

## Chapter 10

## THE MASTER PLAN AND THE TRILOGIES OF TIME AND FAITH: THE REALIZATION

A foundation was laid in the previous chapter for understanding the Biblical trilogies of time and faith and the importance of them being considered together. Faith cannot be considered in its wholeness apart from the past, present, and future components of time. They are integrally inter-woven with one another and together form the basis of our Christian walk of life. We find elements of faith reaching back thousands of years in time and receiving it as a present reality. Our present life, this day, this moment, is but a brief experience between eternity past and eternity future. Faith synthesizes, or combines together all the promises of God, His outpouring grace, and His designed purposes for mankind, as revealed from Genesis to Revelation, into this moment of time we call the present. In essence, it is to some measure learning to live and share in God's eternity.

### I AM

When Moses first encountered God he asked of His name. *“God said to Moses, ‘I AM THAT I AM.’”* (Ex. 3:14) **I Am**, as a name implies an existence different from all other existences but also an existence out of time, with which time has nothing to do. In Him is eternity. Much later Jesus said to the Jews, *“Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”* (Jn. 8:58) Preexisting as part of the Godhead, even before creation, Jesus occupied eternity in God. When He became flesh and a part of this creation, He then entered and shared the time dimension with man. And now, as the crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ, the Lamb of God, He declares,

*“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”* (Rev. 1:8)

Jesus Christ, who occupies eternity as the eternal One, the **I Am**, entered creation and became a part of time, *who was and is and is to come*. Here, He finds complete identity with man.

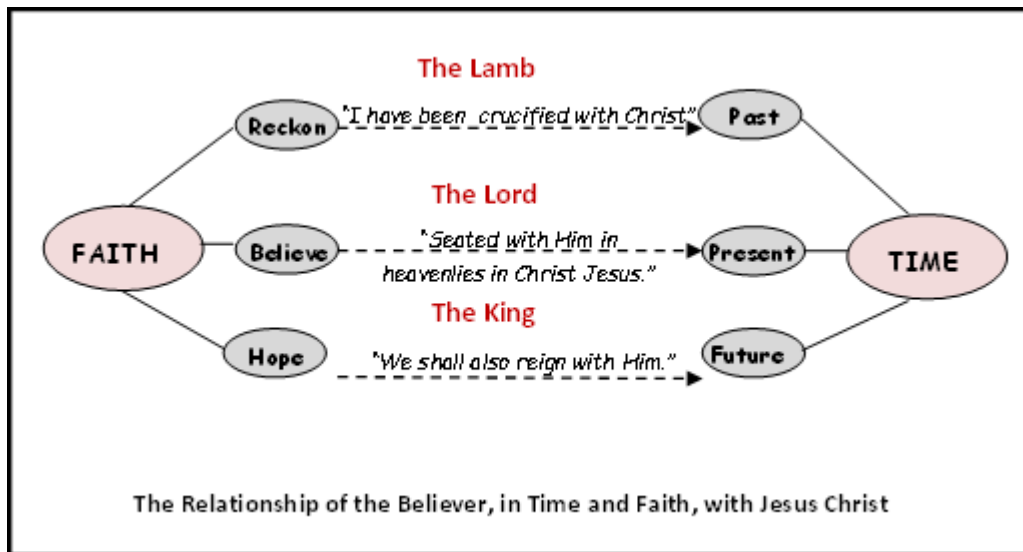
**“So now, in Him, redeemed creation may share in His eternity. Man’s past, present and future will fuse together into the single unity of His eternal present, *I Am*. And, by faith, there is a present foretaste of eternity in which the components of time: past, present and future, combine together, or fuse into eternity...the continuous present. For now, it is by faith, as *the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.*”** (Heb. 11:1) **“Then in the fullness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him.”** (Eph. 1:10)

Is this not all too marvelous to comprehend? Comprehend it we may, but our ultimate is to walk in its present reality and anticipate its grand culmination!

## The Eternal One: The Lamb, the Lord, and the King

"These will wage war against the **Lamb**, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is **Lord** of lords and **King** of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." (Rev. 17:14)

In this verse, Christ, the eternal one, is seen as the Lamb, the Lord, and the King. As the Lamb, He bears the bodily scars of one long ago crucified. As Lord, He is now Master with absolute ownership to whom all things belong. And as King, He wears a royal crown and will conquer and reign forever more. He is one, but all together the Lamb, the Lord, and the King, fully filling the past, present and future of time. He is not one or the other. His wholeness is Jesus, the Lamb Lord King. All the promises, the grace and mercy of God, all His eternal purposes over all ages, from before creation to His eternal Kingdom to come, are summed up in this heavenly scene as *the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen*, even our faith. We must now see and understand how this faith in Jesus Christ as the **Lamb**, as the **Lord**, and as the **King** profoundly impacts and transforms our lives as believers. The relationship between His titles of **Lamb**, **Lord** and **King** with that of *time* and *faith* is illustrated below.



In the pages ahead we will explore how the believer's faith in the eternal life of Christ will change his life forever and bring his own life into alignment with the high calling and purposes of God. O' how we must understand our place **in Christ** and His place **in us**, even as Jesus said to His disciples--

*"Abide in Me, and I in you. And, "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (Jn. 15: 4-5)*

[A discussion of this Biblical truth of **Christ in me** and **I in Christ** is presented more fully in this Series under Chapter 5, "The Trilogy of the Godhead: The Son."]

To understand the reality of this scripture is beyond a Sunday school lesson, and beyond hearing it preached again and again. It simply boils down to faith. The kind of faith that makes *substance out of things anticipated (hoped for) and evidence of things not seen.* (Heb. 11:1) It is to be experienced, not just memorized. These things of which we speak are not lessons, doctrines, or “pie in the sky” theology. They are spiritual reality, as real to the spirit as the air we breathe is to the body. We will begin with the believer’s faith in the Lamb of God.

## Reckoning on the Lamb of God

The word “reckon” is an interesting word used by Paul to describe the believer’s attitude towards these truths that are so spiritual yet real and powerful to work in lives. There are several other words that may be used in its place, such as *consider*, *conclude*, and *account*. It may be best thought of as “graces” recorded in God’s Book of Life, His sacred ledger. These graces are *imputed* on behalf of the believer. They are *imputed*, or reckoned to our account, because of the believer’s position of being **in Christ**. The first I heard the word *imputed* was some 40 years ago, in the first message I heard from Sergio Valori. He clearly made a distinction between *imputed*, as something accounted on our behalf by grace through faith in Christ, and *embodied* as its subsequent working out in our lives, being manifested in our bodies—such as *imputed righteousness* versus *embodied righteousness*.

Those things we *reckon* as *imputed* on our behalf by grace must precede the *embodiment* of that truth. For instance, regarding the co-crucifixion of the believer with Christ, Paul writes, “*I have been crucified with Christ...*” (Gal. 2:20). We know this truth as it is revealed in the Word. And it has been *imputed* by God to our account. This is grace. But to be *embodied* it must become activated by faith. *Reckoning* is not idle faith just considering this to be true, but *reckoning* is a verb, it is faith in action laying hold of that truth and appropriating it into our life. We must consider it as a fact of spiritual reality, a done deal. If one is to grow and mature, the *embodiment* of that truth must follow. To remain and only lavishing in those things eternally credited to our account because of our standing of being in Christ is to remain a babe, unfit for solid food. We may come before God in worship with thanksgiving in our hearts for this imputed grace. We may confess having it in testimony, even singing songs of its merit. But unless it is acted upon by faith, reckoning it as reality, there is no embodiment or out working of its power in our life. It is like having a million dollars credited to our bank account. It only becomes of value to us when drawn upon. This is **practical Christianity!** It is the manifestation of this spiritual truth “*in these earthen vessels.*”

Thus, to reckon is to receive by faith the spiritual reality that we were **in Christ** in His passion, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. Though this happened over 2,000 years ago, we were as much in (the seed of) Christ spiritually as we were in (the seed of) Adam naturally at creation. And, in as much as we were considered sinners because we were of the seed of Adam, being in him when he sinned in the Garden, we are now considered redeemed being in Christ and in His atonement.

**We must mentally grasp the understanding that all believers have a co-existing life in Christ, having a part in His past as the Lamb, His present as the Lord, and His future as King. This is truth—spiritual reality. Our faith must now activate this truth from being imputed to our account to its embodiment as we live a new and higher life in Christ, becoming increasingly estranged from things and matters of this world and unto what matters most to God our Father and Jesus Christ—even our maturity in His purposes. May we consider this growth unto full stature a reasonable part of God’s high calling in Christ Jesus.**

Let us now consider two foundational scriptures to *reckon* upon, beginning with the longest, Romans 6:1-14. As you slowly read through these verses please note:

- (1) Much is written as in the past tense, as things that have already happened, in Christ, but are now *reckoned* or *consider* true, a reality on behalf of the believer.
- (2) We are to *know* these things, i.e., to know through personal experience, “to experientially” know. (When Mary found that she would conceive in her womb a Son and that His name would be Jesus, she asked the angel, “*How can this be, since I do not know a man?*” (Lk. 1:34) Thus, being consistent with the word *know* interpretation, it means to have the personal experience, not just a mental understanding.)
- (3) Reckoning on such knowledge causes an embodiment of this spiritual truth, a *walk in newness of life*.

### **Romans 6:1-14**

*“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we **who died to sin** still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus **have been baptized into His death**? Therefore we **have been buried** with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, **knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.***”

The word *baptized* as used in this passage is also quite interesting, and different from other uses of this word. It literally means to submerge or dip under. Sometimes this same word *baptize* is used merely for ritual washing of water before ceremonial cleansing or eating a meal. (Lk. 11:38) Oftentimes in scripture baptism relates to a rite for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38) It is used also of being imbued with the Holy Spirit. (Mt. 3:11) But in Romans 6 its use is altogether different. I suppose this is why Hebrews 6:2 refers to the *doctrine of baptisms*.

In our above passage, *baptism* means such a complete identification being submerged in Christ that we now consider ourselves not only dead with regard to sin and our old way of life, but also buried, submerged into a spiritual grave. One in such a grave is dead, buried, and unresponsive to this world and its ungodly influences—such as sin, iniquity, and the whole realm of self-centeredness. The only thing now awaiting this person is a *resurrection* to newness of life. Our reckoning is complete when we see with our spiritual eyes and understand with our renewed minds that we are indeed dead to sin but very much alive to God and Christ Jesus.

## Galatians 2:20-21

*“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God...”*

The apostle Paul is declaring here that he is not *nullifying* the grace of God meaning he is not *setting aside* that which has been credited, or imputed to his account by God. He desires to act upon it by *reckoning* the fact by faith. And, what has been credited to his account, by grace through the **Lamb** of God? Because the believer is of His divine seed, it is of being **in Christ** at **His** crucifixion. In the Greek the phrase “*I have been crucified with*” is actually one word, *sustauroó*, meaning *co-crucifixion*. Can we reckon this as fact, as spiritual reality? Furthermore, what has been co-crucified with Christ? It is “*I*.”

We must examine this word “*I*” a little closer that it may reveal a greater and perhaps more personal understanding of this scripture. The word translated “*I*,” referring to oneself, is the Greek word “*ego*.” Yes, the same word from which we derive the English words “ego-centric” and “egotistical”—meaning self-centered, overly absorbed in oneself without regard for the feelings or desires of others, including God. With close observation we see that there are actually two “*I*”s represented in this scripture. The first “*I*” is the old man, the one co-crucified with Christ. His life has been terminated at the cross in Christ. However, the second “*I*” is the resurrected “*I*,” the new man born of the seed of Christ. It is in this oneness with Christ that Paul now “*lives*” in the flesh of this body.

Indeed, one may choose not to *reckon* this by faith. That however, only nullifies its embodiment but not the fact, as truth it remains imputed to our account by God. The believer in this respect lacks, or falls short of being an “overcomer.” What is nullified is the grace and faith of:

*“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the **life** of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the **life** of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”* (2 Cor. 4:10-11)

And, what is its substitute for failure to *reckon*? The old man, the first “*I*” is alive and well. It may even be attempting to produce the new man, the second “*I*” by his own efforts. It is as Paul said to the Galatians, “*Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect (mature) by the flesh* (the “*I*” of the old man)?” (Gal. 3:3)

To overcome is by active faith, correctly reckoning upon the God-endowed status we have in Christ.

## Romans 6 and Galatians 2:20 and Practical Christianity

Romans 6 presents the *objective truth* of the believer’s co-crucifixion, co-death, co-burial, and co-resurrection. These facts are imputed to the believer’s account:

*“Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him....”* (vs. 6)

Romans 7 presents the deep *subjective realization* of the personal need for its reality in life:

*“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”* (vs. 24)



Romans 8 presents the way of the Spirit and its *subjective experience*:

*“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”* (vs. 9-10)

In these three chapters we see the *revelation*, the *realization*, and the spiritual *reckoning* by faith, daily, for its practical application in our lives. We see also the victory is not within ourselves. It is not with resolutions, oaths, and the best of intentions. These will always frustrate and fail. There must be a “letting go” of these self-efforts and a faith *reckoning* for their reality. “*I have been crucified with Christ,*” is a fact imputed to the believer’s account by God. All such facts are real and true, needing only the *reckoning* by faith. I thus “let go.” I do not strive against defeat or strain for victory because this “I” is dead and has no real power over the old man of the flesh. I must now *reckon* this as so and “let go” of my grip on this matter of overcoming. The victory is in Christ, and what the Lamb has purchased to my account. It is now a matter of *reckoning* on the resurrection of His life in me. It is now His work, not mine. In this I am an overcomer.

***“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us...”*** (Eph. 3:20)

In the age to come, “*I*” will have absolutely no power within myself to attain the bodily resurrection from the grave. I am 100% helpless and fully dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit to surge through my material remains, transform it into eternal substance and life, and to re-unite my soul and spirit with it. *I* am useless. All my determination, resolve, and mental and physical strength are of no value. I am as powerless to bring about this future bodily resurrection as I am powerless to bring about the spiritual resurrection as in the death of the old “*I*” and the resurrection of the new “*I*” of Christ in me. I must now let go and *reckon* my rest and confidence in Him, and Him alone. “*Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. This He spoke concerning the Spirit.*” (Jn. 38-39)

**WATCHMAN NEE.** Many believers remember the day of their salvation, the time of their new birth in Christ. It was spiritual, yet a practical experience. Similarly, many remember the exact day and place of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This too was wholly of the spiritual dimension yet practical in life. We are never the same again after such experiences. We were helpless to earn any such spiritual blessing, but received it by grace. Watchman Nee also had such a spiritual experience but beyond the realm of regeneration and Spirit baptism. It was the day he realized the reality of Romans 6 and Galatians 2:20. For Nee, it was *reckoning* by faith and of Spirit revelation. He was never the same afterwards.

### Excerpt from “The Normal Christian Life,” Chapter 4, Watchman Nee

For years after my conversion I had been taught to reckon. I reckoned from 1920 until 1927. The more I reckoned that I was dead to sin, the more alive I clearly was. I simply could not believe myself dead and I could not produce the death. Whenever I sought help from others, I was told to read Romans 6:11, and the more I read Romans 6:11 and tried to reckon, the further away death was: I could not get at it. I fully appreciated the teaching that I must reckon, but I could not make out why nothing resulted from it. I have to confess that for months I was troubled. I said to the Lord, ‘If this is not clear, if I cannot be brought to see this which is so very fundamental, I will cease to do anything. I will not preach anymore; I will not go out to serve Thee anymore; I want first of all to get thoroughly clear here.’ For months I was seeking, and at times I fasted, but nothing came through. I remember one morning—that morning was a real morning and one I can never forget—I was upstairs sitting at my desk reading the Word and praying, and I said, ‘Lord, open my eyes!’ And then in a flash I saw it. I saw my oneness with Christ. I saw that I was in Him, and that when He died, I died. I saw that the question of my death was a matter of the past and not of the future, and that I was just as truly dead as He was because I was in Him when He died. The whole thing had dawned upon me. I was carried away with such joy at this great discovery that I jumped from my chair and cried, ‘Praise the Lord, I am dead!’ I ran downstairs and met one of the brothers helping in the kitchen and I laid hold of him. ‘Brother’, I said, ‘do you know that I have died?’ I must admit he looked puzzled. ‘What do you mean?’ he said, so I went on: ‘Do you not know that Christ has died? Do you not know that I died with Him? Do you not know that my death is no less truly a fact than His?’ Oh it was so real to me! I longed to go through the streets of Shanghai shouting the news of my discovery. From that day to this I have never for one moment doubted the finality of that word: “I have been crucified with Christ.” I do not mean to say that we need not work that out. Yes, there is an outworking of the death which we are going to see presently, but this, first of all, is the basis of it. I have been crucified: it has been done.

What, then, is the secret of reckoning? To put it in one word, it is revelation. We need revelation from God Himself (Matt. 16:17; Eph. 1:17-18). We need to have our eyes opened to the fact of our union with Christ, and that is something more than knowing it as a doctrine. Such revelation is no vague, indefinite thing.

**A SPIRITUAL FATHER.** Earlier in my writings I mentioned Albert Wadel, who was a much needed spiritual father to me in my early years. Albert grew up Brethren in Christ, an outflow of the Anabaptist Church denomination with roots in the Mennonite Church. Thus so, he was bound in the teachings of pietism, quietness, legalism, and semi-separatists. He was a man striving to his utmost, unsuccessfully, to control his old man’s behavior: temper, desires, stubbornness, and so on. He ruled his own life and his family with a heavy hand. Man or animal did not cross Albert. He would strive with all that was within him to change his character only to fail time and time again. Frustration and spiritual weariness entered. But then his spiritual eyes were opened to the revelation of Romans 6 and Galatians 2:20. In a moment Albert was consumed by the *grace* of God. He let go of all the church doctrine, rituals, and codes of ethics. He had found a new rest and freedom in Christ. He was free from the bondage of self-works only to find an inward resurrection of the life of Christ. This was the only Albert I knew: gentle, caring, selfless, and rock-solid in the Word. He was a man at peace with God and man. He would always say, “God does not require anything of man that He doesn’t also provide.” It was in his eulogy I was able to define his life, his passion, his character, and his mission in life with two passages: Romans 6 and Galatians 2:20.

**PERSONAL APPLICATION.** Watchman Nee and Albert Wadel stood out in my life as two men of God in which the reality of co-crucifixion, co-death, co-burial, and co-resurrection with Christ came into their lives as a flash of light, a revelation in the spirit. It gripped them and would not let them go. It was like a tsunami flooding their lives and thereafter smaller tidal waves would continue this work of the Spirit in many parts of their lives.

For many others, like me, this understanding did not come in such dramatic fashion. I wish it had. I am a slow learner. Rather, this revelation was slowly, but continuously, working into my life over the years. The seemingly normal progress is a progressive revelation giving rise to actually being apprehended by this truth. Then, as now, I could not let this vision go. It is one of those spiritual things that, regardless of present circumstances, you know that you know it is truth. It becomes central to one's life and ministry. **Romans 6 and Galatians 2:20 are seen as the two great pillars of truth upon which to build one's spiritual life.** It seems to strike at the very heart of both the provisions for believers made by God in His Son, the **Lamb** Jesus Christ, and for His grand or ultimate destiny for them in His eternal kingdom.

Once at a conference I shared the midnight hours with a minister from another state. We had in common our friend Sergio Valori. This man shared, in sincerity, that Sergio's messages were too "heavy," for he was so focused in this realm of the *embodiment* of God's *imputed* righteousness and the maturity of the believer. Sergio would often say, "character matters!" This man felt Sergio should "lighten up" and enjoy the realm of blessings that flow in the ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This, he implied, is what the people want to hear and experience. Regrettably, this man was/is right. It seems people would much prefer to fellowship around the altar of blessing than the altar of sacrifice. This message is not readily received by the masses. On the other hand, as it was with me, many individuals and small groups are actually apprehended by such a message and know in their spirits this is the way and call of the Spirit for their lives. These are matters in our Kingdom walk that are "weightier" and, I believe, have far reaching eternal consequences. Such is *reckoning* on the **Lamb** of God.

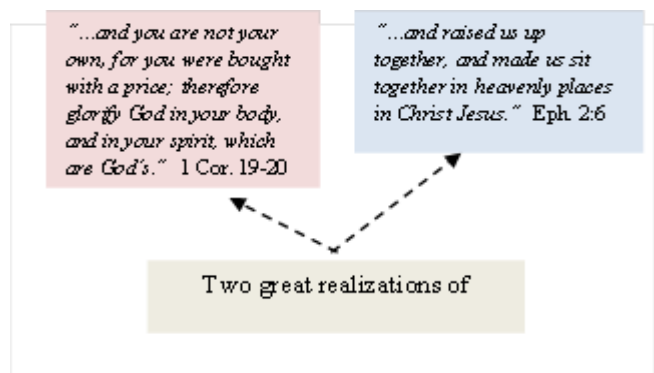
**Believing on the Lord of Lords**

To *believe* on Jesus Christ as **Lord** is different than *reckoning* on being in Him, as the **Lamb** of God, for to *believe* brings our faith to operate in the present realm of time. This faith believes in our current ongoing, day to day, hour by hour, relationship with Christ. We know He is our

Savior but just what is our relationship with Him as **Lord**? Some use this title as honor and respect for Christ. It is a term of reverence. But Christ expects far more from this relationship than courtesy.

**Lordship and Obedience**

Standing in the midst of a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people, Jesus taught the "beatitudes" and on the rules of life in the Kingdom. (See Luke 6) Then He concluded by saying: "*But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things I say?*" (vs. 46) Jesus made an emphatic statement here. Either He is **Lord** or He is not. And, obedience is a clear sign of His lordship. He then likened obedience to a man who built his house with the foundation on rock—it was stable and secure. And, He likened disobedience to His sayings as the foolish man who built his house on the earth with no foundation—it was insecure and in





ruin. Thus, Jesus expected absolute commitment and obedience from anyone using the title of **Lord** when referring to Him. Otherwise, this title should not be used when addressing Him. Do not be double-minded and say one thing but do another. He is **Lord** 100% of the time, not 90%, 50%, or 10% of the time. Not just under this condition or that condition or this day or that day.

Let us now consider a few scriptures relevant to this thought of *believing* on the **Lord** Jesus.

*“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and **you are not your own**. For you were **bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s.”* (1 Cor. 6:19- 20)

*“**You were bought with a price**; do not become slaves of men.* (1 Cor. 7:23)

Is it not obvious from these scriptures that using the term **Lord** rightly implies ownership with absolute ownership rights? It is as in the heavenly song sang in His presence, “...for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by your blood.” (Rev. 5:9) In this verse, the word *redeemed* means to purchase or buy where the ownership transfers to the buyer, who is God! This must be the mind frame of the believer. If I owned a business and that business was not functioning in the way I expected, I would come quickly and set things in order. I would dismiss some, promote others, and hire more that would be allegiant to my expectations and demands. The **Lord** of Lords will not tolerate disobedience and self-will in His house, but will raise up, bring honor to, and give greater responsibility to the obedient, and take away responsibility from the self-willed disobedient.

*“Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.”* (1 Sam. 15:22-23)

**OBEDIENCE: OLD COVENANT VERSUS NEW COVENANT.** A clear distinction must be made here between two opposing views of obedience, one under the Old Covenant in Moses and the Law, the second under the New Covenant in Christ and love. Obedience under the Law is of the outward man coming into conformity with the commandments of God. It is as God spoke to the Israelites before giving the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. He said, “Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you will be a special treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.**” (Ex. 19:5) The modifiers, **if and then** expect conformity to the Law and all its commandments, ethical ordinances, sacrifices and feast days, and rituals. The Israelites, if they were to become a special people to God, they must be obedient to Him, and, as a garment, cloth themselves in their daily life with all God’s sayings of the covenant. It was a matter of outward obedience to an outward Law requiring oaths, vows, resolutions, commitments, and determination.

The believer is held to altogether a different standard under the New Covenant in Christ. No longer is obedience put on as an outward garment, rather obedience rises out of the heart of the inward man as imparted life—it is emitted love in action. So emphatic was Paul that he declared, “*For I through the Law died to the Law that I might live to God,*” (Gal. 2:19) and, “*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.*” (Rm. 8:2)

So, *obedience* under the New Covenant arises simply from an inward imparted life rather than conformity to an outward set of regulations. This obedience is in an overwhelming response to the love of God.

**Analogy.** A law of physics says that a good absorber of energy is a good emitter. If I sit in the rays of a hot noon day sun for a long period of time, I will absorb a fair amount of solar energy. I become hot. Then, I begin to emit that energy as others may even sense a warmth to my skin and perhaps redness to my face. If I absorb a lot of energy, I will emit a lot of heat energy. The more absorbed, the more emitted. I will continue to emit all that absorbed energy until all that was absorbed is emitted and warms the environment around me. So it is with the love emitted and shown forth of God. 1 John 4:19 reads, “We love Him because He first loved us.” A good absorber of His love is also a good emitter of His love. Obedience is a natural consequence of this *agape* love. “*If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments.*”

**“For the love of Christ constrains us ...”** so begins 2 Corinthians 5:14. It is His love for us, when received and absorbed by the heart, that is the constraining power, directing every act of our spiritual state to the obedience of God and the good of others, restraining us from every self-seeking purpose. Obedience arises out of His love to us, and from the inward man—“... *for the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*” (Rm. 5:5) This is the *agape* love spoken of in scriptures. This love is constraining, we are seized by it, and are compelled to walk quite naturally in its power. A good absorber is a good emitter...of His love, of His obedience.

### Lord of the Present

There is another similar but expanded matter that needs to be considered in *believing* in the **Lord** in this present time. This being *believing, taking as evidence the things not seen*, of our present spiritual position in Christ. I believe I can say as a fact that most do not consider daily or hourly the reality of our present place in the heavenlies in His presence. If we did, our behavior and our time of worship and prayer would be much different. He is not **up there** and we **down here**, but we are **seated together**, now, this moment, in the heavenlies. Consider the following scriptures:

*“Even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,”* (Eph.2:5-6)

*“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* (Col. 3:1-3)

*“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.”* (Heb. 12:22-24)

These scriptures clearly and emphatically speak of the need for a renewed mind while *believing* the grace of God, imputed to the believer in his spiritual co-death, co-burial, **and** co-resurrection, and co-seating in the heavenly places in Christ. Firstly, note the past tense: *made alive, raised us up, seated us and have come to*. As the **Lamb** of God, He was crucified, buried, and resurrected. Christ now sits as **Lord** in absolute power and authority over all that is His. And we, by faith, are seated with Him, before Him, and proceed from Him. **Knowing** this, ought not our time of worship, prayer, ministry, and overall conduct be more sober, solemn, and reverent? To actually *draw near, to enter into the holiest*

of His presence, to come into the true *tabernacle* which *the Lord erected and not man*, is by faith as the *evidence of things not seen*.

To *believe* is to see the reality of the invisible and intangible spiritual world about us. In a church service, we may see the stained glass windows, approach the altar, see the cross and images of Christ, hear the music and sing the songs of praise, smell the candles and incense, hear the message, handle the communion elements, and so on. From this our emotions may become excited and we feel something towards God. But all of this appeals to the outward man and has no real spiritual substance. This is not the real presence. It is but a shadow, a copy of the true. That is why we become so easily distracted from the reality of our position. Our minds drift in and out of the service, oftentimes taking lightly, or even blanking out various parts of the service. But this need not, and should not be. This is a most holy gathering about the throne of God. It is a most sober spiritual time of worship, prayer, adoration, and thanksgiving. It is a time of communion, a joining in oneness.

Believing faith is in the exercise of the renewed mind, a mind free from the strength of self (*ego*), of ceremonial laws, and the physical environment about us. It is of a mind (*affection*) set on *things above*. It is not that things on earth are in themselves sinful, or of no use, but they become so if sought after and thought upon having priority over *things above*. However, “*We do not look at things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” (2 Cor. 4:18)

Brethren, let us never be guilty of trivializing this spiritual reality. Let us come out from the shadows and copies of heavenly things bound up in religion and religious practices. Let us, by faith, lay hold of this gift of God, purchased for us through the blood sacrifice of His Son, the Lamb of God. Regardless of what our natural eyes or feelings tell us, with sharpened spiritual senses let us come to higher realizations of our heavenly position in His holy presence, of His holy presence in us, and the love with which He has for us boiling up within us to a holy life and walk of obedience.

### Hope in the King of Kings

We have seen how the believer has a share in Jesus Christ as the **Lamb**, and presently share in His life as **Lord**. It is now time to have an eye to the future and to where all of this is headed as we consider our inheritance in Him as the **King** of Kings.

The future element of our faith is *hope*. Now *hope* is the assurance of things to come. It is the absolute confidence in the Word and promises of God.

*“For we were saved in this hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees. But if we hope for what we do not see, then we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”* (Rm. 8:24-26)

By *hope* we fully anticipate the resurrection from the dead, of not just victory over sin and death, but of their complete annihilation and of the return of Christ as warrior **King** to conquer and to establish, set up, and reign over the eternal Kingdom of God. The most amazing part of all of this is the inheritance of the believer. O, the inheritance goes well beyond having a paradise to dwell in. There remains function and purpose to our existence in the Kingdom. A function and purpose in union with Christ as **King**, and a Kingdom to oversee is to be anticipated.

## The Anointing as King

As a young lad, David was anointed by Samuel as king over Israel. (1 Sam. 16:13) At this point, he had no authority or power over the Kingdom. This anointing was a Divine appointment as a right to eventually reign over Israel. It was not for some years later that he was anointed again, but by the elders as king over Judah. (2 Sam. 2:4) Then, 7½ years later, the elders from all of Israel made a covenant with David and anointed him a third time. (2 Sam. 5:3) This was the official recognition and acceptance of his Divine appointment and his inauguration to office. David was now King over all of Israel with all authority and power. The nation of Israel was united as one, fully devoted and submitted to the new King. Lives were surrendered to him and his causes. This marked the greatest days to come of Israel's history.

“*Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?*” asked the wise men. Jesus was born a king. Like David, this was His divine calling and appointment. Though some wanted to make Him king, He resisted and was never anointed or inaugurated into office by man. But, like David, He was to earn the right to become king through faithfulness in much adversity, warfare, temptations, victories, and suffering—all of which He did while upon this earth. It all culminated at the cross. **Then**, as it is written,

“...when He had purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of Majesty on high.”  
(Heb. 1:3)

Furthermore:

“*Being found in the appearance of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” (Phil. 2:8-11)

Jesus then assumed the royal position of **King** of kings.

At His public trial, Jesus was asked by Pilate if He was a king. Jesus answered, “*You say rightly I am a king.*” He had added, “*My kingdom is not of this world.*” (Jn. 18:36-37) Pilate later said to Jesus, “*Do you not know I have the power to crucify you, and power to release you?*” (Jn. 19:11) It is interesting to note that Pilate had all the earthly authority of the entire Roman Empire behind him to judge and execute judgement, and legions of soldiers to enforce his decisions. Little did Pilate realize that he himself will one day stand in judgement before Jesus Christ. Christ will have all the power and authority of heaven behind Him, and all the legions of angels and the multitudes of His Church (now His bride), who will co-reign with Him, to execute His judgements in all of heaven and on the new heaven and earth—for He will be the **King** of kings.

## Sharing in the Kingdom

The oneness of the believer with Christ as the **Lamb** and as **Lord** is only the beginning of this glorious thing we call salvation. Yes, we were crucified with Him, we died and were buried with Him. We resurrected and ascended spiritually with Him, and are now seated in heavenly places with Him. But now, in the hope of faith...

*“For if we died with Him, we shall live with Him. If we endure, we shall also **reign** with Him.”* (2 Tim. 2:11-12)

Even as Jesus now sits as King at the right hand of the Father, He will have a queen at His side to reign with Him. This queen is none other than the Church which has now become joined with Christ in a new way, as His Bride (see Rev. 19:7-9) Jesus made this promise to His disciples while He was still with them:

*Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, in the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for the sake of My name will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”* (Mt. 19:28-30)

The angel, as a messenger of Christ, reaffirmed the promise to the Church of Thyatira:

*And to the one who is victorious and continues in My work until the end, I will give authority over the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter and shatter them like pottery—just as I have received authority from My Father.* (Rev. 2:26-27)

## **Conclusion and Summary**

**INHERITANCES.** In the previous chapters of this series on THE MASTER PLAN and Trilogies of the Kingdom, the focus was on God’s inheritance in the plan of salvation, that is, we are to know, *“what are the riches of the glory of **His** inheritance in the saints.”* (Eph. 1:18) In short, God as the Father is to have a family to Himself born of the spirit of His Son, Jesus Christ. This family is to know the intimacy of His Father/son, father/daughter fellowship. God the Son is to have a Church, the Body of Christ, upon this earth in whom and through whom He will find His expression and fulfillment of God’s eternal purposes. This Church will transform into His partner, the Bride of Christ, in the eternal Kingdom to come. The Holy Spirit will have a holy dwelling place, to fill and set apart for God as His holy habitation. He fills this holy sanctuary of the individual believer as well as the corporate Church. It is a glorious, spiritual inheritance for God. It is a people that will satisfy His heart in responding to His upward calling.

The latter chapters in this series have focused on the inheritance believers have in Christ, *“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”* (Mt. 25:34) Eternal life may be an ultimate, but in this inheritance we see that salvation is exceedingly more than possessing an eternal existence. Here we find an everlasting union with God the Father and the Son in and through the Holy Spirit, a continuing intimate fellowship, and a call to responsibilities and function, serving God in the eternal Kingdom to come.

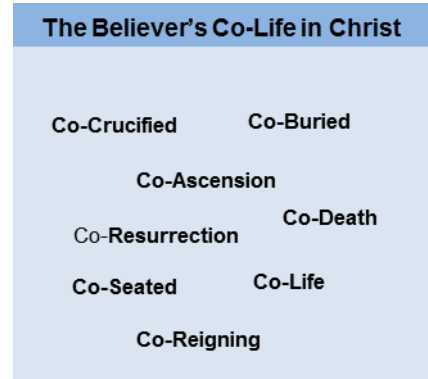
**A “CO-LIFE” IN CHRIST.** Scripture often uses expressions like, *“I have been crucified with Christ.”* (Gal. 2:20) In the context of the original Greek, the phrase, *I have been crucified with*, is a single word, *sunestaurōmai*, and may be translated *to crucify together with*, or simply, *co-crucified*. The idea presented here is that there is a union with Christ in which the believer shares in His life, past when Jesus walked the earth, presently with Him in heaven, and future when He returns to fully estab-



lish the Kingdom of God. As clearly as knowing our lives are not independent of Christ Jesus, we must also know that His life is not independent of the believer. It is all caught up in the eternal purpose of God to have a people and a creation that will not pass away in time but will be eternal.

The trilogies time and faith are inescapably considered together as they are co-dependent upon one another. In Christ we find another trilogy that relates to both time and faith. In faith we *reckon* a *past* in Christ as He is the **Lamb** of God. Presently, we *believe* a *present* life in Christ as He is the **Lord** of Lords. Faith in our *future* in Christ, we have our *hope* in Him as the **King** of Kings. Lastly, regarding the believer's **co-life** in Christ, let us look at the past, the present, and the future.

**The Past.** The believer's union with the **Lamb** *reckons* his past co-crucifixion, co-death and co-burial, co-resurrection and co-ascension in Christ. This is all truth. It exists as fact, written in the ledger of God's Book of Life. As one becomes convinced of this truth, his walk becomes altogether different. He begins to live a life more closely to Paul's description, "*It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God...*" (Gal. 2:20) This death and resurrection represents a separation of one's heart and mind from the busyness of the world about him to the upward call of God. There is a new life focus.



**The Present.** It is quite awesome to reflect upon the fact that at the present time, this very moment, as well as the next moment unto eternity, we *believe* we are *co-alive* in Christ and are *co-seated* with Christ as **Lord** in the heavens. The parable in John 15 of the vine and the branches comes alive, that is, the need to draw upon His essence to live. We are fully given over to Him, drawing from His life and walking in obedience to His call upon our lives. We are constrained, apprehended by His love for us. This yet again brings a change in our behavior pattern as we become less self-centered and more Christ-centered.

**The Future.** Our *hope* is in that yet to come, our *future* with the coming **King**. It is overwhelming to understand that eternal life in His Kingdom is so much more than a sweet existence in the absence of sin, sickness, and decay. There remains a high calling for the overcoming believer to actually co-reign with the **King** of Kings, as His Bride, in His Kingdom. There remains function, responsibilities, obedience in His governmental service, and a going forth and coming unto His kingly throne. What a lively anticipation our future holds.

*"... the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ..."* (Eph. 1:17-20)