

Semiannual Training

(December 26-31, 2016)

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF EZEKIEL (1)

Banners:

The most important matter for a person who serves the Lord is that he must see visions of God; under the visions from God we are directed toward God's destination, and our life is controlled according to God's economy.

God needs a group of living creatures who can coordinate together as one corporate entity, the corporate Christ, for His expression, move, and administration; their coordination is not in themselves but in God and by the divine power, the divine strength, and the divine grace.

We need to maintain a clear sky with the Lord, that is, have a clear fellowship with Him; in our spiritual experience, to have the throne above a clear sky is to allow God to have the highest and most prominent position in our Christian life.

Through His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, the Lord Jesus was brought to the throne, and as the Pioneer and Forerunner, He cut the path to the throne and led the way to the throne so that we may follow for the fulfillment of God's desire to bring us to the throne.

WEEK 1 —OUTLINE

Visions of God and the Unveiling of God's Purpose and the Desire of His Heart

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:1, 3, 16; 8:3; 40:4; Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:18

<< DAY 1 >>

I. "The heavens were opened and I saw visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1):

A. The heavens were opened to Ezekiel (v. 1):

1. The opening of the heavens was God's special visitation; the heavens were opened also to Jacob (Gen. 28:11-17), to Jesus (Matt. 3:16-17), to Stephen (Acts 7:56), to Peter (10:11), and to John (Rev. 4:2; 19:11).
2. Ezekiel stood in the position of a priest, one who was seeking God and contacting God and who was connected to the heavens (Ezek. 1:3):
 - a. Ezekiel was carrying out his priesthood in the spirit, serving God and fellowshiping with God, so that the heavens were opened, and he saw the glorious vision of God being life to man so that He and man could be built together (vv. 4, 16; 40:1—48:35).
 - b. The heavens were opened to Ezekiel and could even come down to earth, enabling God's heavenly things to be seen by people on earth and to be fulfilled among them on earth (Rev. 1:1, 9; Gen. 28:17).

<< DAY 2 >>

3. Whenever God finds a man on earth who is one with Him and whose heart is a duplication of His heart, the heavens are opened to him (Matt. 3:16).
- ##### B. Ezekiel saw visions of God—divine, spiritual, heavenly visions—in his spirit under an opened heaven (Ezek. 1:1; 8:3; cf. Rev. 1:10-11; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10):
1. God's visions are His revelations, which enable us to see divine, spiritual, and heavenly things (Ezek. 40:4; cf. Eph. 1:17-18).
 2. What we present to the children of God should be visions of God, which we have seen in our spirit under the opened heavens through our contact with God (Acts 26:16-19; cf. S.S. 1:15; 7:4).
 3. These visions will lead to the building up of God's churches (Matt. 16:18).
 4. The most important matter for a person who serves the Lord is that he must see visions of God (Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:19):
 - a. In the Bible vision denotes an extraordinary scene; it refers to a special kind of seeing—a glorious, inward seeing—and to the spiritual scenery that we

see from God (Dan. 7:1, 9-10, 13-14).

b. In order to see a vision, we need revelation, light, and sight (Eph. 1:17-18).

c. Visions of God govern us, restrict us, control us, preserve us, revolutionize us, give us the boldness to go on, and keep us in the genuine oneness (Prov. 29:18a).

d. Under the visions from God we are directed toward God's destination, and our life is controlled according to God's economy (Phil. 3:13-14; 1 Tim. 1:4).

« DAY 3 »

5. We need the kind of prayer that brings us into a trance and that brings a heavenly vision to us (Acts 10:9-16; 22:17-21):

a. A trance means that we have been brought out of our self; we may be imprisoned in the self, but we need to pray ourselves out of that imprisonment.

b. To be in a trance is to be out of our self, and in that trance we receive visions from God (10:10-11; 22:17-18).

C. God wanted Ezekiel not only to behold with his eyes but also to hear with his ears; hence, He gave him His words along with His visions (Ezek. 40:4):

1. God's word to Ezekiel was not an ordinary word but an express word, a special word (1:3).

2. God's words are His explanations of His visions.

3. We need to have an express word from the Lord (John 6:63; S.S. 8:13):

a. God wants to give us special, fresh, and vivid words that convey His divine visions (1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Pet. 4:11a).

b. We should ask God for words that will enable us to understand the visions, and we need the words that will enable us to proclaim and explain what we have seen (Ezek. 3:1-4).

D. God's hand always follows His speaking; thus, the hand of Jehovah was upon Ezekiel (1:3):

1. God will come in to do what He says and to work according to His speaking (v. 3; Psa. 33:9).

« DAY 4 »

2. God's hand upon man is for leading and directing man and for causing man to take action (cf. 1 Kings 18:46; Dan. 11:32b; John 7:6, 8; 2 Cor. 5:14-15).

3. May we all have an opened heaven, see God's visions, receive God's words, and have God's leading and directing hand upon us to meet God's need.

II. Ezekiel 1 unveils to us the desire of God's heart and the purpose that He wants to accomplish (vv. 4-5, 26; Eph. 1:5, 9; 3:10; Phil. 2:13; Gen. 1:26):

A. The biblical term that refers to the desire of God's heart is the good pleasure of His will; the good pleasure of God's will is the desire of God's heart (Eph. 1:5):

« DAY 5 »

1. The Triune God's economy was made according to His good pleasure, and His good pleasure comes out of His heart's desire (vv. 9-10; 3:9-11).

2. Out of the desire of God's heart, His good pleasure, is God's purpose, and out of this purpose is His economy (1 Tim. 1:4).

3. Our inward joy is an indication that God is operating in us for His good pleasure and that we are living and walking according to His good pleasure, the desire of His heart (Phil. 2:13).

B. Ezekiel 1 unveils God's desire to be expressed in His Son (Heb. 1:3).

C. The One signified by the glowing electrum, the Lamb-God, dwells within us as a priceless treasure for His expression (2 Cor. 4:7).

D. The four faces of the four living creatures signify the complete and adequate expression of Christ (Ezek. 1:5-6, 10):

1. The four living creatures signify a corporate entity, the corporate Christ—the corporate expression of God; when God gains such a corporate expression, His purpose will be accomplished (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 3:10-11).

2. The vision in Ezekiel 1 shows us that we need to be corporate and that we need to be in coordination (vv. 4-5, 12).

« DAY 6 »

E. "Upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man" (v. 26):

1. The One on the throne looks like a man, yet with Him is the likeness of the glory of Jehovah (v. 28), indicating that the One sitting on the throne is both God and man; this is Jesus Christ, the God-man, the mingling of God and man.

2. As revealed in the Bible, God's mysterious intention in His relationship with man is to mingle Himself with man and thereby to become the same as man and make man the same as He is in life, in nature, and in expression but not in the Godhead (John 1:12-14; 1 John 3:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:29).

3. The One on the throne and the four living creatures both have the appearance of a man, indicating that the four living creatures on earth are the expression of the One on the throne; this is the manifestation of God in humanity (Ezek. 1:5, 26; 1 Tim. 3:15-16).

F. The Bible as a whole, and the book of Ezekiel as a miniature of the Bible, reveal that God's eternal intention is to dispense Himself into His chosen people, making them the same as He is in His life, His nature, and His image but not in the Godhead (Eph. 3:15-16):

1. God's goal is that His redeemed and regenerated people into whom He is working Himself in Christ will be mingled with Him as one entity and be built together in Him to be His eternal habitation, the New Jerusalem (John 14:20; Eph. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:17; 12:12; Rev. 21:2, 10-11).
2. This is the central point of the revelation of the Bible and also of the visions presented in the book of Ezekiel (Eph. 1:17-23; 3:15-21; Rev. 21:2, 10-11).

« WEEK 1 —DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:1 ...While I was among the captives by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

3 The word of Jehovah came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of Jehovah was upon him there.

The opening of the heavens is God's special visitation. Whenever people on earth are one with God, the heavens will be opened to them. In the land of captivity there was a man, Ezekiel, who was mature and who was one with God, and the heavens were opened to him. Today the principle is the same. We need the heavens to be opened to us, but in order for the heavens to be opened in our experience, we need to be Ezekiels. If we are today's Ezekiels, we will have an open heaven. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 18)

Today's Reading

The first time the Bible mentions the heavens being opened was when Jacob was wandering in his attempt to escape his brother Esau. He had a dream, and in that dream the heavens were opened to him (Gen. 28:11-17). This signified that God intended to gain Jacob as His beachhead on earth so that the heavens could be opened to the earth. When the Lord Jesus was baptized, the heavens were opened to declare that there was a man on earth who was one with God in the heavens (Matt. 3:16-17). When Stephen was martyred, the heavens were opened up to him (Acts 7:56). When the Lord Jesus comes back, the heavens will be opened once again. It is a great blessing for God's children to have the heavens opened to them.

After the earth had been occupied by Satan and the people on earth had been damaged by Satan, God could not come to earth, and the heavens, where God is, could not be opened to the people on earth. This was the situation at Ezekiel's time. The people of Israel had been damaged by Satan and carried away into captivity, and, as a result, the heavens could not be opened to them. However, among those in captivity, there was a priest who was seeking God and contacting Him and who was connected to the heavens. The heavens could therefore be opened to him and even come down to the earth, enabling God's heavenly things to be seen by people on earth and to be fulfilled among them on earth. This was truly a great matter.

Ezekiel 1:3 speaks explicitly of "Ezekiel the priest." As a priest Ezekiel was one who lived in the presence of God, serving God and being mingled with God. Ezekiel was this kind of person. Although he was in the land of captivity, he still lived in the presence of God and ministered before God. He was by the river Chebar, not in the holy temple, yet as a priest he looked to God, prayed to God, contacted God, fellowshiped with God, and waited for God. Because Ezekiel was such a person and contacted God in such a way, the heavens were opened to him, and he "saw visions of God" (v. 1).

We encourage all the brothers and sisters in the Lord to serve Him as priests. We all need to learn to pray to God, to contact God, to have fellowship with God, and to live before God. If we exercise as priests in this way, the heavens will be opened to us, and we will see God's visions.

Not only are the books of Ezekiel and Revelation similar in content, but the authors of these books are similar in certain respects. The most important similarity is that the prophet Ezekiel and the apostle John were both priests before God. Although Ezekiel was a prophet, when he saw the visions recorded in his book, he stood in the position of a priest, having the status of a priest (Ezek. 1:3) and also the life of a priest. As he was by the river Chebar, he surely was carrying out his priesthood in the spirit, serving God and fellowshiping with God, so that the heavens were opened and he saw the glorious vision of God being life to man so that He and man could be built together. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 18, 16, 3)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 1; CWWL, 1975-1976, vol. 2, "Young People's Training," ch. 1

« WEEK 1 —DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 40:4 And the man said to me, Son of man, look with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and set your heart on all that I show you, because for this purpose you have been brought here, that it may be shown to you. Tell all that you see to the house of Israel.

Acts 26:19 ...I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

God's plan is hidden in heaven. When God finds a man on earth after His heart, heaven is opened to him. It was opened to Jacob (Gen. 28:12-17), to Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1), to Jesus (Matt. 3:16), to Stephen (Acts 7:56), and to Peter (Acts 10:11). In Revelation 4:1, and in 19:11, it is opened to John,...and it will be opened to all believers in the Lord in eternity (John 1:51). (Life-study of Revelation, p. 213)

Today's Reading

God's visions are His revelations, which enable His people to see divine, spiritual, heavenly things. Ezekiel saw spiritual, heavenly visions in his spirit (cf. Eph. 3:3-5; Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10) under an opened heaven, and he presented these visions to God's people that they might be recovered from their captivity for the building up of God's dwelling place. (Ezek. 1:1, footnote 4)

All the churches and all the saints need to see heavenly visions. Therefore, what we present to the children of God should not be mere teaching or doctrine or knowledge gained from reading but a vision we have seen in spirit under the open heavens through our contact with God. This will cause God's people to be recovered from their captivity, and it will lead to the building up of God's churches. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 19)

The most important matter for a person who serves the Lord is that he must have a vision. Everyone who serves the Lord must be a person with a vision. Not all the brothers and sisters will have a vision directly from the Lord; some of them will see a vision indirectly through the help of others....If a person has a vision, his service is a service with a vision. The apostle Paul said that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19). He served for his whole life according to the vision he had received. (Our Vision—Christ and the Church, p. 7)

Vision denotes an extraordinary scene....In the Bible vision refers to the scenery we see from God. Through His Word God has opened the veil, but we must see the scenes contained in the Word. Whatever we see through God's revelation is a vision. (The Revelation and Vision of God, p. 9)

I hope that every one serving the Lord in His recovery would have this glorious vision breaking and shining upon him at least once. This is not a matter of any outward seeing. Rather, it is a definite and glorious inward seeing. (The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross, p. 11)

In order to have the vision we need the revelation, the eyes, and the light. Praise the Lord that we are not in religion, a maze, or darkness but in a vision! (CWVL, 1978, vol. 1, "Basic Training," p. 283)

Such a vision from God will always direct our steps and control our living. This was true even in the Old Testament, where we are told that without vision the people will cast off restraint (Prov. 29:18a). Under the heavenly vision we are directed toward God's destination, and our life is controlled according to God's economy.

If we would know the truth, we need to see the vision of God's economy. I can testify that years ago I was caught by this vision. Because we have seen it, we can press on in spite of suffering, defamation, and all kinds of trouble.

This vision has become the principle that directs our steps and that governs our way....We take this way [of the Lord in His recovery] because we have been caught by the vision of God's economy. Because we have seen this vision, throughout the years heavenly light has been flooding into the Lord's recovery. The reason for this light is that we are under this vision. Whenever we come to the Word of God, the light shines because we are in this directing, controlling, governing vision. (Life-study of Mark, pp. 452-453)

Further Reading: The Glorious Vision and the Way of the Cross, ch. 1; The Triune God's Revelation and His Move, msgs. 1, 4

« WEEK 1 —DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 10:10-11 And he became very hungry and wanted to eat. And while they were preparing, a trance came upon him; and he beheld heaven opened, and a certain vessel like a great sheet descending, being let down by four corners onto the earth.

Acts 10:9-16 shows us the prayer that brought Peter into a trance and brought a heavenly vision to him. This prayer at the appointed time (v. 9) brought Peter into a conversation with the Lord (vv. 13-16). This is another principle of prayer. To pray is to pray ourselves into a trance. A trance means that we have gotten out of our self. We may be imprisoned in our self, but we need to pray out of that imprisonment. In a trance, in a situation in which we are out of our self, we can receive visions of God. We all need a trance because we remain in our self too long...Our self is a strong prison that we need to get out of, so we need to pray ourselves into a trance. Many times in morning watch, while we are reading the Bible and pray-reading, we have the sensation that we are out of our self and that we are in a situation of being so close to God. We cannot tell where we are. We just know that we are out of our self. That is a trance, and in that trance we receive visions from God. (The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, p. 95)

Today's Reading

God not only gave His visions to Ezekiel—He also gave him His words. Visions are God's revelations, which cause us to see something. God's words are His explanations, which cause us to hear something. Because God wanted Ezekiel not only to behold with his eyes but also to hear with his ears (Ezek. 40:4), He gave him words along with His visions. He explained His visions with His words.

The words that came to Ezekiel were not common or ordinary; they were special. The words given to Ezekiel, being special, fresh, and vivid, are different from the words given to Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. In fact, they are different from the words in any other book of the Bible. When we read the book of Ezekiel, we sense that the words in this book are special. The words in Ezekiel are God's special words, which came in a particular way to a man who was in close contact with God.

Ezekiel 1:3a says, "The word of Jehovah came expressly to Ezekiel the priest." This was not an ordinary word—it was an express word. Today, we also need not an ordinary word but an express word. For such an express word, do not go to the expositions of the Bible, and do not go even to the books of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. You need to have an express word from the Lord. With Ezekiel, the heavens were opened, the visions came, and the word came expressly.

Those who are ministers of God's words need God to give them not only visions but also special words, fresh words. We need to see God's heavenly visions, and we need to hear God's special words. We need the words that will enable us to understand the visions, and we need the words that will enable us to proclaim and explain what we have seen. May God's words come to us expressly along with God's visions!

Ezekiel 1:3b goes on to say, "The hand of Jehovah was upon him there." Here we see that the hand of the Lord follows the word of the Lord. The sequence is significant: the open heavens, the visions, the word of God, and the hand of God. God's hand always follows His speaking. Whatever He says, He does. If what we minister is truly God's word, God's hand will follow. However, if you minister many things and nothing happens, this means that you have a babbling mouth, but God's hand is not working. You need God's almighty hand to work out what you are speaking.

Today we need the heavens opened; we need the vision coming to us; we need the word of the Lord to come expressly to us; and we need the hand of the Lord to be upon us. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 20-21)

Further Reading: The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, pp. 93-98; Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 2

« WEEK 1 —DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 33:9 For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood.

Eph. 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

The one who speaks God's express word may be an insignificant person, but God's hand is not an insignificant matter. God will come in to do what He says and to work according to His speaking.

God's hand upon man is also for leading man and for causing one to take action (cf. 1 Kings 18:46). The visions are for seeing; the words are for hearing; and the hand is for action. The Lord's hand upon Ezekiel held him, led him, lifted him, and carried him so that he could take action. After the Lord's hand came upon Ezekiel, everything he did was due to the leading and directing of the Lord's hand. God's hand led and directed Ezekiel as a person who spoke for God. His every action was under God's hand. Wherever he went, whatever he did, and how he acted and behaved were all due to God's leading and directing hand. Whether he was bound or free, whether he mourned or rejoiced, whether he went or came—everything was under the leading and directing of God's hand. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 21)

Today's Reading

A man who speaks for God no longer has his own freedom and can no longer do things according to his own convenience. If God's hand leads him to go to a certain place, he must go there. If God's hand directs him to do a certain thing, he must do it. His actions are according to the leading of God's hand and are under the strict directing of God's hand. Where he goes and what he does are not according to his choice but are under and according to the leading and directing hand of God. This requires the one who speaks for God to pay a considerable price.

Every minister of God's word needs to fulfill the four conditions for seeing God's visions. Everyone who speaks God's words in a normal way must be one to whom the heavens are opened, one who has seen God's visions, one to whom God's words have come expressly, and one who has God's hand upon him.

May we all have an open heaven, see God's visions, receive God's words, and have God's leading and directing hand upon us. God needs such persons today, and the church also needs them. May we all become such persons to meet God's need!

It is crucial for us to realize that Ezekiel 1 shows us the desire of God's heart and unveils to us the purpose that God wants to accomplish. As we read this chapter, we may think that it speaks merely about four living creatures. However, if we read this chapter carefully, we will see that it speaks of God's desire to be expressed in His Son. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 21-22, 79)

God's eternal purpose is of His will. Now we need to see that God's will is according to God's good pleasure (Eph. 1:9). God's good pleasure is His heart pleasure, which we may call the desire of His heart. Our God is living, loving, and purposeful. The living, loving, and purposeful God surely has a desire. Every living thing and especially every living person has a desire, a good pleasure. If we desire pleasure, then certainly God does also. Only something dead or nonliving has no such need. The more living we are, the more pleasure we need. The degree of our livingness determines how much pleasure we need. Because God is certainly the most living One, He surely needs the most pleasure. If we, as fallen sinners, require pleasure, then how much more does God, the living One, have a deep need for it. The book of Ephesians reveals that God needs pleasure; it reveals the desire of God's heart. The biblical term for "the desire of God's heart" is the good pleasure of His will. The good pleasure of God's will is the desire of God's heart. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2049)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msg. 68; Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 7

« WEEK 1 —DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 1:3 Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance...

2 Cor. 4:7 ...We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

The economy of the Triune God is for Him to dispense Himself into His chosen and redeemed people to make them His expression....God is a living person, full of feeling. He has His heart's desire. Out of God's heart's desire is God's good pleasure. Out of this pleasure is God's purpose, and out of this purpose is His economy. The entire Bible is the contents of God's economy. (The God-man Living, p. 116)

Today's Reading

We Christians should be an emotional people. When we are with others, they should sense something exciting about us. In those years at Elden hall in Los Angeles, our neighbors called us the "hallelujah people." We were excited enough to be singing and praising the Lord even while we walked on the streets.

What makes us so happy? It is because we have the very God working within us both the willing and the working for His good pleasure. How do we know that we are living a life according to God's good pleasure? It is because of our sense of happiness. When we are happy, we are registering God's happiness within us. Our inward joy is an indication that we are living and walking according to His good pleasure. (CWWL, 1978, vol. 2, "Life Messages, Volume 1" p. 422)

As the electrum, the Lord Jesus is the One who has redeemed us and who is everything to us. He is our God, our Lamb, our Redeemer, our jasper, and our sardius. If we consider our spiritual experience, we will realize that the One who dwells within us today is the Lamb-God, the One signified by the electrum.

In the sight of God, before we were saved, we were base and wicked, having nothing that was honorable or glorious. Praise the Lord that He saved us and regenerated us! His wind, His cloud, and His burning fire have made it possible for us to have Him, the redeeming God, within us as the glowing electrum. Now we have Him as the treasure in the earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7), and we have thereby become a people of honor and glory. We need to consider how precious and honorable is the Christ who is within us. As the electrum within us, He is the treasure of incomparable worth....The more we pass through the wind, the cloud, and the fire, the more the electrum is constituted into our being, making us a people who are filled with the Triune God and who manifest His glory.

The four faces of the living creatures signify the complete and adequate expression of Christ. Furthermore, the four living creatures with their four faces signify a coordinated, corporate entity, the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). This corporate Christ is the corporate expression of God among human beings.

Today many Christians think that the reason for believing in the Lord Jesus is that they may have peace and well being in the present and that in the future they may go to heaven to enjoy eternal bliss. This thought falls far short of the divine revelation. In Ezekiel 1 God reveals that He needs a group of living creatures who can coordinate together as one entity for His expression, move, and administration. When God gains such a corporate expression, His purpose will be accomplished.

We cannot be Christians in isolation. Basically, as believers in Christ we are a collective entity, and we cannot do anything alone. The vision in Ezekiel 1 shows us that we need to be corporate and that we need to be in coordination....Coordination is necessary for God's expression. We have pointed out that the four living creatures are for God's expression in Christ. In order for God to have a corporate expression of Himself in Christ, we need to be joined together and knit together with all the saints and thereby become one entity. If we are isolated, we cannot express Christ adequately. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 35, 79-80, 82)

Further Reading: The God-man Living, msg. 13; Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 8

<< WEEK 1 —DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Ezek. 1:5 And from the midst of it there came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: They had the likeness of a man.

26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.

[In Ezekiel 1:26b] we are told that the One on the throne looks like a man. This is absolutely different from the human concept and also different from the religious concept, including the concept widely held in today's Christianity. Mainly, our concept is that the One on the throne is the mighty God. Have you ever thought that the Lord on the throne is not only the mighty God but is also a man? Oh, the One who sits on the throne is a man! However, verse 28 speaks of "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah." The One on the throne looks like a man, yet with Him there is the appearance of the glory of Jehovah. (Life-study of Ezekiel, p. 123)

Today's Reading

In the Bible there is a mysterious thought concerning the relationship between God and man. God's desire is to become the same as man is and to make man the same as He is. This means that God's intention is to mingle Himself with man and thereby make Himself like man and make man like Him. The Lord Jesus is the God-man; He is the complete God and the perfect man. We may also say that He is the Man-God. The One whom we worship today is the Man-God. Furthermore, to be a man of God, as Moses was (Deut. 33:1; Josh. 14:6; Psa. 90, title), is to be a God-man, a man who is mingled with God. It is a delight to God that all His chosen and redeemed people would be God-men.

If we would live out God and express God, we need to be a man and have the appearance of a man. Ezekiel 1:5 says that the four living creatures have the appearance of a man, and verse 26 says that the One on the throne has the appearance of a man. The crucial point here is that because man was created in the image of God in order to express God, only man is like God. A person must have the appearance of a man in order to live out the image of God and therefore express God. If we want to live out God and express God, we must be a man and have the appearance of a man. Anyone who does not have the appearance of a man cannot express God. The One on the throne and the four living creatures both have the appearance of a man, indicating that the four living creatures on earth are the expression of the One on the throne.

In Ezekiel 1 the One on the throne is the union of God and man. Thus, the place where the throne is, is the place where heaven and earth are joined. The One on the throne is God, but He manifests the appearance of a man. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was God manifest in the flesh, for He was the God-man and had the appearance of a man. Inwardly, He was God, but His appearance on earth was the appearance of a man. Now, as the One on the throne after His ascension, He is still the God-man; He is God, yet with the appearance of a man.

In the church life today, there should be a condition where God is manifested in man. This means that in the church we should have...the expression in man of the One who is on the throne. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 124-126)

The Bible as a whole, and the book of Ezekiel as a miniature of the Bible, reveal that God's eternal intention is to dispense Himself into His chosen people, making them the same as He is in His life, His nature, and His image but not in His Godhead, that they might be mingled with Him as one entity and be built together in Him to be His eternal habitation, the New Jerusalem. This is the central point of the revelation of the Bible and also of the four visions presented in the book of Ezekiel. (Ezek. 1:1, footnote 4)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezekiel, msg. 12; CWWL, 1978, vol. 2, "Life Messages, Volume 1," msg. 31, 33

« WEEK 1 —HYMN

Hymns, #1220

Remove the veils, Lord, from my heart

The Church — The Vision

1220

1. Re - move the veils, Lord, from my heart; True rev - e - la - tion
grant to me; A vi - sion clear, O Lord, im - part Of Thy re - cov - er -
y. (C) Of Thy re - cov - er - y. Of Thy re - cov - er -
y. A vi - sion clear, O Lord, im - part Of Thy re - cov - er - y.

2. By revelation I perceive
The power that raised Christ from the dead;
When I by faith this power receive,
I to the church am led.

3. Thy mighty power has set me free
From all the world's distracting things;
An entrance to the local church
This mighty power brings.

4. Once in the local church, I need
To take Thee as my person, Lord;
My outward man each day recede,
My heart is for the Lord.

5. I take Thee as my person, Lord;
I have been crucified with Thee.
My inner man has been restored;
I'm now indwelt by Thee.

6. When all Thy members self forsake,
Thy glorious Body, Lord, is known;
When of Thy Person we partake,
The one new man is shown.

7. The church life is the one new man
In every local church expressed;
Thy Body is a corporate man,
One Person manifest.

(Repeat the last two lines of each stanza)