

COOPERATING WITH THE HEAVENLY MINISTRY OF THE ASCENDED CHRIST

(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

Practicing the Church Life under the Ministry of Christ as the Minister of the True, the Heavenly, Tabernacle

RK *Hymns* —

Scripture Reading: Heb. 8:2, 6; 2:10-12; 1:9; 3:6; 4:9; 7:22; 9:15; 12:22-24, 28; 13:1-19

- Heb 8:2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
- Heb 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry inasmuch as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises.
- Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
- Heb 2:12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."
- Heb 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";
- Heb 3:6 But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house, whose house we are if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end.
- Heb 4:9 So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.
- Heb 7:22 By so much Jesus has also become the surety of a better covenant.
- Heb 9:15 And because of this He is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
- Heb 12:22 But you have come forward to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, to the universal gathering;
- Heb 12:23 And to the church of the firstborn, who have been enrolled in the heavens; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits of righteous men who have been made perfect;
- Heb 12:24 And to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks something better than that of Abel.
- Heb 12:28 Therefore receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us have grace, through which we may serve God well-pleasingly with piety and fear;
- Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.
- Heb 13:2 Do not forget hospitality, for through this some, without knowing it, have entertained angels.
- Heb 13:3 Remember those who are imprisoned as bound with them, those who are ill-treated as being yourselves also likewise treated in body.
- Heb 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and the bed undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
- Heb 13:5 Let your way of life be without the love of money, being satisfied with the things which are at hand; for He Himself has said, "I shall by no means give you up, neither by any means shall I abandon you";
- Heb 13:6 So that being of good courage, we say, "The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear. What shall man do to me?"
- Heb 13:7 Remember the ones leading you, who have spoken to you the word of God; and considering the issue of their manner of life, imitate their faith.
- Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes, even forever.
- Heb 13:9 Do not be carried away by various strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be confirmed by grace, not by the food of sacrifices, by which those who walk were not profited.
- Heb 13:10 We have an altar from which they who are serving the tabernacle have no right to eat.
- Heb 13:11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the Holy of Holies for sin by the high priest are burned up outside the camp.
- Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

- Heb 13:13 Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.
 Heb 13:14 For we do not have here a remaining city, but we seek after the one to come.
 Heb 13:15 Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name.
 Heb 13:16 But do not forget doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
 Heb 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.
 Heb 13:18 Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to conduct ourselves honorably.
 Heb 13:19 And I exhort you much more to do this that I may be restored to you more quickly.

I. The ascended Christ is a “Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle”—Heb. 8:2:

- Heb 8:2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
- A. Christ, as a Minister of the true (heavenly) tabernacle, ministers heaven (which is not only a place but also a condition of life) into us.
- B. The present Christ, who is now in the heavens as our Minister, is ministering to us the heavenly life, grace, authority, and power and sustaining us to live a heavenly life on earth as He did when He was here—1:3; 4:14; 7:26; 9:24.
- Heb 1:3 Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
- Heb 4:14 Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.
- Heb 7:26 For such a High Priest was also fitting to us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and having become higher than the heavens,
- Heb 9:24 For Christ did not enter into a holy place made by hands, a figure of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God for us;
- C. The heavenly Christ is ministering in the tabernacle “which the Lord pitched, not man”—8:2:
- Heb 8:2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
1. This tabernacle, this sanctuary, is in the third heaven, in which is the heavenly Holy of Holies.
 2. The heavenly Holy of Holies, where Christ is ministering on our behalf, is connected to our spirit—4:12.
 Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
 3. Christ’s ministry in the heavens takes care of our needs—v. 15:
 Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin.
 - a. From the heavens Christ ministers Himself to us as food, as our life supply, in the way of dispensing.
 - b. As our Minister takes care of our needs, He carries out God’s economy—Eph. 1:10.
 Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- D. Whatever Christ carries out as the heavenly Minister, He applies to us as the Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17:
 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
 2 Cor 3:17 And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
1. The supply we need comes from the Christ who is both the Lord in the heavens and the Spirit within us—Acts 2:36; Rom. 8:11.
 Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

- Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.
2. Now we may experience Him in all His functions as the ascended One—Heb. 1:3; 9:24; 12:2.
- Heb 1:3 Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
- Heb 9:24 For Christ did not enter into a holy place made by hands, a figure of the true, but into heaven itself, to appear now before the face of God for us;
- Heb 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.
3. As the heavenly Minister, He transmits what we need from God the Father, who is the source, into our spirit to supply and sustain us.
- E. In His heavenly ministry as the Minister of the true tabernacle, Christ is serving God's people with the bequests, the blessings, of the new testament—7:22; 8:6; 9:15:
- Heb 7:22 By so much Jesus has also become the surety of a better covenant.
- Heb 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry inasmuch as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises.
- Heb 9:15 And because of this He is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
1. As our heavenly Minister with a more excellent ministry, Christ is carrying out the better covenant—7:22:
- Heb 7:22 By so much Jesus has also become the surety of a better covenant.
- a. He does this by making the facts of the new covenant effective.
- b. Every fact in the new covenant is made effective by the heavenly Minister with His more excellent ministry—9:15; 8:6.
- Heb 9:15 And because of this He is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
- Heb 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry inasmuch as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises.
2. Whatever is a fact in the new covenant is a bequest in the new testament; Christ, the heavenly Minister, is executing the bequests in the new testament—9:15-17; 10:16-18.
- Heb 9:15 And because of this He is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
- Heb 9:16 For where there is a testament, the death of him who made the testament must of necessity be established.
- Heb 9:17 For a testament is confirmed in the case of the dead, since it never has force when he who made the testament is living.
- Heb 10:16 "This is the covenant which I will covenant with them after those days, says the Lord: I will impart My laws upon their hearts, and upon their mind I will inscribe them,"
- Heb 10:17 He then says, "And their sins and their lawlessnesses I shall by no means remember anymore."
- Heb 10:18 Now where forgiveness of these is, there is no longer an offering for sin.

II. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, various aspects of the church are revealed:

- A. The church is a living composition of the many sons of God, who are the many brothers of Christ brought forth in His resurrection—2:10-12; Rom. 8:29; John 20:17; Heb. 1:5; 5:5;

Acts 13:33; 1 Pet. 1:3:

- Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
- Heb 2:12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."
- Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
- John 20:17 Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.
- Heb 1:5 For to which of the angels has He ever said, "You are My Son; this day have I begotten You"? And again, "I will be a Father to Him, and He will be a Son to Me"?
- Heb 5:5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself in becoming a High Priest, but it was He who said to Him, "You are My Son; this day have I begotten You";
- Acts 13:33 That God has fully fulfilled this promise to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You."
- 1 Pet 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1. God is our divine Father, and we are His divine sons born of His divine life with His divine nature—John 20:17; Eph. 1:5; Gal. 3:26; John 1:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:4.

John 20:17 Jesus said to her, Do not touch Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.

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

Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,

John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

2. As the many brothers of Christ, we are the same as the firstborn Son; He is divine and human, and we are human and divine—Heb. 2:11; 1:6; Rom. 8:29.

Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

Heb 1:6 And when He brings again the Firstborn into the inhabited earth, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

3. The church is an organism with two lives and two natures combined and mingled together—Lev. 2:1-16:

Lev 2:1 And when anyone presents an offering of a meal offering to Jehovah, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it.

Lev 2:2 Then he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests, and he shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all its frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as its memorial portion on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Lev 2:3 And what is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire.

Lev 2:4 And when you present an offering of a meal offering baked in the oven, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened cakes mingled with oil or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

- Lev 2:5 And if your offering is a meal offering baked on a flat plate, it shall be of fine flour mingled with oil, unleavened.
- Lev 2:6 You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a meal offering.
- Lev 2:7 And if your offering is a meal offering made in a pot, it shall be made of fine flour with oil.
- Lev 2:8 And you shall bring to Jehovah the meal offering that is made of these things and present it to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar.
- Lev 2:9 And the priest shall take up from the meal offering its memorial portion and shall burn it on the altar, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.
- Lev 2:10 And that which is left of the meal offering shall be Aaron's and his sons'; it is a thing most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire.
- Lev 2:11 No meal offering that you present to Jehovah shall be made with leaven, for you shall not burn any leaven or any honey as an offering by fire to Jehovah.
- Lev 2:12 You may present them to Jehovah, as an offering of firstfruits, but they shall not be offered up for a satisfying fragrance on the altar.
- Lev 2:13 And every offering of your meal offering you shall season with salt, and you shall not omit the salt of the covenant of your God from your meal offering; with all your offerings you shall present salt.
- Lev 2:14 And if you present a meal offering of firstfruits to Jehovah, you shall present for the meal offering of your firstfruits new grain roasted with fire, crushed grain of the fresh ear.
- Lev 2:15 And you shall put oil on it and place frankincense on it; it is a meal offering.
- Lev 2:16 And the priest shall burn as its memorial portion some of its crushed grain and some of its oil, with all its frankincense, as an offering by fire to Jehovah.
- a. The church is altogether a matter of life—the divine life and the uplifted, resurrected human life—Rom. 1:3-4.

Rom 1:3 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh,

Rom 1:4 Who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord;
 - b. The church has two natures—the human nature and the divine nature; thus, the church is both human and divine—Heb. 2:14, 11.

Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
- B. The church is a corporate partnership with Christ—3:14; 1:9:
- Heb 3:14 For we have become partners of Christ, if indeed we hold fast the beginning of the assurance firm to the end--
- Heb 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";
1. The goal of God's operation in the universe is to accomplish a glorious expression of Himself—2:10; John 17:1, 5, 22, 24; Rev. 21:10-11.

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

John 17:1 These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You;

John 17:5 And now, glorify Me along with Yourself, Father, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

John 17:24 Father, concerning that which You have given Me, I desire that they also may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

- Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.
2. The firstborn Son is God's appointed Heir, and we, the many sons, have been saved to be His joint heirs, inheriting not only salvation but also all things with Him—Heb. 1:14; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7; Eph. 3:6; Titus 3:7.
 - Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for service for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?
 - Rom 8:17 And if children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him.
 - Gal 4:7 So then you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, an heir also through God.
 - Eph 3:6 That in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the Body and fellow partakers of the promise through the gospel,
 - Titus 3:7 In order that having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
 3. Since Christ as the firstborn Son of God is God's appointed Heir and we as the many sons of God are His joint heirs, we are Christ's partners—Heb. 1:9; 3:14.
 - Heb 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";
 - Heb 3:14 For we have become partners of Christ, if indeed we hold fast the beginning of the assurance firm to the end--
 4. As Christ's partners, we share in His anointing and cooperate with Him in His operation to reach the goal of God's economy—the glorious expression of the Divine Being—1:9; 2 Cor. 1:21; Rev. 21:10-11.
 - Heb 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";
 - 2 Cor 1:21 But the One who firmly attaches us with you unto Christ and has anointed us is God,
 - Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
 - Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.
- C. The church, the enlargement of Christ, is the Sabbath rest—John 2:19, 21; 3:29a, 30; 1 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 3:6; 4:9:
- John 2:19 Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.
 - John 2:21 But He spoke of the temple of His body.
 - John 3:29a He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. ...
 - John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
 - 1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
 - Heb 3:6 But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house, whose house we are if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end.
 - Heb 4:9 So then there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.
1. The individual Christ is God's Sabbath (Matt. 11:28-29), and the church is the enlargement of Christ; therefore, the church is also God's Sabbath rest.
 - Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
 - Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
 2. The church is God's satisfaction and rest because in the church God has His habitation for His expression and representation—Eph. 2:22.
 - Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- D. To come to the church is to come to the new covenant and to the heavenly New Jerusalem—Heb. 12:22-24; 8:7-13; 11:10, 16; Gal. 4:24-26:
- Heb 12:22 But you have come forward to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, to the universal gathering;

- Heb 12:23 And to the church of the firstborn, who have been enrolled in the heavens; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits of righteous men who have been made perfect;
- Heb 12:24 And to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks something better than that of Abel.
- Heb 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, no place would have been sought for a second.
- Heb 8:8 For finding fault with them He says, "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will consummate a new covenant upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah,
- Heb 8:9 Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord.
- Heb 8:10 For this is the covenant which I will covenant with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will impart My laws into their mind, and on their hearts I will inscribe them; and I will be God to them, and they will be a people to Me.
- Heb 8:11 And they shall by no means each teach his fellow citizen and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all will know Me from the little one to the great one among them.
- Heb 8:12 For I will be propitious to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins I shall by no means remember anymore."
- Heb 8:13 In saying, A new covenant, He has made the first old. But that which is becoming old and growing decrepit is near to disappearing.
- Heb 11:10 For he eagerly waited for the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God.
- Heb 11:16 But as it is, they long after a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.
- Gal 4:24 These things are spoken allegorically, for these women are two covenants, one from Mount Sinai, bringing forth children unto slavery, which is Hagar.
- Gal 4:25 Now this Hagar is Sinai the mountain in Arabia and corresponds to the Jerusalem which now is, for she is in slavery with her children.
- Gal 4:26 But the Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother;
1. The new covenant, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the church are one.
 2. To receive the new covenant is to enter the New Jerusalem and come to the church:
 - a. Hebrews 8 indicates that the old covenant of law has been replaced by the new covenant.
 - b. Hebrews 12 says that we have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the church—vv. 22-24.

Heb 12:22 But you have come forward to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, to the universal gathering;

Heb 12:23 And to the church of the firstborn, who have been enrolled in the heavens; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits of righteous men who have been made perfect;

Heb 12:24 And to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks something better than that of Abel.
- E. The church is the unshakable kingdom of God—v. 28:
- Heb 12:28 Therefore receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us have grace, through which we may serve God well-pleasingly with piety and fear;
1. The unshakable kingdom that we are receiving is Christ with His enlargement:
 - a. The kingdom is actually the Lord Himself as the kingdom within us—Luke 17:20-21; Mark 4:3, 26.

Luke 17:20 And when He was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation;

Luke 17:21 Nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

Mark 4:3 Listen! Behold, the sower went out to sow.

Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,

b. Whereas the church is Christ's increase in life, the kingdom is Christ's increase in administration.

2. In the church, we are living in the kingdom of God today—John 3:3, 5; Rom. 14:17; Rev. 1:9.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

III. Hebrews 13:1-19 speaks of the virtues and the experiences needed for the practice of the church life:

Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

Heb 13:2 Do not forget hospitality, for through this some, without knowing it, have entertained angels.

Heb 13:3 Remember those who are imprisoned as bound with them, those who are ill-treated as being yourselves also likewise treated in body.

Heb 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and the bed undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Heb 13:5 Let your way of life be without the love of money, being satisfied with the things which are at hand; for He Himself has said, "I shall by no means give you up, neither by any means shall I abandon you";

Heb 13:6 So that being of good courage, we say, "The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear. What shall man do to me?"

Heb 13:7 Remember the ones leading you, who have spoken to you the word of God; and considering the issue of their manner of life, imitate their faith.

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes, even forever.

Heb 13:9 Do not be carried away by various strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be confirmed by grace, not by the food of sacrifices, by which those who walk were not profited.

Heb 13:10 We have an altar from which they who are serving the tabernacle have no right to eat.

Heb 13:11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the Holy of Holies for sin by the high priest are burned up outside the camp.

Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Heb 13:13 Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

Heb 13:14 For we do not have here a remaining city, but we seek after the one to come.

Heb 13:15 Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name.

Heb 13:16 But do not forget doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Heb 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.

Heb 13:18 Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to conduct ourselves honorably.

Heb 13:19 And I exhort you much more to do this that I may be restored to you more quickly.

A. As indicated by its content, this chapter was written with a view to a proper church life; nearly everything mentioned here, such as brotherly love and hospitality, is for the church life, not only for the Christian life—vv. 1-7, 16-18.

Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

- Heb 13:2 Do not forget hospitality, for through this some, without knowing it, have entertained angels.
- Heb 13:3 Remember those who are imprisoned as bound with them, those who are ill-treated as being yourselves also likewise treated in body.
- Heb 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and the bed undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
- Heb 13:5 Let your way of life be without the love of money, being satisfied with the things which are at hand; for He Himself has said, "I shall by no means give you up, neither by any means shall I abandon you";
- Heb 13:6 So that being of good courage, we say, "The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear. What shall man do to me?"
- Heb 13:7 Remember the ones leading you, who have spoken to you the word of God; and considering the issue of their manner of life, imitate their faith.
- Heb 13:16 But do not forget doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.
- Heb 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.
- Heb 13:18 Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to conduct ourselves honorably.
- B. For a true and steadfast church life, we must hold on to the Christ who is the same yesterday and today, and even forever, and must not be carried away by various strange teachings—vv. 8-9.
- Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes, even forever.
- Heb 13:9 Do not be carried away by various strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be confirmed by grace, not by the food of sacrifices, by which those who walk were not profited.
- C. The more we are in our spirit, enjoying the heavenly Christ, the more we will come outside the camp of religion, following the suffering Jesus—vv. 12-14.
- Heb 13:12 Therefore also Jesus, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.
- Heb 13:13 Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.
- Heb 13:14 For we do not have here a remaining city, but we seek after the one to come.
- D. Since in the church life we enjoy the unchanging Christ as grace and follow Him outside religion, we should offer through Him spiritual sacrifices of praise to God—v. 15:
- Heb 13:15 Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name.
1. In the church we should offer up through Christ a sacrifice of praise to God continually.
 2. In the church He sings in us hymns of praise unto God the Father (2:12), and in the church we too should praise God the Father through Him.

Heb 2:12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."
 3. Eventually, in the church He and we, we and He, praise the Father together in the mingled spirit—v. 12; 13:15:

Heb 2:12 Saying, "I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You."

Heb 13:15 Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name.

 - a. He, as the life-giving Spirit, praises the Father in our spirit, and we, by our spirit, praise the Father in His Spirit.
 - b. This is the best and highest sacrifice that we can offer to God through Christ the Son.
 - c. This is greatly needed in the church meetings.

Excerpts from the Ministry

CHRIST IN ASCENSION

Minister of the True (Heavenly) Tabernacle

Hebrews 8:2 says that the ascended Christ is a “Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.” Christ, as a Minister of the true (heavenly) tabernacle, ministers heaven (which is not only a place but also a condition of life) into us, so that we may have the heavenly life and power to live a heavenly life on earth as He did while He was here.

The heavenly Christ is ministering in a tabernacle pitched by the Lord and not by man. This tabernacle, this sanctuary, is in the third heaven, in which is the heavenly Holy of Holies. The heavenly Holy of Holies, where Christ is ministering on our behalf, is connected to our spirit. Christ’s ministry in the heavens takes care of our need. From the heavens Christ ministers Himself to us as food, as our life supply, in the way of dispensing. As our Minister takes care of our needs, He carries out God’s economy.

Whatever Christ carries out as the heavenly Minister, He applies to us as the Spirit. Whatever He ministers is transmitted into our spirit. Because the Lord in the heavens and the Spirit in our spirit are one, there is a continual transmission between the heavens and our spirit so that whatever takes place there is immediately applied here.

The supply we need comes from the Christ who is both the Lord in the heavens and the Spirit within us. He is interceding for us, caring for us. Now we may experience Him in all His functions as the ascended One. In particular, as the heavenly Minister He transmits what we need from God the Father, who is the source, into our spirit to supply and sustain us. This is the dispensing of the Triune God into our being. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, p. 347)

As a Minister of the True Tabernacle, Serving God’s People with the Bequests of the New Testament

Finally, in His heavenly ministry Christ is a Minister of the true, the heavenly tabernacle (Heb. 8:2), serving God’s people with the bequests, the blessings, of the new testament. As our heavenly Minister with a more excellent ministry, Christ is carrying out the better covenant. He does this by making the facts of the new covenant effective. Every fact in the new covenant is made effective by the heavenly Minister with His more excellent ministry.

Christ, the heavenly Minister, is also executing the bequests in the new testament. Whatever is a fact in the covenant is a bequest in the testament. Facts refer to certain things that have been accomplished but which are not yet designated until they are bequeathed. After the accomplished facts have been bequeathed, they immediately become bequests designated for us. Whatever is in a covenant is a fact, but whatever is in a testament is a bequest. What were facts in the covenant have now become legally designated for us as bequests in the testament. There are four facts of the new covenant which have become bequests in the new testament: the propitiation for unrighteousness and forgiveness of sins; the imparting of the law of life; the blessing of having God and of being His people; and the inward ability of knowing the Lord. In His work in His heavenly ministry Christ is now serving us with these bequests. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 826-827)

His Being the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever

Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes, even forever.” We should remember that the writer of the book of Hebrews spoke this word after Christ ascended to the heavens. Before His ascension He underwent changes; that is, He passed through processes. In eternity past, Christ was only the Son of God, not the Son of Man. He did not have humanity, the flesh. However, in His incarnation Christ underwent a change, picking up humanity and putting the flesh upon Himself

(John 1:1, 14). Christ then passed through death and entered into resurrection. In resurrection He, as the last Adam, was transfigured into the life-giving Spirit. Thus, He changed to become that which had not been—the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). After passing through all His processes, including incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, Christ, the embodiment of God, is now processed and consummated. For Jesus Christ to remain the same yesterday, today, and forever does not mean that Christ remains unprocessed from eternity past, through time, and into eternity future. Rather, by passing through the processes, Christ underwent many changes. Yet since He went through and completed the processes, He is now processed and consummated, possessing divinity, humanity, human living, the all-inclusive crucifixion, the all-surpassing resurrection, and the all-transcending ascension. As the Christ who has been processed and consummated, He remains the same and will remain the same forever.

Christ, who is the word that the ministers of the word of God in Hebrews 13:7 preached and taught, who is the life that they lived, and who is the Author and Perfecter of their faith, is perpetual, unchangeable, and unchanging. He remains the same forever (1:11-12). There must not be another Jesus and another gospel preached in the church (2 Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:8-9). For a true and steadfast church life, we must hold on to the Christ who is the same yesterday and today, and even forever, and we must not be carried away by various strange teachings (Heb. 13:9).

Our Going Forth unto Him outside the Camp, Bearing His Reproach

Hebrews 13:13 says, “Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.” The gate in verse 12 refers to the city of Jerusalem, which signifies the earthly realm, while the camp in verse 13 refers to the tabernacle, which signifies human organization. Together, the two signify one thing, the Jewish religion with its two aspects, the earthly and the human. Judaism is both earthly and human. Christ was crucified outside the governmental gate, the gate of the city of Jerusalem, but we need to follow Him outside the religious camp, bearing His reproach. This means that we are passing through the process of suffering that He underwent. As suffering ones, we will become the same as He is.

If we would be proper Christians, we must experience Christ in the way of going outside the camp to bear His reproach, following Him in the sanctifying pathway of the cross. We must experience Christ in this particular aspect. If we would experience Him in this aspect, we must enter “within the veil” (6:19-20), that is, into the Holy of Holies, to enjoy Him as our heavenly Sanctifier in His heavenly priesthood (10:19-20).

“Outside the camp” and “within the veil” (13:13; 6:19) are two very striking points in the book of Hebrews. To enter within the veil means to enter into the Holy of Holies, where the Lord is enthroned in glory, and to go outside the camp means to come out of religion, whence the Lord was cast in rejection. This signifies that we must be in our spirit, where experientially the practical Holy of Holies is today, and outside religion, where the practical camp is today. The more we are in our spirit, enjoying the heavenly Christ, the more we will come outside the camp of religion, following the suffering Jesus. Being in our spirit to enjoy the glorified Christ enables us to come outside the camp of religion to follow the rejected Jesus. The more we remain in our spirit to contact the heavenly Christ, who is in glory, the more we will go forth outside the camp of religion unto the lowly Jesus to suffer with Him. By contacting Christ in the heavens and enjoying His glorification, we are energized to take the narrow pathway of the cross on earth and bear the reproach of Jesus.

First, the book of Hebrews gives us a clear vision of the heavenly Christ and the heavenly Holy of Holies, and then it shows us how to walk on the earth in the pathway of the cross, that is, how to go forth unto Jesus outside the camp, outside religion, bearing His reproach. Even Moses, after the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf (Exo. 32), moved to a place outside the camp, where everyone who sought the Lord went to meet with him, for both the Lord’s presence and the Lord’s

speaking were there (33:7-11). We must go outside the camp so that we may enjoy the Lord's presence and hear His speaking. Our spirit must be in the heavens with Christ, and our steps must be with Jesus outside the camp of religion. All these things are necessary for the practical and proper church life.

Christ is our offering, our portion offered to God for us on the altar of the cross. The way to enjoy Him as our portion is twofold. On the one hand, we enjoy the ascended Christ in the heavens in our spirit, and on the other hand, we need to follow His steps outside the camp and bear His reproach. In these two ways we fully enjoy Him as our portion. The way to enjoy Him is by entering the veil and going outside the camp. To enter the veil is to enjoy the heavenly Christ in our spirit, and to go outside the camp is to give up organized religion to follow Jesus. There is no other way to fully enjoy Him. The more we enjoy Him as the heavenly Melchizedek in our spirit, the more we will step outside the camp and give up organized religion.

To bear the Lord's reproach means that we bear the same reproach He bore; it is to bear His disgrace or shame. Further, to bear His reproach is to bear the cross (Matt. 16:24). The more we are despised, the happier we should be because we are bearing the cross. The reproach He suffered now becomes our reproach. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He suffered reproach from religion. Now as His followers, we must bear His reproach, suffering reproach from religion. This is to be a joint partaker of the tribulation in Jesus (Rev. 1:9). This is the only way for us to follow Him and enjoy Him as our portion. This is the way of faith, the way of the cross, which is the narrow pathway for us to enjoy Christ in a practical way. May the Lord be gracious to us that we may practice this.

On the one hand, we are within the veil; on the other hand, we are outside the city, the camp. On one hand, we are in the Holy of Holies; on the other hand, we are before men. Inwardly, we enjoy the resurrected Christ, and outwardly, we follow Jesus. When we pray in our room in the morning, we contact Christ. This can be likened to the Shulammitte and Solomon living and fellowshiping together in the palaces of ivory (Psa. 45:8; S. S. 1:4). We touch the Lord in the inner chamber, in the Holy of Holies, in the secret place. When we testify for the Lord and work for the Lord in our outward living, we can be likened to Abigail, wandering with David in the wilderness (1 Sam. 25:39-42).

Every day we experience these two aspects. On the one hand, we are within the veil as the Shulammitte, living in the Holy of Holies and enjoying the resurrected and glorified Christ, the One greater than Solomon (Matt. 12:42). On the other hand, we are outside the camp as Abigail, living in the world and following the lowly Jesus (v. 3). Like the Shulammitte, we inwardly remain in the palaces of ivory and fellowship with the Lord, the real Solomon, and like Abigail, we outwardly live and work by following the Lord, the real David, to war and suffering. The One within is the resurrected Christ, whereas the One without is Jesus the Nazarene. Inwardly, we have the enjoyment of the Shulammitte in the secret place, and outwardly, we have the public living of Abigail.

We not only enjoy the resurrected Christ within, but we follow the suffering Jesus without. Our colleagues, relatives, neighbors, and friends may persecute and trouble us when we testify for the Lord. At such times, we are outwardly walking on a narrow way similar to that of Jesus the Nazarene. Nevertheless, when people trouble, persecute, oppose, and harass us, we enjoy the resurrected Christ inwardly.

Philippians 3:10 says, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." As far as Christ is concerned, He first experienced suffering and then resurrection. As far as we are concerned, we touch resurrection and then experience suffering. He died and then resurrected, but we resurrect and then die. No one can take the way of the cross by himself; neither can he follow the footsteps of Jesus the Nazarene by himself. It is not until a person touches and contacts the resurrected Christ within and the resurrected Christ enters into him that he can say, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). It is the resurrected Christ in us who leads us to follow the suffering Jesus. He has walked the way of the cross and entered into us in resurrection. Now He is leading us to take the way of the cross.

When we enter within the veil by entering into our spirit, we taste the sweetness of the heavenly Christ so that we may be enabled to go outside the camp, forsaking the earth and its love. As we stay

within the veil, we also have our spirit filled with the glory of the heavenly Christ so that our heart may be freed from the possession of the earth's enjoyment outside the camp. Furthermore, within the veil we behold the glorified Christ so that we may be attracted to follow the suffering Jesus outside the camp. Beholding His countenance in heaven enables us to trace His footsteps on earth. As we enter within the veil, we are infused with resurrection power (Phil. 3:10) so that we may be empowered to walk the pathway of the cross outside the camp. We also participate in the ministry of the heavenly Christ so that we may be equipped to minister Him to the thirsty spirits outside the camp. Here we enjoy the Lord's best so that we may be enriched to meet the needs of people outside the camp.

The Holy of Holies, the pathway of the cross (signified by the going forth unto Jesus outside the camp, bearing His reproach), and the kingdom are three crucial matters set forth in the book of Hebrews. The Holy of Holies with its rich supply enables us to take the narrow, difficult pathway of the cross, and the pathway of the cross ushers us into the kingdom in its manifestation so that we may obtain the reward of glory.

Through Him Our Offering Up a Sacrifice of Praise Continually to God

Hebrews 13:15 says, "Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name." This verse presents a profound thought. When we bear the reproach of Jesus and suffer on His behalf, we often groan and do not offer any praise to God. Yet the writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that when we pass through reproach and suffering, we should continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.

Verse 15 is a continuation of verses 8 through 14. Since in the church life we enjoy the unchanging Christ as grace and follow Him outside religion, we should offer through Him spiritual sacrifices to God. First, in the church we should offer up through Him a sacrifice of praise to God continually. In the church He sings in us hymns of praise unto God the Father (2:12). In the church we too should praise God the Father through Him. Eventually, in the church He and we, we and He, praise the Father together in the mingled spirit. Christ as the life-giving Spirit, praises the Father in our spirit, and we, by our spirit, praise the Father in His Spirit. This is the best and highest sacrifice that we can offer to God through Him. This is greatly needed in the church meetings.

Through the Christ whom we have experienced and enjoyed, we need to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually. The real praise in the meetings must be constituted of our experiences of Christ. The sweetest praises we can offer to the Father are those we offer to Christ and which concern Christ. There is nothing more pleasant to the Father's heart than this. Real worship to the Father is the offering of His Son. In the preaching of the gospel, we tell the sinners that Christ is the Son of God, who redeemed us and who can save us and bring us to the Father. If we minister these things regarding Christ to the unbelievers, this is real worship to the Father. To worship God the Father is simply to present the Son of God. The real praise to the Father comes out of our experience of Christ in our daily life. This is a very pleasing praise to the Father, gladdening and rejoicing His heart. The Father desires that we glorify Him with the Son. If we glorify the Son, we glorify the Father. When we glorify the Son, the Father is glorified in His Son's being glorified by us (John 17:1). The praises out of our experience and enjoyment of Christ—the spiritual praises about Christ—are the best praise to the Father.

Hebrews 13:16 goes on to tell us about "doing good and sharing with others." *Doing good* refers to giving, and *fellowshipping* refers to sharing, that is, having fellowship in the needs of the saints. This kind of doing good and fellowshipping with others also are sacrifices that we should offer to God. These too are necessary for a proper church life. It is truly improper if in the church some needy saints are not well cared for and ministered to. This means that the fellowship with others is absent or inadequate. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 3837-3845)