be that of jasper. [Revelation 4](#) indicates that God sitting on the throne in the heavens also has the appearance of jasper. Hence, jasper denotes God’s image, His expression. The fact that jasper is the appearance both of God and of the New Jerusalem indicates that this holy city will bear the same appearance that God does. The entire city will express God.

Today we are preparing our bridal gown, a gown that will have the appearance of righteousness, which is the expression of God. Ultimately, in the New Jerusalem, this will be the appearance of jasper.

As used in [2 Peter 3:13](#), the word *righteousness* is rich in meaning. To say that righteousness will dwell in the new heaven and new earth means that everything will be in order, headed up, and regulated. Everything will be governed, controlled, and under the proper rule, for the throne of God, the kingdom, the divine administration, will be there. The result will be peace and joy.

At present there is little righteousness on earth. Instead, there are unrighteousness, disorder, and confusion. But praise the Lord that in the church, where we have a foretaste of the new heaven and the new earth, righteousness dwells! Moreover, we should be able to say that, by the Lord's mercy, righteousness also dwells in our family life.

Today many Christians neglect the new covenant ministry. Instead of ministering the Spirit and righteousness to others, they argue about such things as the method of baptism...The various so-called ministries have divided the children of God...The ministry of the new covenant simply ministers Christ to others as the Spirit to be the life supply inwardly and as righteousness to be the expression of God outwardly. This expression of God as righteousness, the image of God, brings in the kingdom, where everything is regulated, orderly, and headed up. This gives us a foretaste of the coming kingdom and of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth. This is the function of the new covenant ministry.

We must all carry on the ministry to minister Christ as the life-giving Spirit and as righteousness. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, pp. 256-258)

Further Reading: Life-study of Romans, msg. 57

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« WEEK 5 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 19:7-8

Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.

The bride in [Revelation 19:7-8](#) refers to redeemed and transformed tripartite mankind. This bride will wear white linen, which is the righteousnesses of the saints. If we would have a share in this bride, who is adorned with bright, shining, clean righteousness, we need to adorn ourselves with righteousness. Day by day we need to prepare bright linen clothing to cover ourselves. This is our daily righteousness. How can we produce such a garment of righteousness? We produce it by walking daily according to the Spirit of life and by having a life that is a life of the Spirit. If we prepare our wedding garment day by day, month by month, and year by year by living such a life in the Spirit, we will not be found naked when the Lord comes. Instead, at His coming, we will be wearing a bright, clean wedding garment. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, p. 256)

Today's Reading

There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness from God to the believers. The first aspect is that He is the believers' righteousness for them to be justified before God objectively at the time of their repenting unto God and believing into Christ...Christ is our beauty given by God to us to be put on us as our clothing, our glorious dress.

The second aspect is that Christ is the believers' righteousness lived out of them as the manifestation of God, who is the righteousness in Christ given to the believers for them to be justified by God subjectively...When Christ was given to us to be put on us, He entered into us to be our life and life supply to live Himself out of us. This living out is the manifestation of God in Christ. This is pleasant in the eyes of God. Surely, God would justify us subjectively, not just objectively. Now we can see the two aspects—outward and inward. Christ is put on us, and Christ enters into us to live God out of us to be our subjective righteousness.

These two aspects are typified by the best robe and the fattened calf in [Luke 15:22-23](#). The best robe typifies Christ as God's righteousness given to the believers to cover them outwardly before God as their objective righteousness. The fattened calf typifies Christ as God's righteousness given to the believers as their life supply for them to live out God in Christ as their subjective righteousness.

In [Luke 15](#) when the prodigal son came back to the father, the father told his slaves to bring out the best robe and put it on his son. This robe replaced the rags (cf. [Isa. 64:6](#)) of the returned prodigal...Thus, he became a new man, but just outwardly.

Even though the robe was put upon the prodigal son, he was still hungry. He could have said, "Father, I need something to eat. I was eating the pigs' food. I am starved to death. Father, I don't need this robe; I need something to eat." But the father could say, "Son, if you are so poor, in rags, I cannot serve you anything. I must beautify you first by dressing you up. Then you match me. Then I can serve you with a pleasant meal, the fattened calf."

The best robe is a type of Christ being righteousness to us outwardly. The fattened calf typifies the subjective Christ entering into us to be enjoyed, digested, and assimilated by us to become our tissue, to become us. By eating the fattened calf, the prodigal son's face would be transformed. He came back with a pale face. But after eating the fattened calf, his face would become shining, bright, and colorful. This is Christ given by God to us as righteousness in two aspects: as the outward righteousness to beautify us and as the inward righteousness to supply us to live Himself out of us to be God's pleasure. (*CWWL*, 1994–1997, vol. 1, "Crystallization-study of the Epistle to the Romans," pp. 259-260)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 36, pp. 199-208

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Morning Nourishment

Rev. 3:4-5

But you have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they will walk with Me in white because they are worthy. He who overcomes will be clothed thus, in white garments...

In [Psalm 45](#) the queen has two garments ([vv. 13-14](#)), one corresponding to the objective righteousness for our salvation and the other to the subjective righteousness for our victory. The latter is equivalent to the wedding garment in [Matthew 22:11 and 12](#). The queen in [Psalm 45](#) signifies the church. Her first garment is inwrought with gold, and her second is embroidered clothing. In the Bible gold signifies the nature of God. At the time of our salvation we received a golden garment that enabled us to be in the presence of God. In addition to this, we need another garment, a garment of embroidery. This embroidery signifies the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit today is working on us to transform us...Although we have the first garment, our second garment is now being prepared under the embroidering work of the Holy Spirit. This garment will qualify us to see Christ at His judgment seat. Day by day we are under the needle, the transformation work, of the Holy Spirit. This is because we need not only justification but also approval...Only those who have the second garment produced by the embroidering work of the Holy Spirit will be chosen and qualified to attend the wedding feast of the Lamb. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 4327-4328)

Today's Reading

The bride in [Revelation 19](#) is clothed with fine linen, bright and clean—the righteousnesses of the saints. This is Christ growing in and living out of us. When we live out Christ by letting Him grow in us, He will be our living. The only way for Christ to grow in us and live out of us is by our eating and drinking Him all the time.

For the bride to be prepared means that she has the fine linen, bright and clean. No doubt, these righteousnesses are related to the righteousness in [Ephesians 4:24](#), where we are told that the new man was created in righteousness...The righteousnesses of the bride here denote the subjective righteousness, Christ as the righteousness which has been constituted into our being. The more this subjective righteousness is wrought into

the church, the more she is prepared to become the bride. Those who compose the bride have been redeemed and regenerated. But they also need to have the subjective righteousness interwoven into their being in order to have the fine linen, bright and clean. Actually, it is this linen that is the beauty of the bride.

The bride in [Revelation 19](#) refers to the redeemed and transformed tripartite mankind. This bride will wear white linen, which is the righteousnesses of the saints. If we would have a share in this bride, we need to adorn ourselves with the bright, shining, and pure righteousness. Day by day we need to prepare bright linen clothing to cover ourselves. This is our daily righteousness. We produce such a garment of righteousness by walking daily according to the Spirit of life and by having a life that is a life of the Spirit.

[[Matthew 5:20](#)] clearly indicates that we must have a righteousness that surpasses the righteousness of the Pharisees. This righteousness is not the objective Christ whom we receive as our robe for our justification. Rather, it is the subjective Christ whom we live out as our daily living. It is not the justifying robe; it is the garment that qualifies us to receive the reward.

The second garment is also referred to in [Revelation 3:4, 5, and 18](#). In [3:4 and 5](#) the Lord told the church in Sardis that those who have not defiled their garments will walk with Him in white and that the overcomers will be “clothed...in white garments.” This is the garment for the wedding feast. In [3:18](#) the Lord advised the church in Laodicea to buy from Him “white garments.” Thus, in the book of Revelation the matter of the second garment is stressed. If we do not have it, we will miss the wedding feast. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 4328-4329, 4326-4327)

Further Reading: Life-study of 2 Peter, msg. 1

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« WEEK 5 — HYMN

Hymns, #1311

- 1 The local churches are preparing for
the Lord's return—
We know the time is near for our
Bridegroom so dear.
He's coming back to claim the bride
for which His heart doth yearn,
That with Him we may be through
all eternity.

The Christ we love is coming soon,
And He will come as our Bridegroom.
We'll wait for Him, we'll watch and pray—
It may be today, it may be today!

- 2 How we must give Him all our heart
and from all idols turn!
Oh, who else could there be who
loves so tenderly?
Lord Jesus, You're the only One who
makes our heart to burn—
Oh, please do not delay! Come quickly,
e'en today!

- 3 A glorious bride He is preparing for
His wedding day;
She'll be so bright and pure, fine
linen cov'ring her.
O Lord, work in Thy righteousness,
this is the only way;
And blessèd we will be to join that
feast with Thee.

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WEEK 6 — OUTLINE

The Bride as the Corporate Warrior

Scripture Reading: [Eph. 6:10-20](#)

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I. [Ephesians 6:10-20](#) reveals that the bride is a corporate warrior fighting against the enemy of God for God's kingdom:

- A. When the overcoming lover of Christ becomes one with God to be God's dwelling place, in the eyes of God she is as beautiful as Tirzah and as lovely as Jerusalem; however, to the enemy she is as terrible as an army with banners—[S.S. 6:4](#):
 - 1. Banners indicate a readiness to fight and also are a sign that the victory is won; a terrible army signifies that the overcomers of the Lord terrify God's enemy, Satan.
 - 2. This army fights the battle for God's kingdom in the degradation of God's people to become the overcomers who answer the Lord's call ([Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21](#)); eventually, the overcomers will become a bride collectively to marry Christ ([19:7-9](#)); after their wedding, this bride will become an army to fight alongside Christ, her Husband, to defeat Antichrist with all his followers ([vv. 11-21](#)).
- B. The church as the bride is actually the corporate man in God's intention, who will fulfill the twofold purpose of expressing God and dealing with God's enemy—[Gen. 1:26](#).
- C. Not only must God's eternal purpose be fulfilled and the desire of Christ's heart be satisfied, but God's enemy must be defeated; for this, the church must be a warrior.
- D. Our walk is for the fulfillment of God's purpose, our living is for the satisfaction of Christ, and our warfare is for the defeat of God's enemy—[Eph. 4:1; 5:2, 8; 6:10-11](#).

II. The testimony of Jesus during the millennium is the bride of Christ—the overcomers who are the co-kings of Christ—[Rev. 19:7-9; 20:4, 6](#):

- A. The Lord's recovery is for the preparation of the bride of Christ ([19:7-9; 21:2](#)); ultimately, we will be conformed to be the wonderful Shulammite, who, as the duplication of Solomon, is the greatest and ultimate figure of the

New Jerusalem as the counterpart, the bride, of Christ ([S.S. 6:13](#); [Rev. 21:2, 9-10](#); [22:17a](#)).

B. The Shulammite is likened to the dance of two camps, or two armies (Heb. *mahanaim*), in the sight of God; after Jacob saw the angels of God, the two armies of God, he named the place where he was Mahanaim and divided his wives, children, and possessions into “two armies”—[S.S. 6:13](#); [Gen. 32:1-10](#):

1. The spiritual significance of the two armies is the strong testimony that we more than conquer, we “super-overcome,” through Him who loved us according to the principle of the Body of Christ—[Rom. 8:37](#); [12:5](#); [Deut. 32:30](#); [Eccl. 4:9-12](#).
2. God does not want those who are strong in themselves; He wants only the feeble ones, the weaker ones, the women and children; those who are counted worthy to be overcomers will be the weaker ones who depend on the Lord—[1 Cor. 1:26-28](#); [2 Cor. 12:9-10](#); [13:3-5](#); [S.S. 8:6](#).
3. God needs a people who are one with Him, a people who are submissive to Him, signified by the plaited hair ([1:11](#)), and obedient to Him with a flexible will, signified by the neck with strings of jewels ([v. 10](#)).
4. When we consider how to arrive at the highest peak of the divine revelation, we should not trust in ourselves but depend on the Lord as love, power, and mercy to make us vessels of mercy, honor, and glory—[Rom. 9:16, 21-23](#).

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III. Spiritual warfare is necessary because Satan’s will is in conflict with God’s will—[Eph. 1:5, 9, 11](#); [Matt. 6:10](#):

- A. In addition to God’s intention, God’s will, there is a second intention, a second will, for the satanic will is set against the divine will—[Isa. 14:12-14](#).
- B. All warfare has its source in the conflict between Satan’s will and God’s will.
- C. Spiritual warfare is the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan; in order for the kingdom of the heavens to be established, there is the need of spiritual fighting—[Matt. 12:26, 28](#); [Rev. 12:11](#).
- D. We walk according to truth and by grace, we live in love and light, and we fight to subdue the satanic will—[Eph. 4:1](#); [5:2, 8](#); [6:12](#).

« Day 4 »

IV. To deal with God's enemy, we need to be empowered with the greatness of the power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the heavens, far above all the evil spirits in the air—v. 10; 1:19-22:

- A. The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that in ourselves we cannot fight the spiritual warfare against Satan and his evil kingdom; we can fight only in the Lord and in the might of His strength.
- B. The charge to be empowered implies the need to exercise our will; if we would be empowered for spiritual warfare, our will must be strong and exercised—S.S. 4:4; 7:4.

V. The warfare between the church and Satan is a battle between us who love the Lord and who are in His church and the evil powers in the heavens—Eph. 6:12:

- A. The rulers, the authorities, and the world-rulers of this darkness are the rebellious angels, who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and who now rule in the heavens over the nations of the world—Col. 1:13; Dan. 10:20.
- B. We need to realize that our warfare is not against human beings but against the evil spirits, the spiritual powers in the heavens.

<< Day 5 >>

VI. Spiritual warfare is not an individual matter; it is a matter of Christ's bride being a corporate warrior—Eph. 6:13:

- A. The church is a corporate warrior, and the believers together make up this corporate warrior; after we have been formed corporately into an army, we will be able to fight against God's enemy.
- B. God's strategy is to use the church as His army to fight against the enemy; Satan's strategy is to isolate us from the church as God's army.
- C. The whole armor of God is for the Body, not for individuals; only the corporate warrior can wear the whole armor of God.

VII. To fight the spiritual warfare, we need to put on the whole armor of God—v. 11:

- A. God in Christ as the reality in our living is the girdle that strengthens our whole being for the spiritual warfare—v. 14a.
- B. The breastplate of righteousness that covers our conscience and guards us from Satan's accusations is Christ as our righteousness—v. 14b; 1 Cor. 1:30.
- C. Christ is the peace for us to be one with God and with the saints; this peace is the firm foundation that enables us to stand against the enemy—Eph. 2:15;

[6:15.](#)

- D. Faith is a shield against the flaming darts of the enemy; Christ is the Author and Perfecter of such faith—[v. 16](#); [Heb. 12:2](#).
- E. The helmet of salvation that covers our mind is the saving Christ whom we experience in our daily life—[Eph. 6:17a](#); [John 16:33](#).
- F. The sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, is our offensive weapon with which we cut the enemy to pieces—[Eph. 6:17b](#).

« [Day 6](#) »

- G. Prayer is the unique, crucial, and vital means by which we apply the whole armor of God, making every item of the armor available to us in a practical way—[v. 18](#).

VIII. By putting on the whole armor of God, we are able to stand against the stratagems, the evil plans, of the devil—[vv. 11, 13-14](#):

- A. To sit with Christ is to participate in all His accomplishments, to walk in His Body is to fulfill God's eternal purpose, and to stand in His power is to fight against God's enemy—[2:6](#); [4:1](#); [5:2, 8](#); [6:11, 13-14](#).
- B. In fighting against the enemy, the most important thing is to stand; having done all, we need to stand to the end.

IX. We all need to see that in the Lord's recovery today we are on a battlefield; we must cooperate with the Lord to fight against Satan's aerial forces so that we can gain more of Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ and the preparation of the bride of Christ, setting up and spreading the kingdom of God so that Christ can come back to inherit the earth.

« [Hymn](#) »

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« WEEK 6 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

S.S. 6:4

You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, as lovely as Jerusalem, as terrible as an army with banners.

S.S. 6:13

Return, return, O Shulammite; return, return, that we may gaze at you. Why should you gaze at the Shulammite, as upon the dance of two camps?

When we become one with God to be God's dwelling place, we are as beautiful as Tirzah and as lovely as Jerusalem in the eyes of God [cf. [S.S. 6:4](#)]. However, to the enemy this lover, this overcomer, is as terrible as an army with banners. Banners indicate a readiness to fight and also mean that the victory is won...When she becomes as beautiful as the moon and as clear as the sun, she is also as terrible as an army with banners ([v. 10](#)).

When she becomes the garden, she is nothing more than a garden, but when she becomes Tirzah and Jerusalem, something is built up to show God's beauty and God's loveliness. At that time, God's enemy trembles because this little country girl has become an army with banners...An army fights the battle for God's kingdom in the degradation of God's people to be the overcomers answering the Lord's call ([Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21](#)). (*CWWL, 1994–1997, vol. 3, "Crystallization-study of Song of Songs,"* pp. 346-347)

Today's Reading

After seeing such a high vision in Song of Songs, we may ask, "Who can be such persons?" In order to answer this we need an additional interpretation of [6:13b](#)...By this time the Shulammite is like two camps, or armies, in the eyes of God. These two armies are dancing in celebration of their victory. The country girl eventually attained the status of the Shulammite...In this verse the Shulammite is likened to two armies, or camps, dancing.

This phrase *two armies* in Hebrew is *Mahanaim*. This is not a common word; it is a historical name from the Old Testament in [Genesis 32:2](#). Jacob decided to go back to his fathers' land when he could no longer stay with his uncle Laban, to whom he had fled from his brother Esau. By that time he had four wives and many children, servants,

flocks, and herds. However, his twin brother Esau was still alive. Jacob was returning with the fear that Esau still wanted to kill him. As he journeyed with his family, there were no strong ones with him. There were only feeble ones, women and children. Jacob was very frightened at the prospect of meeting Esau. On the way “the angels of God met him,” and Jacob said, “This is God’s camp.” So he “called the name of that place Mahanaim” ([vv. 1-2](#)).

After he saw the two armies of God, Jacob did a marvelous thing. He divided his wives, children, and the rest of his possessions into two groups, or “two armies.”...This is full of spiritual significance. These two groups are not just the singular army of God but “two armies.” This means that we are more than conquerors. It also signifies a strong testimony. God does not want “giants.” He wants only the feeble ones, the weaker ones, the women and children. They can become His armies because the fighting is not in their hands but in His hands. He needs a people who are one with Him, a people who are submissive to Him, signified by the plaited hair ([S.S. 1:11](#)), and obedient to Him with a flexible will, signified by the neck with strings of jewels ([v. 10](#)).

When we consider how to arrive at the high peak of the revelation in Song of Songs, we should not trust in ourselves. We may think that because the apostle Paul was strong, he could do it. But the apostle Paul himself says that he was less than the least among the saints ([Eph. 3:8](#)). He says, “Who is weak, and I am not weak?” ([2 Cor. 11:29](#))...In [Romans 9:16](#) Paul says, “It is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.” We may think that we can run, but we cannot. It is Christ who can run. Paul also says, “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” ([Gal. 2:20a](#)). (*CWWL, 1994–1997*, vol. 3, “Crystallization-study of Song of Songs,” pp. 347-348)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1994–1997, vol. 3, “Crystallization-study of Song of Songs,” chs. 7, 12

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<< WEEK 6 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 8:37

But in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us.

Rom. 12:5

So we who are many are one Body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Dear saints, when that day comes, all who are strong in themselves will be disqualified. Those who are counted as overcomers will be the weaker ones, the ones who wept with tears, saying, “Lord, I cannot make it. Thank You for releasing all these high-peak truths unveiling to us what we should be. We should be in the Holy of Holies, living within the veil. We should be in oneness with You. You are our dwelling place, and we are Your dweller. I want to attain to this, but I cannot do anything. I am just a little one, a feeble one.” Such weaker ones who depend on the Lord will be counted worthy to be the overcomers.

There being two armies indicates that the country girl was not alone. An army indicates the principle of the Body...We should humble ourselves and admit that we are nothing. Instead of worrying, we should change our feeling to praise. We can say, “Praise You, Lord. What a joy that I cannot do anything! What a joy that You do everything and have done everything for me!” Right away we will have plaited hair and strings of jewels around our neck, that is, submission and obedience to the Lord. We will no longer be stiff-necked. (*CWWL, 1994–1997*, vol. 3, “Crystallization-study of Song of Songs,” pp. 348-349)

Today's Reading

In [Revelation 3:8](#) the Lord said that those in Philadelphia had “a little power.” He admired their absoluteness and faithfulness to do what they could...He is still calling for overcomers. If we say, “Lord, I can’t overcome,” the Lord will say, “My child, whatever you cannot do, I will do for you. I resist the proud, but I give grace to the humble.” This is the principle of two armies (Mahanaim) dancing. Remember that these two armies were composed of Jacob’s wives and children. Eventually, none of them fought against Esau. It was God who fought Esau by changing his attitude. [Genesis 32](#) is a history of Mahanaim. Today we are the reality of God’s armies (Mahanaim).

Shulammite is the feminine form of *Solomon*, indicating that now the overcomers have become the same as Christ...The Shulammite was a country girl. Now, as a counterpart of Solomon, she has become the same as Solomon in life, in nature, in expression, and in function for the carrying out of God's economy. In these four things—life, nature, expression, and function—we become the same as God and Christ but not in Their Godhead. To say that we are the same as God in His Godhead is a great blasphemy, but if we say that we cannot be the same as God in life, nature, expression, and function, this is unbelief.

The phrases *in Christ* and *in the Lord* are used repeatedly in the New Testament...In the Lord we are able to do all things ([Phil. 4:13](#)). Surely, our God is more qualified than Solomon. He is able to make us the same as He is in His life, in His nature, in His expression, and in His function to carry out His economy. This signifies that the overcomers were sinners. Now, in the maturity of Christ's life, they have become the same as Christ in life, in nature, in expression, and in function for the accomplishment of God's eternal economy.

In the last two chapters of the Bible, a city is presented to us. This city is the consummation of the entire Bible. In this city we can find all the types, figures, and prophecies in the Old Testament and all the realities in the New Testament. This city is the aggregate of all the visions and revelations in God's Word...The primary thing is that the almighty King, the almighty "Solomon," wants to be one with His people, signified by a country girl. He does this not by coercing but by the personal and affectionate way of courting. Who could imagine that God wanted to contact His chosen people just like a man courting a lovely lady? This is how the Bible ends, with a couple in a marriage life—the New Jerusalem ([Rev. 21](#)). (*CWWL*, 1994–1997, vol. 3, "Crystallization-study of Song of Songs," pp. 349-350)

Further Reading: Life-study of Colossians, msg. 65

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<< WEEK 6 — DAY 3 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 1:5

Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Matt. 6:10

Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, *so* also on earth.

In the universe there are three wills: the divine will, the satanic will, and the human will...God's will, being self-existing, is eternal, uncreated. As created beings, the angels also have a will. One of these angels, an archangel, was appointed by God to rule the universe that existed before the creation of Adam. Because of his high position and his beauty, this archangel became proud. This pride gave rise to an evil intention, which became the satanic will. Therefore, in addition to God's intention, God's will, there is a second intention, a second will, for now the satanic will is set against God's will. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 515)

Today's Reading

All warfare has its source in this conflict of wills...The controversy in the universe began with the rebellion of the archangel against God. That rebellion was the beginning of all the fighting that is now taking place among nations, in society, in the family, and in individuals...For example, you may experience an inner warfare between your reason and your lust. All the different kinds of warfare have their source in the controversy between the divine will and the satanic will.

At a particular time, God created man and endowed him with a human will that was free. It is because of God's greatness that He gave man a free will. A great person will never compel anyone to follow him. By giving man a free will, God was indicating that He would not force man to obey Him...In His greatness God gave man freedom of choice.

In [Genesis 2](#) we see that man was free to exercise his will to eat either of the tree of life or of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...In the garden there was a triangular situation, with the tree of life representing the divine will, the tree of knowledge representing the satanic will, and Adam representing the human will.

Actually, the tree of life denotes God Himself, and the tree of knowledge denotes Satan. Therefore, there were three persons—God, Satan, and man—each one with a will.

Although there were three wills, the controversy involved just two parties—God and Satan. The crucial issue was whether man would choose the divine will or the satanic will. If the human will stood with the divine will, then God's will would be accomplished. But if the human will took sides with the satanic will, Satan's will would be carried out, at least temporarily. As we all know, the human will took sides with the satanic will. This means that man chose to follow Satan and sided with the satanic will. Therefore, Satan was victorious temporarily.

However, through repentance man can turn from the satanic will to the divine will, from Satan's side to God's side. The first commandment in the gospel is to repent. The next two commandments are to believe and to be baptized. Any sinner who desires to be saved must obey these three commandments. He must repent to God, believe in the Lord Jesus, and be baptized in water. To repent is to have a turn from the satanic will to the divine will.

The Bible says that we must repent for the kingdom ([Matt. 4:17](#)). The kingdom of God is actually the exercise of the divine will. When sinners repent for the kingdom of God, they turn from the side of Satan to the side of God, which is the kingdom of God, the will of God. After a person turns from the satanic will to the divine will, he must believe in the Lord Jesus and be baptized. Through baptism he is brought out of the authority of darkness, the satanic will, and is transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God's love ([Col. 1:13](#)).

Our walk is for the fulfillment of God's purpose, our living is for the satisfaction of Christ, and our fighting is for the defeat of God's enemy. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 515-517)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msgs. 63—66, 97

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<< WEEK 6 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 6:10

Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

Eph. 6:12

For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

The Greek word in [Ephesians 6:10](#) rendered “empowered” has the same root as the word *powers* in [1:19](#). To deal with God’s enemy, to fight against the evil forces of darkness, we need to be empowered with the greatness of the power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the heavenlies, far above all the evil spirits in the air. The fact that we are to be empowered in the Lord indicates that in the spiritual warfare against Satan and his evil kingdom, we can fight only in the Lord, not in ourselves. Whenever we are in ourselves, we are defeated.

The charge to be empowered implies the need to exercise our will. If we would be empowered for spiritual warfare, our will must be strong and exercised. We should not be like jellyfish, those who are weak-willed and vacillating. Actually, it is those with a strong will who are most able to repent. Consider Saul of Tarsus as an example. As he was traveling to Damascus with the intention of arresting all those who called on the name of the Lord Jesus, he was apprehended by the Lord. Because Saul had such a strong will, he could have a strong repentance. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 518)

Today’s Reading

In addition to preserving our conscience, God has sovereignly preserved our will...We may mistakenly think that it is difficult to preach the gospel to one with a strong will. According to my experience, most of those who were saved through my gospel preaching were those with a strong will and a definite intention. Such a will is able to function positively in repentance. Repentance requires the exercise of the will. In like manner, to be empowered also involves our will.

The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that we cannot fight the spiritual warfare in ourselves; we can fight only in the Lord and in the might of His

strength. In [Ephesians 6:10](#) Paul refers to power, might, and strength. First, we are empowered by the power that raised Christ from the dead and gave Him to be Head over all things. Then we know God's might and strength.

Blood and flesh [[v. 12](#)] refers to men. Behind men of blood and flesh are the evil forces of the devil, fighting against God's purpose. Hence, our wrestling, our fighting, must not be against men but against the evil spiritual forces in the heavenlies.

We in the Lord's recovery should realize that spiritual warfare is not a matter of fighting against men. Even if men cause damage to the recovery, we should not fight against them. Behind them and over them is the evil power.

The rulers, the authorities, and the world-rulers of this darkness are the rebellious angels, who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and who now rule in the heavenlies over the nations of the world, such as the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece in [Daniel 10:20](#).

In [Ephesians 6:12](#) Paul also speaks of "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies." *The heavenlies* here refers to the air ([2:2](#)). Satan and his spiritual forces of evil are in the air. But we are seated in the third heaven above them ([v. 6](#)). In fighting a battle, the position above the enemy is very important strategically. Satan and his evil forces are under us, and they are destined to be defeated by us.

Thus, the warfare between the church and Satan is a battle between us who love the Lord and who are in His church and the evil powers in the heavenlies. Apparently, it is people of flesh and blood who damage the church. Actually, it is Satan and his evil angels working behind them who cause the damage. Therefore, we must fight against these spiritual forces. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 518-521)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 156

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« WEEK 6 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 6:14

Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Eph. 6:17-18

And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.

The armor in [Ephesians 6](#) is not for Christians as individuals; it is for the church corporately as the Body. What this chapter reveals is not the believers fighting as individuals but a corporate army fighting the battle for God's interests on earth.

No soldier in a modern army would enter into battle by himself. Rather, he would fight as part of a well-trained and fully equipped army. After we have been formed corporately into an army, we will be able to fight against God's enemy. God's strategy is to use the church as His army to fight against the enemy. Therefore, it is very dangerous to be isolated from the army. Only by remaining in the army will we have the necessary protection. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 793)

Today's Reading

If you separate yourself from the church, you will be defeated. Satan's strategy is simply to isolate you from the church as God's army. It is crucial for us to realize that spiritual warfare is a Body matter. If we realize this and stay with the church, we will be victorious. The battle is not for us as individual believers; it is for the church as God's army.

The Lord with His might is the very armor that we put on for our protection. This means that we, as the Body, need to put on Christ Himself as our armor. In order to fight in the spiritual warfare, we must have Christ as the whole armor of God. In [Ephesians 6:14-17](#) there are six aspects of Christ as armor: the girdle of truth, or reality; the breastplate of righteousness; the firm foundation of the gospel of peace (the shoes); the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit. Therefore, the

whole armor of God consists of the girdle, the breastplate, the shoes, the shield, the helmet, and the sword. The shield is for defense, whereas the sword is for offense. In fact, the sword is the only item of the armor that is for offensive warfare.

We receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit by means of all prayer and petition [v. 18]. Actually, prayer is the means by which we receive all the aspects of the whole armor of God. Do you know how to apply the girdle of reality? It is by praying in spirit. Prayer is also the way to apply the breastplate, the shoes, the shield, the helmet, and the sword.

The antecedent of *which* in [verse 17](#) is *the Spirit*, not *the sword*. This indicates that the Spirit is the word of God. Both the Spirit and the word are Christ ([2 Cor. 3:17](#); [Rev. 19:13](#)). We need to receive the word of God by means of all prayer and petition.

As we receive the word by means of all prayer and petition, we should pray “at every time in spirit.” The spirit in [Ephesians 6:18](#) is our regenerated spirit indwelt by the Spirit of God. Hence, this spirit is the mingled spirit, our spirit mingled with God’s Spirit. Whenever we pray as a means of taking in the word, we need to be in spirit. The spirit is the proper organ for prayer...We can be in spirit simply by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus from deep within. When we call “O Lord Jesus,” we turn from the vanity of the mind to the spirit of the mind. How sweet and enjoyable it is to call on the Lord Jesus in spirit!

By praying in spirit we apply Christ as the whole armor of God. As we take the word by praying in spirit, we spontaneously contact Christ as the life-giving Spirit. Immediately, our praying and reading become living, and we are empowered by Christ and covered with Him as our armor. Furthermore, we have the realization that we are in the Body and that Christ with all that He is and has is our portion. In this way we apply Him as the all-inclusive armor. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 793-796)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1984, vol. 1, “Teachers’ Training,” ch. 2

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Morning Nourishment

Eph. 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil.

Eph. 6:13

Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The armor of God is composed of six items: the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the firm foundation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. When we are equipped with such a full armor, we can stand against the attack of the enemy and even take the offensive against him. After these items of the armor of God, Paul turns to prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 says, “By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.” The phrase *by means of all prayer and petition* modifies the word *receive* in **verse 17**. By prayer we receive both the helmet of salvation and the word of God. This indicates that we need to receive the word of God by means of all prayer and petition. We need to pray as we are receiving the word of God. We have seen that the whole armor of God is composed of six items. Prayer may be considered the seventh. It is the unique, crucial, and vital means by which we apply the other items, making the armor available to us in a practical way. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 537)

Today's Reading

It is by means of all prayer and petition that we gird our loins with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, and have our feet shod with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace. Furthermore, it is by prayer that we take up the shield of faith and receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God. Whenever we are about to put on the armor or to take up any item of the armor, we need to pray. We cannot and we should not attempt to use any part of God's armor without prayer. Prayer is the unique way to apply the armor of God.

We need to put on the whole armor of God so that we “may be able to stand” ([Eph. 6:11](#)). In [chapter 6](#) the word *stand* is crucial. In [chapter 2](#) we sit with Christ in the heavenlies ([v. 6](#)), and in [chapters 4 and 5](#) we walk in His Body on the earth ([4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15](#)). Then in [chapter 6](#) we stand in His power in the heavenlies. To sit with Christ is to participate in all His accomplishments; to walk in His Body is to fulfill God’s eternal purpose; and to stand in His power is to fight against God’s enemy.

By putting on the whole armor of God, we are able to stand against the stratagems of the devil. These stratagems are the devil’s evil plans. Not only does the devil have an evil will, but he also has subtle stratagems to work out his will. Even now Satan is busily working and plotting to carry out his evil, subtle stratagems.

In [6:11](#) we are told to put on the armor of God, and in [verse 13](#) we are charged to take it up...The armor of God is prepared and provided by God for us. But we need to take it up and put it on; we need to use and apply God’s provision...Whether we put on the whole armor of God or take it up, we must exercise our will in a strong way.

In order to wage the spiritual warfare, we need the whole armor. This requires the Body of Christ, not only individual believers, to take it up.

By taking up the whole armor of God, we will be able to withstand in the evil day. To withstand is to stand against. In fighting, the most important thing is to stand. In [5:16](#) Paul says that the days are evil. In this evil age ([Gal. 1:4](#)), every day is an evil day because Satan is at work every day.

Paul concludes [Ephesians 6:13](#) with the words, “Having done all, to stand.” In fighting we need to stand to the end. Having done all, we still must stand. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 537-538, 519-520, 522)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1953, vol. 3, “The Experience of Life,” ch. 18

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« WEEK 6 — HYMN

Hymns, #885

- 1 Fight the battle in the Body;
Never fight it on your own.
With the Body to the Head joined,
Fight the battle on the throne.

Fight the battle in the Body!
By the virtue of the Head;
Standing firmly with the Body,
Into vict'ry you'll be led.

- 2 For the Body is God's armor,
Not for anyone alone;
When you wrestle in the Body,
All its benefits you own.
- 3 'Tis the Church on Christ established
Satan shall not overpow'r;
'Tis the Body built together
Which resists the evil pow'r.
- 4 In the Body, by the headship,
Sitting in the heavenlies,
Struggle with the wicked spirits
And the principalities.
- 5 As a member of the Body,
With the brethren stand for God;
Praying always in the Spirit,
Claim the vict'ry through the blood.
- 6 In the heav'nlies more than conqu'ror,
In the power of His might.
As a soldier in the army,
In the Lord the battle fight.
- 7 Keep on wrestling in the Body,
Mighty vict'ry you will see.

Bind and loose, God's will fulfilling,
And the foes your food will be.

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