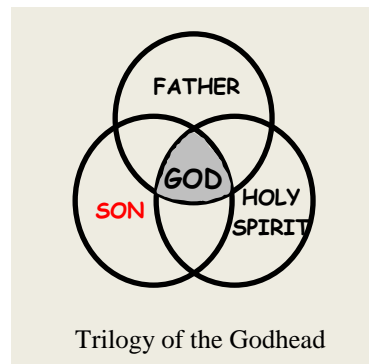


Chapter 5

THE TRILOGY OF THE GODHEAD: THE SON

There is an overwhelming sense of caution and of humility when beginning to write on the role of the Son of God in God's master plan. It is humbling. This is the One God the Father exalts above all that is in heaven and on earth. This is the "*Son of His love. He is the image of the invisible God. By Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things consists. And He is the head of the body, the church, Who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*" (Col. 1:13-18)



He is the "*brightness of His glory and the express image of His person...and He now sits... at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*" And "*to the Son He says, 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.'*" (Heb. 1:3, 8)

Anything written here can only begin to scratch the surface of the immensity and the all-inclusive purpose of the Son in this unfolding mystery. On an end page of my Bible, I have written a simple statement regarding the Son: *The Simplicity, Centrality, Supremacy, and Preeminence of Christ*. This is a constant reminder of the magnificence of this Person of the Trinity and of His all-inclusive role in and for God's ultimate purpose for creation—from before the *beginning of time*, in the *present*, and for all *eternity* to come.

"*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" (Acts 4:12) It must be remembered in all of these writings, "*salvation*" and entrance into the kingdom of God only begins at the cross of Christ. A proper appreciation for the word "*salvation*" requires a much larger window of understanding. One can say, "in Christ 'I was saved' ...at the cross with the new birth, 'I am being saved' ...undergoing a present day personal transformation and 'I will be eternally saved' ... be a part of God's eternal kingdom. This is the essence of the relationship of the Son of God with man, with you and me.

Through Him and For Him

"*All things were created through Him and for Him*" is a portion of scripture cited above regarding the Son. Of key importance in appreciating the essential role of the Son in the Godhead's master plan is the use of the two prepositions *through* and *for*. Their importance cannot be overstated. It is often said that 'Jesus is the Way' or that 'He is the door,' in the sense that He is a passage-way, a path to follow. Although there is a measure of truth to this, it doesn't begin to touch the meaning of *through Him*. In a greater context to be explained below, *through Him* may be introduced with the following analogy.

“Who alone dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power.” (1 Tim. 6:16)

Analogy. One cannot simply approach the sun to receive of its life giving energy. He would be instantly consumed by the immensity of its power. But without the sun’s energy there can be no life on the earth. All of the energy emitted from the sun must first pass *through* the earth’s atmosphere where this pure radiant energy is altered in various ways to best interact with life on the earth. In other words, the sun’s abundant and powerful energy does not just pass *through the atmosphere* as light through a glass pane. This would destroy all life on earth. Instead, some of this energy is selectively filtered out, some is converted to other forms of energy, and some is simply reflected back into space. In the end, a safe amount and type of energy is actually received and made available to support life on earth. In addition, all of the energy re-emitted from the earth must also pass back *through the atmosphere* where this energy is again altered in various ways. Some of this outgoing energy is actually captured by the atmosphere to form a warm blanket of air around the earth, while some is actually reflected back to the earth. The remaining is simply lost to space. In all of this, a balance is maintained so the earth does not get too warm or too cold in support of its life. Here, *through the atmosphere* takes on a larger, more significant meaning—as *through the Son* will likewise.

The phrase *for Him* will also take on an immensely larger understanding. The mentality of the Gospel being about man and *for man*, is an “egocentric” gospel and must be altered. Though man may be greatly involved in and richly blessed by the Gospel, the Gospel is actually Christocentric. All of creation did not come into being *for* the sake and prosperity of man. Below is a wonderful worship song, based upon Rev. 4:11, which captures the essence of this thought.

“Thou art worthy, O lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.”

The ultimate purpose is for God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And, the Gospel of Christ and of the Kingdom is a domain that graciously includes redeemed man, but is ultimately and eternally *for Him*.

THROUGH HIM. For many years I sought for a greater understanding of Christ’s words regarding the vine and the branches recorded as in John 15:4:

*“All things were created **through** Him and for Him”*

“Abide in Me, and I in you...”

No explanation seemed to adequately describe the dichotomy between “*in Me*” and “*I in you.*” Slowly, a significant difference between the two phrases seemed to emerge. We find that they are not remotely the same, but, at the same time, integrally one. They represent two elements of salvation brought to completion. *In Me* and *I in you* are as two sides of a coin, distinctly different yet a single coin. Both sides are required for completeness. The first represents the “grace of God” freely given **to** those of Christ. The second represents the “work of the Spirit of God” **in** those of Christ. This is an incredibly important distinction. O the importance of properly considering little prepositions like in, by, for, and to.

Many may feel that *through Him* is the concept of Jesus simply being a door or a pathway—that one needs only to believe in Him, or to confess His name, for the right of passage into heaven. Though this may have a small hint of truth to it, there must come a greater understanding of *through Him*. Jesus

said to His disciples, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except **through Me.**” (Jn. 14:6) Aha, immediately the thought jumps from places like heaven and things like well-being and pleasantness, to that of the person of God the Father. It all becomes personal for the believer and for God.*

Through Him: Another analogy.

In Him and He in You

Analogy. Now, pause what you are doing, relax and inhale lungs full of air. Hold your breath for a moment. At this moment in time there is an air that surrounds you and there is air in you. Think about it. You are in the air and the air is in you. There are distinct and importance differences. The surrounding air is your habitation. This atmosphere provides for warmth, moisture, air currents, protection from the sun, and so on. We cannot survive without it. It is our home. However, now with the air now in you, in your lungs, you are its home and its work is altogether different. This air brings oxygen to your blood and to over fifty trillion cells in your body. It fights diseases and eliminates toxins. One can live only 3 to 5 minutes without it. The importance of this simple analogy is that there is one air but it serves two completely difference purposes, whether one is **in the air** or the air is **in you**.

There is one Christ *through whom* a fullness of salvation may come to man. In doing so, He serves two different purposes in His relationship to man. One purpose is to bring *grace* to the believer; the second is to do a *work* in the believer. The apostle Paul clearly brings this two-fold work of Christ in the Book of Ephesians. Consider the following:

<p><i>Through Him</i> As Revealed in the Book of Ephesians</p>	
<p><u>IN CHRIST</u> “Abide in Me.....and.....”</p>	<p><u>CHRIST IN YOU</u> “.....I in You”</p>
<p>Realm of Grace Spiritual Past Tense</p> <p><i>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.</i></p> <p>1:4 <i>He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.</i></p> <p>1:6 <i>He has made us accepted in the Beloved.</i></p> <p>1:3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-Continued-</p>	<p>Realm of Works Bodily Present & Future Tense</p> <p>3:17 <i>That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.</i></p> <p>3:19 <i>That you may be filled with all the fullness of God.</i></p> <p>3:20 <i>Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly above all we ask or think according to the power that works in us.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">-Continued-</p>

1:7 *In Him we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*

1:8 *He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence (understanding).*

1:9 *Having made known to us the mystery of His will...which He proposed in Himself.*

1:11 *In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined (foreordained) according to the purpose of Him.*

2:5 *Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved.)*

2:6 *and raised us up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

2:18 *For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.*

Though this last scripture reference appears in the present tense it is actually a *continuing access* from being already in Christ.

4:11-13 *He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. For the equipping (preparing) of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the body of Christ, **Till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect (mature) man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.***

4:17-18 *That you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God.*

4:22 *That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to deceitful lusts.*

2:20-22 *...Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you are also being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.*

4:23 *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*

4:24 *And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.*

A more detailed explanation for both follows.

IN CHRIST. The entire column on the left, the IN CHRIST column, is all by *grace*, the unmerited favor of God, and is all *spiritual* experiences—a reality of the inward man of the heart. One may not observe these things with his natural senses, but they are none-the-less real. Though one may be seated in a church pew with all that accompanies a church service he is never-the-less simultaneously...by faith... seated in the heavenly realm in Christ (...and raised us up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:6). Coincident to this natural realm in which we bodily live, is a spiritual environment to which one may reckon. You “*have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.*” (Heb. 12: 22-24) At any time one may choose to focus with the natural senses and reasoning on the physical realm or by faith to focus on the heavenly environment. “*If you then were raised with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on the earth, for you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*” (Col. 3:1-3) The choice is for the believer to make, either of the natural by the physical senses or the heavenly by faith. Both are reality.

So, all that is IN CHRIST is simply received by faith as a gift of God (grace). The believer has a new position, seated in the heavenlies. What a marvelous revelation! And, there is a further matter that should be presented at this time, and that is the believer's standing before God. There are two things a believer can never improve upon in his spiritual status: (1) he has been *sanctified* (eternally set apart unto God) and (2) he has been declared *righteous* (after his examination before God, he is declared divinely approved in His sight). Consider the following two scriptures:

“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Heb. 10:10)

*“and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the **righteousness** which is from God by faith.”*
(Phil 3:9)

Albert, a spiritual father to me in my early days, would actually groan in his inward man when hearing such marvelous things and just say, with emotion and emphasis “G-L-O-R-Y!” ☺

CHRIST IN YOU. We must now contemplate the second column, that of CHRIST IN YOU. One cannot help but come to understand there must follow a corresponding working out **in** the natural life of the believer these inward realities of the spirit. It is a present day transforming of the *old man* into a *new man*. This is the realm of **works** and of things done now in flesh and blood. It is what we are to become. For this too will have eternal consequences. To begin, consider again the same two words in scripture, **sanctified** and **righteousness**, but now as CHRIST IN YOU.

“For by one offering He has perfected forever those that are being sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14)

*“Being filled with the fruits of **righteousness** which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”* (Phil. 1:11)

Yes, one may be eternally spiritually sanctified and declared righteous before God, a condition that guarantees an inheritance—“*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus*” (Rm. 8:1) However, there remains yet another judgment with eternal consequences:

“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”
(2 Cor. 5: 9-10)

Beloved, it is a matter of character, a matter of conduct, a matter of degree of personal transformation. For we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ carrying a life full of perishable (wood, hay, stubble) and the imperishable (gold, silver, precious stones). All the perishable will be consumed by fire and any eternal reward lost. What we will be left with, to carry on into eternity with Christ, are those imperishable things that do receive more honor. (See 1 Cor. 3:11-15) Although there may be a guaranteed inheritance of eternal life in the Kingdom of God, one's position, function and purpose in His kingdom is subject to His judgment.

FOR HIM. Now consider the second aspect of our opening scripture: *“All things were created through Him and for Him.”* (Col. 1:15) Once again, we must lay aside for now the question what is “for man,” as we now seek to answer a larger question, “what, in all of God's master plan, is designed **for** the Son of God—just

*“All things were created through Him and **for** Him,”*

what is His portion?” As we begin to unveil this mystery, we should first consider the two foremost men of scripture: Adam, the son of God by creation, and Jesus Christ, the Son of God by birth. Adam, the first man, is considered as representative or a type of Christ. As such, what was designed **for** Adam in the natural foreshadows what is spiritually designed **for** Christ.

A Tale of Two Men. “*And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam (Christ) was made a quickening (life-giving) spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.’*” (1 Cor. 15:45-49)

As it is written here, the first man, Adam, was created a living soul and he is of the earth—natural. In Adam was the seed to bring forth all of mankind. Biblical lineages are traced back to Adam, the progenitor of the human race. The second man, Christ Jesus, the firstborn of God, is a life giving spirit—supernatural. In Christ is a divine seed to bring forth a new race which will bear His spiritual image. The design is for the natural to be first as a type or example, then the spiritual as a new and eternal reality. This pattern is consistent in all of scripture.

Dominion/Government. In the beginning, Adam was given authority over all God’s creation: “*Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’*” (Gn. 1:28) A ruling dominion was designed **for** Adam. In like manner, elaborated upon in the previous chapter to this series, the spiritual seed of Christ (1 Jn. 3:9) will be fruitful and multiply and bring forth a new race, a family born of God. (Jn. 1:12-13; Eph. 3:14-15) Furthermore, Isaiah prophesied that this Christ will oversee God’s eternal kingdom, “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder...Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...from that time forward, even forever.*” (Is. 9:6-7) Thus, it is first the earthy, the natural, and then the heavenly, the spiritual. Adam was given a seed to multiply and a dominion over all the earth, to populate the earth through his seed and to govern all things on earth. The second man, Christ, was given the mandate to bring forth a new family, a family of God through His seed, and to have oversight of God’s own kingdom. The earthly is constrained by time, space and matter. The heavenly is timeless, spiritual, and eternal.

A Woman. Having dominion over God’s creation for Adam, and over His eternal kingdom for Christ, is certainly a part of God’s master plan **for** these two men—and that their progenies will share in that ruling dominion. However, there is something else in God’s plan **for** Adam and **for** Christ. It is for each to be given a woman for completion and fullness. First the natural: “*And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable (suitable) to him.’*” (Gn. 2:18) Everyone is familiar with the account of God causing a deep sleep to fall on Adam; He took from his side (rib) and formed the woman **for** Adam. Adam declared, “*This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*” Adam went on to say, “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*” (Gn. 2:23-24)

This woman is absolutely essential in God’s plan. The woman’s role in the will of God was to be a *helper* who was suitable to man, to be his complement mentally, spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically. She was to be by his side in all ways, to bring forth a people of the earth and even sharing as man rules in dominion over all God’s creation. She would be even as one-soul with Adam sharing in all the divine intent and purposes for him. This woman was to be his helper, his queen, his wife.

THE CHURCH Out of Christ

It is important to note in Ephesians 1:22 that, according to a Greek lexicon, the definition of the word *fullness (of Him)* can mean “full complement.” Eve was formed out of Adam to be his complement—that which completes or brings perfection. The Church is being formed **out of Christ** to be His full complement. There is an important serious note to be made here. Many think that the Church is the coming together of people who believe in Christ. It is a place of testimony, worship, teaching, and many other activities. This may all be done in the natural by the best man has to offer—his intellect, charisma, many talents, organization and psychological skills, and so on. This church may appear successful because man may be excellent in what he puts his hand to. After all, he did eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. But this concept of the Church falls dreadfully short of God’s design for her. May we say, “There is the church (lower case “c”), an institution of ‘Christian’ religion, and there is the Church (upper case “C”), the functioning Body of Christ.” Make no mistake about it; they are very different in origin, function and purpose.

The Church comes out of Christ as Eve came out of Adam. Now this may appear a lofty thought, but is never-the-less true. The true, or pure Church, is only that portion which has been taken out of Christ. The Church is Christ in you, the Christ in him, the Christ in all the Christians in all places in all time—being put together in a type of functioning unity. It is of His Body. Without the immediate flow from the head, Christ Jesus, The Church has no heavenly position, no flow of life, no ministry to others, no spiritual existence. (See Watchman Nee, The Glorious Church) Under the guise of serving God, the church actually becomes something by man, through man, and for man. It meets man’s basic psychological needs.

The Church is not what is added to Christ but what issues out of Christ. All of man’s talent, ability, thought, self, and all he has are outside the Church. Everything that comes from the natural man is outside the Church. Eve was not made from the dust of the earth, outside of man, but from the side of Adam, a type of Christ. Only that which came out from Adam was the woman Eve. Only that which flows out from Christ is The Church—His bride to be. All that is not from Christ—even if it be the finest talent, the greatest program, persuasive amiable behavior, the most artistic and emotionally stirring worship, or fluent and articulate message—has nothing to do with the **Church**. The Church may actually be pulled down by such, and become... a religious church. Only that which comes out from Christ, that has touched His life, His crucified death, and His spiritual resurrection, is the Church. **“Good” may be a term used to describe a church but is inadequate to describe the Church.**

THE CHURCH A Time of Preparation

We continue now with our thought of a bride **for** the Son. Perhaps one of the most disastrous concepts of the Gospel is “I am saved by grace, and now heaven awaits me.” This thought may continue with “If I could just hang on, do what is right, profess my faith, and wait for either Christ to return or I to die a believer than all will be well.” What is missing is a lifetime of opportunity for *God to work in me both to do and to will of His good pleasure.* (Phil. 2:13) To be *sanctified* is a spiritual status one enters by virtue of being in Christ. It has a past and present sense of being set apart. *Sanctification* is a process of transformation by virtue of Christ **in** the believer. It has a present and future sense to it.

The Example of Esther. The book of Esther is a very interesting Old Testament prefiguring of this New Testament reality. It is full of types and similitudes. The following is but one very brief synopsis and interpretation of this book. Certainly other interpretations may be made. A personal reading of this book will reveal much more detail than is allotted here.

King Ahasuerus (Gk. Xerxes), the great king over all Persia may be considered a type of Christ. The disobedient and self-serving Queen Vashti is a type of the religious church (lower case “c”). A decree was made that she no more come before the king and that her position be given to another who is better than she. Esther, the daughter of a Jew who was carried away in captivity from Jerusalem, is a type of the Church, chosen by God. Esther was one of several young women chosen to possibly become queen to replace Vashti. Like all the young women, Esther had to undergo a year of preparation before meeting the king—six months with treatment of oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes for beautifying. Of all the young women, Esther was chosen queen. Ahasuerus loved Esther more than all. You see, there is much more than the outward display of youth, beauty, aroma, dress, and subjection to the law and to the king. For all the women were as such. But there was an inner quality to Esther, something of the heart, of her character and personality that was most pleasing to the King.

Thus Esther was not just by grace taken off the streets to become queen; she had to undergo a season of *preparation*. What was worked into her added to her beauty and to her appeal. And what was worked into her was the finest oil and perfume. Scripturally, oil is often a type of the Holy Spirit, thus indicating His inward transforming work into Esther’s life. She became fruitful in those character qualities of the Spirit. Perfume is scripturally representative of an aroma of sacrifice from acts of love that come at a cost. The self is set aside for the love of another. Esther was chosen and set apart as one sanctified. But her sanctification required much preparation.

The Passion of Paul. The apostle Paul was driven by a zeal for The Church. To Paul, his mission went far beyond evangelism, bringing salvation **to** individuals or adding believers **to** the Church. His primary focus was to work a greater work **in** a believer and **in** the Church. One can sense this passion in his writing:

“Him (Christ) we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect (spiritually mature) in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” (Col. 1:28-29)

By far, the bulk of Paul’s writings were to the building up—the perfecting—of the Church. Evangelism was for getting a people saved and through the door, into the kingdom. Now the work begins: *“But I (Paul) have betrothed you (The Church) to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:2)*

The Passion of Peter. Peter was a pillar in the Church at Jerusalem. As such, his ministry was not as much a missionary or evangelist but as an apostle and overseer to the Church. He too wrote letters to believers dispersed throughout the extended region of Christianity and to sister churches. In these letters he focused on the proper role of elders in Church government and on the believer living a life *in holy conduct and godliness*, and of character by being *partakers of the divine nature*. Peter concluded his first letter with the following benediction:

*“May the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, **perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle** you.” (1 Pet. 5:10)*

So you see, the overriding emphasis in all the epistles was the proper preparation of the saints, to maturity, unto full stature—all with an eye on the goal, the finished product, the presentation of The Church to be an appropriate Bride to Christ.

A Passion of Christ. One certainly cannot limit the passion of Christ or narrowly define His zeal to satisfy the Father's heart, or the burden He carried in His own heart to fulfill all of His anointing in the kingdom of God. His passion for the Church to become His eternal Bride is, however, clearly revealed in Ephesians 5:25-33:

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”

This passage paints a vivid picture of the culmination of the age of The Church and its transition from being the Church, the Body of Christ, to the Bride of Christ. It shows Christ's desire for the proper preparation of a glorious church to one day be presented to Himself as His bride—a woman **for** himself. This would be His complement, His helper, His Queen, His Wife, His joint heir. Is it not overwhelming to ponder such marvelous, spiritual realities? ...and more...

THE BRIDE Prepared

The apostle Paul said, *“I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”* (2 Cor. 11:2) One day this presentation will take place in the courts of the kingdom of God, before God and all the majesty of Heaven and all its citizens. It will be a glorious and most holy convocation. A proclamation will be heard throughout the heavens and the farthest extent of the universe:

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife (bride) has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” The scripture continues, *“Then He said to me, write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And He said to me, ‘These are the true sayings of God.’”* (Rev. 20:7-9)

Vital Union. I do not wish to speculate on the nature of activities beyond this point of the marriage supper. Many questions of how, who, where, and when, remain. May I only present one scripture that sheds a little insight to life at and beyond the marriage supper of the Lamb and His bride:

“This is a faithful saying: ‘For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him, if we endure, we shall also reign with Him.’” (2 Tim. 2:11-12)

Many are there in the Church today that do not understand, or are even aware of, the overwhelming magnitude of the believer's present and eternal “vital union” with Christ. Perhaps more literally the phrases in this verse may be interpreted as, *“If we **died in union with Him**, we shall also **live in union with Him**, and we shall also **reign in union with Him**.”*

Analogy of the Vine and Branches (Jn. 15:1-5). The *branches* are inseparable from the *vine*. In order for the *branches* to bear fruit they must receive the flow of life from the *vine*. The *vine* needs the *branches* as it cannot bear fruit and a continuation of itself by itself. The two are one.

Analogy of an Alloy. Think of an alloy of two metals or of a metal and non-metal like iron and carbon. These are intimately united, fused together and dissolved in each other when in a molten state. As one, they form the alloy steel. One cannot say, “The carbon does this and the iron is responsible for that.” The two are one. The two elements participate together as one in all its uses, functions, and forms.

Now it is Christ in you and you in Christ—a vital union. The Church is the *fullness* of Christ, or His perfect complement, and His wife will eternally be His perfect complement. I believe God set forth a pattern for this kind of union in marriage when He declared, “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*” (Gn. 2:24) ... [He who has an ear to hear let him hear] And, there is Jesus’ priestly prayer of this vital union, “*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me though their word, that they all may be one, as You Father are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us.*” (Jn. 20, 21)

If you are as I am, and I think you are, to imagine this truth goes well beyond my limits of imagination and is overwhelming to my thoughts. I am overcome by the expectations and provisions of Christ for His Church, and then to be His bride—of which I am, among so many, humbly found among her.

A Matter of Purpose and Function. Man cannot expect or demand equality the same with God as with man. The two are not the same. Jesus declared, “*I and My Father are one.*” (Jn. 10:30) And, it is written of Christ, “*Who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.*” (Phil. 2:9) Yet Christ confessed, “*I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I.*” (Jn. 14:28) There is equality in the Kingdom of God, yet there is authority and obedience and submission to authority. Even to pray, as Christ, “*Not My will but Thine be done,*” reveals not a legalistic obedience to a law, but a desire to accomplish something of another, a given responsibility.

When I was young I worked in my father’s business. I assumed certain areas of responsibility and oversight. I tried to be thorough, not just to accomplish certain tasks as hired help, but even to anticipate my father’s desires for the business—to go beyond what was required. So it is, and will be, in this realm of the Kingdom—function, responsibilities, and purpose. Jesus said to His apostles, “*And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon me, and that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*” (Lk. 22:29-30)

So it is for all who are in the kingdom and of the Bride. In John’s revelation of this eternal kingdom, he wrote, “*And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face and His name shall be on their foreheads...and they shall reign forever and ever.*” (Rev. 22:3-5) Thus, in this eternal kingdom, the Bride will serve and reign with her Husband, King Jesus. There will be many areas and degrees of *service*—of responsibility, function, and purpose.

Overcomers. Not all are equal in the kingdom on the believer’s side of the equation. In the parable of the soils Jesus said, “*And others (seeds) fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*” And, “*Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven... for whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away.*” (Mt. 13:8, 11-12) Rewards in the kingdom are many, and many will rise to greater responsibilities and functions, and some to lesser. No one in the kingdom is punished for his lack, but he may suffer loss of an added reward.

This fact is clearly addressed in John's book of Revelation, and specifically in the letters to the seven churches of Asia. To each Christ makes promises, "*He who **overcomes**...*

Ephesus.....*"will I give to eat from the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God. (2:7)*

Smyrna..... *"shall not be hurt by the second death." (2:11)*

Pergamos..... *"I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written..." (2:17)*

Thyatira..... *"to him I will give power over the nations—'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as a potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces'—as I also received from My Father." (2:26-27)*

Sardis..... *"shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before my Father and before His angels." (3:5)*

Philadelphia... *"will I make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God. And I will write on him My new name. (3:12)*

Laodicea..... *"will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, as I also overcame and sat down With My Father on His throne." (4:21-22)*

Thus: The corporate Bride, having been prepared Christ through His Body, the Church, will become that perfect complement **for** the Son. She will sit with Christ, on His throne, in His eternal kingdom. She shall serve Him in many and diverse ways. Purposes will understandably vary for individual members of that Bride even as they are today in The Church, the Body of Christ. They will however, continue to serve the Lord in various positions, responsibilities, and functions throughout the age to come. The come forth and The Church's work will be complete. The marriage of the bride and the Lamb, the Son of God, will be consummated, and God's dominion over all the works of His hand will be complete. His Kingdom has come.

"Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15:24-28)

TODAY. As I close this chapter on **the Son**, I am reminded of the word "today" as used in scripture, particularly as in Hebrews. I think this biblical use of the word *today* is a step into the thought of eternity. Yesterday was once *today*, today is *today*, and tomorrow will very shortly become *today*. We live in the remembrances of yesterday, the hopes of tomorrow, *but* in the reality of *today*. *Today* is as long as life lasts--as long as we have breath.

We are encouraged to "*exhort one another daily, while it is called "today" ...for we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginnings of confidence steadfast to the end.*" (Heb. 3:13-14) Just think on it, "Today I have the distinct privilege to be a '*partaker of Christ!*'" Today I have the continuing life altering opportunity to share in His calling, sit at His table, and to know the ever indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit in life and power.

To contemplate what has been written in these pages is overwhelming. And it does not begin to touch the reality of Christ. Perhaps you noticed the conditional particle "*if*" in the cited scripture. It is there to remind us of the ever present dangers of *hardening our*