

Week Six

Christ as Typified by the Bronze Serpent

EM Hymns: 1089, 493

Scripture Reading: Num. 21:4-9; John 3:14, 29-30; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21

Outline

Day 1

- I. **When the children of Israel sinned against God, they were bitten by serpents (Num. 21:4-9); God told Moses to lift up a bronze serpent on a pole on their behalf for God's judgment so that by looking upon that serpent all might live:**
 - A. **The bronze serpent typifies Christ (John 3:14), and the pole typifies the cross (1 Pet. 2:24); in typology, bronze signifies judgment; the bronze serpent had the form of a serpent but not the poisonous nature of a serpent.**
 - B. **In the same way, Christ was lifted up on the cross (John 8:28) in the likeness of the flesh of sin (Rom. 8:3), without participating in any way in the poisonous sin of the flesh (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15).**
 - C. **In Genesis 3 Satan, the serpent, injected his nature into man's flesh; as descendants of Adam, we all have been "bitten" by the old serpent, the devil; therefore, in the sight of God, the entire fallen human race consists of serpentine beings with the poison of the old serpent in their fallen nature:**
 1. **In John 8:44 the Lord Jesus revealed that the devil is the father of sinners; thus, in our fallen nature we are children of the old serpent, the devil—1 John 3:10.**

2. In Matthew 12:34 the Lord Jesus called the Pharisees the "offspring of vipers"; in 23:33 He called them "Serpents! Brood of vipers!"
3. The devil is the ancient serpent (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), and sinners are serpents, the offspring of vipers; in our fallen nature we are not merely sinful—we are serpentine.
4. Romans 7 says that Satan as personified sin is in our flesh; sin can deceive and kill people (v. 11), and it can dwell in people and cause them to do things against their will (vv. 17, 20); it is quite alive (v. 9) and exceedingly active, so it must be the evil nature of Satan, the evil one, dwelling, acting, and working in fallen mankind.

Day 2

- D. The Lord as the Son of Man was lifted up in the form of the serpent on the cross to bear the judgment for the serpent-poisoned people; He was lifted up on the cross for the casting out of the old serpent, Satan, the ruler of the world—John 12:31-34.**
- E. Hence, the Lord, as the Son of Man lifted up, can deliver the serpent-poisoned people from sin, the serpent's poison; also, by His being lifted up, He would destroy Satan and draw all men to Himself—Heb. 2:14; John 12:32-33.**
- F. Now whoever believes into Christ as the One who was lifted up to be condemned in our place has eternal life; we need a "bronze serpent" to be our Substitute to bear God's judgment for us, to redeem us, and to release His saving, divine life into our being—3:14-16; 12:24.**
- G. When we repent and admit that we are serpentine, we are qualified to experience Christ as the eternal life and enjoy Him:**
1. The Greek word for repentance means to have a change of mind, issuing in regret, to have a turn in purpose; also, man's repentance is his turning from all things to God Himself—Acts 26:20; 14:15b; 1 Thes. 1:9b.
 2. In our experience, this is not a once-for-all matter but a daily experience;

John the Baptist preached repentance (Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:4), and in the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, the Lord Jesus tells us again and again to repent (2:5, 16, 21-22; 3:3, 19).

- H. It is a great blessing for us to know that, as the fulfillment of the type of the bronze serpent, Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin to die on the cross as our Replacement and Substitute in order for us to be regenerated and have eternal life.**

Day 3

II. John 3 speaks of the serpent and the bride—vv. 14, 29-30:

- A. John 3:16 is the issue of verses 14 and 15; that is, the receiving of the divine, eternal life is the issue of the uplifting of Christ on the cross as the bronze serpent, the real sin offering:**
1. The Lord Jesus was lifted up as our Substitute to bear God's judgment for us so that we may look at Him (believe into Him) and have eternal life.
 2. Because in Adam we were bitten by the old serpent, we were dead (Eph. 2:1, 5), but now through Christ as the bronze serpent lifted up on the cross, we may receive eternal life, the life of God; this is the real manifestation of God's love to the world.
- B. For the serpent to "bite" us means that he imparts the poison of his nature into us to make us his increase; through the fall the entire human race has become the increase of Satan.**
- C. John 3 reveals that regeneration is not only to bring the divine life into the believers but also to make them the corporate bride for Christ's increase; as Adam was increased in Eve, so Christ is increased in His bride—vv. 29-30; Gen. 2:21-22.**
- D. By Christ being lifted up on the cross as the bronze serpent, Satan's increase has become Christ's increase, His bride; we who were once the increase of Satan have become the increase of Christ.**

- E. All regenerated persons are components of the bride, who will be married to the Lord Jesus as the Bridegroom; regeneration means that our serpentine being is annulled and that we receive the divine life in order to become a new being so that we may be a part of the bride; by this we can see that regeneration is for producing the bride of Christ—John 3:29-30.**
- F. The intention of John 3 is to show that the unlimited Christ must have a universal increase and that He is in the process of gaining this increase today; the immeasurable Spirit produces a universal increase for the unlimited Christ—vv. 29-36.**
- G. We may say that, considered as a whole, the Bible unveils the matter of the serpent and the bride:**

Day 4

1. God used Adam's rib to bring forth Eve, the increase of Adam, but in Genesis 3:1-6 the serpent visited the bride and succeeded in capturing her; however, God is greater, higher, and wiser than the serpent.
2. In His judgment upon the serpent, God indicated that the woman would bring forth a seed (Christ) to bruise the serpent's head (v. 15); furthermore, the seed of the woman would also become righteousness to the very ones who were poisoned by the serpent (v. 21).
3. Paul was concerned that the serpent who had come to bite Eve would come to bite the believers at Corinth; once again, this is the story of the serpent and the bride—2 Cor. 11:2-3; cf. Rev. 12:9; 1 Thes. 3:5; 1 Tim. 2:14; 4:1; 2 Pet. 3:17.
4. The book of Revelation provides the final word on the serpent and the bride:
 - a. Chapter 19 reveals that the bride is ready for the wedding of the Lamb—v. 7.
 - b. Immediately after the wedding, this universal couple will fight against Satan and his followers, the beast and the false prophet; then Satan will

be bound and cast into the abyss, where he will be imprisoned for a thousand years—vv. 11-16, 19-21; 20:1-3.

- c. Following that, Satan will rebel once more and will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire—vv. 7-10.
- d. Then the universe will be thoroughly cleared up, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth; for eternity there will be a universal couple: Christ as the Husband and the church as the bride—21:1-2, 9-10.

Day 5

III. The serpentine people are becoming the universal increase of the unlimited Christ by the immeasurable Spirit with the eternal life:

- A. In our experience we need to realize that we can be contending serpents who are apart from Christ as the life-giving Spirit; in the church life we can either be contending serpents or life-giving-Spirit drinkers—John 4:14; 7:37-39.**
- B. John 3:30 refers to the increase of Christ, which is the bride of Christ in verse 29:**
 - 1. According to our natural birth, all of us automatically live by our serpentine being; this is to live according to the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - 2. Our natural life and living are not part of the increase of Christ; only the regenerated part of our being, our regenerated spirit, is Christ's increase—v. 6.
 - 3. In a real and practical way, Christ should be our life and our person; we live Him and are one spirit with Him; we abide in Him, and He abides in us; therefore, He and we have one life and one living (Gal. 2:20; 4:19; John 15:5)—this is the serpentine people becoming the bride of Christ.
 - 4. When we have this kind of living, then in reality we are serpentine beings in the process of transformation into the bride of Christ, the increase of Christ; the ultimate consummation of this bride will be the New Jerusalem as the tabernacle of God and the wife of the Lamb—Rev. 21:3, 9-10.

5. May the Lord have mercy on us that we may learn to live by our regenerated being—Rom. 8:4; Phil. 4:11-13.

Day 6

C. In John 3 we can see at least nine aspects of the unlimited Christ:

1. The unlimited Christ is from above, that is, from the heavens—v. 31.
2. The unlimited Christ is above all (v. 31); because Christ is all-inclusive, unlimited, and universal, while He was on earth, He was still in the heavens (v. 13).
3. The unlimited Christ is loved by the Father; only in Christ can we enjoy the love of God the Father—v. 35.
4. The unlimited Christ has been given all things; the Father has given all things, including us, into the Son's hand—v. 35; 1 Cor. 3:21-23.
5. The unlimited Christ was sent by God—John 3:34; 6:46.
6. The unlimited Christ speaks the words of God—3:34; 6:63.
7. The unlimited Christ gives the Spirit not by measure—3:34.
8. The unlimited Christ gives eternal life to His believers—vv. 15-16, 36; 6:63.
9. The unlimited Christ has the bride as His universal increase—3:29-30.

D. The immeasurable Spirit is the all-inclusive compound Spirit typified by the compound ointment—Exo. 30:23-25; Phil. 1:19:

1. The immeasurable Spirit is the life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6.
2. The immeasurable Spirit is also the pneumatic Christ; the term pneumatic Christ refers to Christ as the Spirit—vv. 6, 17-18; Rom. 8:9-11.

E. The eternal life is mentioned three times in John 3—vv. 15-16, 36:

1. Eternal life is the divine life, the life of the eternal God; this life is eternal in time, space, essence, function, and power.
2. Eternal life is the essence of the Triune God becoming the element of the church, the bride; and the bride is the universal increase of Christ for the corporate expression of the Triune God.

WEEK 6 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Num. 21:8-9 Then Jehovah said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole; and if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

John 3:14 says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Here the Lord referred to what happened in Numbers 21:4-9. Numbers 21:5 says, "The people spoke against God and against Moses, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and there is no water; and our soul loathes this light bread." Here we see that the children of Israel complained and were rebellious. As a result, the Lord "sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died" (v. 6). Then the people came to Moses and confessed that they had sinned in speaking against Jehovah and against him. They asked Moses to pray that Jehovah would take away the serpents from them. When Moses prayed for the people, Jehovah said to him, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live" (v. 8). We are told that Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. Then "if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (v. 9). (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," p. 109)

This bronze serpent typifies Christ (John 3:14), and the pole typifies the cross (1 Pet. 2:24). In typology bronze, or brass, signifies judgment. The Hebrew word translated "looked at" in Numbers 21:9 may also be rendered "regarded," or "looked intently at." (Life-study of Numbers, p. 231)

Today's Reading

As descendants of Adam, we all have been "bitten" by the old serpent, the devil. Therefore, we are all serpentine beings with the poison of the old

serpent in our nature. In the sight of God, the entire fallen human race consists of poisonous serpents. Furthermore, all these serpents are dead. We as dead serpents need a substitute, someone with the form of a serpent but without the poisonous element of the serpent. This Substitute, of course, is Christ.

According to John 3:14, Christ became a bronze serpent.... He was a serpent in form, but He did not have the poisonous nature of a serpent. We, however, actually are serpentine, for in our fallen nature we are children of the old serpent, the devil (1 John 3:10). For this reason, in Matthew 12:34 the Lord Jesus called the Pharisees the "offspring of vipers." In Matthew 23:33 He called them serpents and a brood of vipers, the offspring of the most poisonous kind of serpents. The Lord was telling the Pharisees that they were little vipers....The devil is the old serpent (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), and sinners also are serpents, the offspring of vipers. Therefore, in the sight of God, in our fallen nature we are not merely sinful—we are serpentine. (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2,"The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," pp. 110, 131)

Based upon Romans 7 we say that Satan and sin are in the flesh. Romans 7 tells us that sin is in our flesh, and in Romans 7 sin is personified. This chapter shows that sin can deceive and kill people (v. 11) and that it can dwell in people and do things against their will (vv. 17, 20). It is quite alive (v. 9) and exceedingly active; so it must be the evil nature of Satan, the evil one, dwelling, acting, and working in fallen mankind. Sin in Romans 7 is a person. This person is the source of sin, the origin of sin. This sin who is Satan still remains in our flesh, where he lives, works, and moves, even after we have been saved. The sin in our flesh is a person, just as the divine life in our spirit is a person. This person who is our life is Christ (Col. 3:4), the embodiment of the Triune God. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 3,"God's New Testament Economy," pp. 146-147)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 43; Life-study of Numbers, msg. 31; CWWL, 1984, vol. 3,"God's New Testament Economy," ch. 3

WEEK 6 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.

It was not that the children of Israel wanted to sin, but rather, the serpent in them caused them to sin. In judging the children of Israel, God actually was judging the serpent; therefore, the one hung on the pole was actually the serpent. Man sinned, but the serpent received the judgment. This shows that the one who sinned was actually the serpent in man, that is, the devil. In God's eyes the serpent and the children of Israel were one. Therefore, God's judging the serpent on the pole was also His judging of the children of Israel.

We also need to see that ultimately a Substitute, not the children of Israel themselves, was judged by God. This Substitute, Christ, was judged by being identified with the people for whom He was substituted. The cross of Christ indicates two identifications: the people redeemed by Christ were identified with Satan, and Christ was identified with His redeemed people. (CWWL, 1960, vol. 1, "Synopsis of Numbers," p. 312)

Today's Reading

We must realize that we are such serpentine beings. We must also realize that Christ was made sin for us and died on the cross as a bronze serpent so that the serpentine nature within us might be judged. If we realize that we are sinful people, serpentine beings, and confess this, immediately this dear, incarnated One will become our sin offering and enter into us. Then we will have Him as eternal life. This is the way for us to partake of the incarnated God for our enjoyment. It is when we admit that we are serpentine that we are qualified to experience eternal life and enjoy Him.

John the Baptist preached repentance, and in the seven epistles to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 the Lord Jesus again and again tells us

to repent. This indicates that throughout our entire Christian life we need to repent. Daily we need to say, "Lord, I am serpentine. But I thank You, Lord, that You became the bronze serpent lifted up to be judged in my place. Lord, I confess that I am sinful. Even though You did not know sin, You were made sin for me, and You died on the cross to condemn sin. Now, Lord, I take You as my sin offering." Whenever we do this, He once again becomes our enjoyment. (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," p. 125)

The Greek word for repentance means to have a change of mind issuing in regret, to have a turn in purpose. Therefore, to repent, as taught in the Bible, is to have a change of mind. It is not to improve or reform oneself nor to forsake the evil and turn to the good, as people generally believe. Man's repentance is also his turning from all things to God Himself (Acts 26:20; 14:15b; 1 Thes. 1:9b). Originally man's mind was toward all things outside of God; hence, under its direction, all of man's behavior and actions were also against God. Real repentance should be a repentance unto God (Acts 20:21), a turning in reality from all things to God. (Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, pp. 45-47)

At the time the Lord Jesus spoke this word [in John 3:14] to Nicodemus, it is not likely that he understood it. Nicodemus surely did not regard himself as a serpent but as an ethical gentleman who came to the Lord Jesus for the purpose of receiving teachings about his behavior. However, in His word concerning the bronze serpent, the Lord Jesus appeared to be saying to Nicodemus, "You should not consider yourself a gentleman but realize instead that you are a serpent.... As your replacement, I will be lifted up in the form of a serpent." It is a great blessing for us to know that, as the fulfillment of the type of the bronze serpent, Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin to die on the cross as our replacement and substitute. (Life-study of Numbers, p. 232)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1960, vol. 1, "Synopsis of Numbers," ch. 26; Truth Lessons—Level One, vol. 3, lsn. 29; CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," ch. 8

WEEK 6 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that everyone who believes into Him would not perish, but would have eternal life.

29-30 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full. He must increase, but I must decrease.

Christians today appreciate John 3:16 very much, but not many of them understand 3:14. However, 3:16 is the issue of 3:14; that is, the receiving of eternal life is the issue of the uplifting of the bronze serpent. The Lord was telling Nicodemus that if he realized that he was serpentine and believed in the Lord Jesus as the bronze serpent lifted up as his Substitute, he would have eternal life. This is to be regenerated, to receive another life, the divine life....To have this new life is what it means to be born again.

Verse 16 begins with the word for. This indicates that 3:16 is an explanation of verses 14 and 15. It explains the fact that, in the sight of God, the Lord Jesus was lifted up as our Substitute to bear God's judgment for us so that we may look at Him and receive eternal life. Because in Adam we were bitten by the old serpent, we were dead. But now through Christ as the bronze serpent lifted up on the cross, we may receive eternal life, the life of God. This is the real manifestation of God's love to the world. (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," pp. 124, 128, 131)

Today's Reading

In chapter 3 of John we not only have the serpent; we also have the bride. In verse 29 John the Baptist said, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom."...The totality of all those who have been regenerated is the bride of Christ. We all are part of Christ's bride, and this bride is His

increase (v. 30). John's disciples were made jealous by the fact that so many of his followers were coming to the Lord Jesus. As part of his answer to his disciples, John the Baptist said concerning Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (v. 30). The increase in this verse is the bride in the previous verse, and the bride is a living composition of all the regenerated ones. This means that in this chapter regeneration is not only to bring the divine life into the believers but is also to make them the corporate bride for Christ's increase. As Adam was increased in Eve, so Christ is increased in His bride.

The intention of this chapter in the Gospel of John is to show us that this unlimited Christ must have a universal increase, and He is in the process of gaining this increase today. Wherever we go, Christ is present by the Spirit He gives without measure. Verse 34 says definitely, "He gives the Spirit not by measure." This is the Spirit He gives to His Body, the church. The Spirit given by Christ to His Body is immeasurable. Every one of the millions of persons who believes in the Lord Jesus has received the Spirit, the immeasurable Spirit. This immeasurable Spirit produces a universal increase for the unlimited Christ. I would call your attention to the three adjectives used in the previous sentence: immeasurable, universal, unlimited. I use the word immeasurable to describe the Spirit, the word universal to describe the increase, and the word unlimited to describe Christ. The unlimited Christ gives the immeasurable Spirit in order to produce a universal increase.

Christ and His bride, His increase, form a universal couple. In the last two chapters of the Bible, Revelation 21 and 22, we see this couple. The Lamb, Christ, is the Husband, and the New Jerusalem is the bride. In John 3 we have the serpent and the bride. Ultimately, in the book of Revelation we see that Satan as the old serpent will be entirely dealt with (20:2, 10) and that the bride of Christ as the New Jerusalem will be brought forth in full (21:2, 10-27). (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," pp. 131-133)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," ch. 9

WEEK 6 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 2:22 And Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; he will bruise you on the head, but you will bruise him on the heel.

God increased Adam with a wife....Eve was not a separate creation, having nothing to do with Adam. Rather, Eve was made from a part of Adam's being, from his rib [Gen. 2:22]. At first Adam was alone. Then God used Adam's rib to bring forth the increase of Adam. The result was a couple to produce a people for the fulfillment of God's purpose. Eve, therefore, is vital and crucial in fulfilling God's purpose. (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2,"The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," p. 136)

Today's Reading

In Genesis 3 the serpent visited the bride and succeeded in capturing her. Then through the woman he also gained the man. But God is greater, higher, and wiser than the serpent. In His judgment upon the serpent, God indicated that the woman would bring forth a seed to bruise the serpent's head...(v. 15). Furthermore, there is an indication in verse 21 that the seed of the woman would not only bruise the head of the serpent but also become righteousness to the very ones who were poisoned by him:"Jehovah God made coats of skin for Adam and for his wife and clothed them." These coats of skin typify Christ as righteousness for fallen man.

In Adam, the old serpent gained us for himself by biting us. Do you know what it means for the serpent to bite us? It means that he imparts the poison of his nature into us to make us his increase. Through the fall, the entire human race has become the increase of Satan. Do you know what you were before you were saved? You were a part of Satan's increase. No

matter what kind of person we were before we were saved, we were all part of the increase of that evil one. When the serpent bit Adam in the garden of Eden, he gained the entire human race, and all mankind became his increase. No doubt, after he had bitten man in Genesis 3, Satan, the old serpent, was happy. He may have laughed and said to himself, "I have gained man for myself. The man created by God has now become my increase."

But the Lord Jesus came to be the bronze serpent. This means that He became sin for us. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf." Sin came from Satan, entered into man (Rom. 5:12), and made man not only a sinner but sin itself under God's judgment. Hence, when Christ became a man in flesh (John 1:14), He was made sin (not sinful) on our behalf to be judged by God (Rom. 8:3).

Christ's death on the cross opened the way for us sinners to believe into Him and receive Him. Now we can receive His life. It was through His redemption that He imparted Himself into us to make us His increase. In this way we who were once the increase of Satan have become the increase of Christ. In the past we were part of Satan's increase, but we praise the Lord that we have become part of the increase of Christ.

This story continues until we come to the end of the Bible. In the book of Revelation we have the final word concerning the serpent and the bride. In chapter 19 we see that the bride is ready for the marriage of the Lamb (v. 7). Immediately after the marriage dinner, this universal couple will fight against Satan and his followers, the beast and the false prophet. Then Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss, where he will be imprisoned for a thousand years. Following that, Satan will rebel once more and ultimately will be cast into the lake of fire. Then the universe will be thoroughly cleared up, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. For eternity there will be a universal couple: Christ as the Husband and the church as His bride. (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," pp. 136-139)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," ch. 10

WEEK 6 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

John 7:37-39 ...Jesus...cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. But this He said concerning the Spirit...

1 Cor. 15:45 ...The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

When Adam was bitten by the serpent, we all became serpents. Christ has come to be our replacement, and we have believed into Him. At this point we need to ask an interesting question: Are we who believe in Christ still serpents? The answer to this question depends on whether, in our experience, we are in John 3, which speaks of the bronze serpent, or in John 7, which speaks of coming to the Lord and drinking (vv. 37-39). If we are drinking of the living water, then we are no longer serpents. But if we are short of the living water, then we are contending serpents.

Are [you] dry, lacking the life-giving Spirit, or are [you] drinking of the Spirit? Apart from the life-giving Spirit, we are contending serpents. In the church life we may be either contending serpents or life-giving-Spirit drinkers. May we all be those who drink of the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit! (Life-study of Numbers, pp. 232-233)

Today's Reading

In our actual daily living we may not be a newborn person. We may still be an old person, even perhaps a good, moral, ethical, religious, God-fearing "Nicodemus." I say this because we may not live, walk, behave, and have our being in the Spirit. Instead of living by the Spirit, we may live by ethics or religion. According to our natural birth, all of us automatically live by our serpentine being. This is to live according to good and evil. With the tree of knowledge in the garden of Eden there was not only the knowledge of evil but also the knowledge of good. But with the tree of life there is nothing but life. We should not think that morality is a matter of life.

Morality is good, but it is not life.

In Galatians 2:20 Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." Here Paul is saying that he has been terminated and that now Christ lives in him. If Christ were not the living Spirit, how could He live in us? This would be impossible. It is important for us to realize that as believers in Christ not only do we have two natures—the old nature and the new nature—but we also have two beings, two persons. Although we have been regenerated and thereby have a new person, most of us continue to live by the old person, even in doing so-called spiritual things. We may even endeavor to live the church life by the old man. This is a serious problem.

Often I have said, "Lord, forgive me for not living You adequately today. In my family life and in my fellowship with the brothers, I am short of what You require." I have seen that I may be religious, ethical, moral, and scriptural—all without Christ....But we all need to be able to say with Paul that we have been crucified and that Christ now lives in us. We should be able to declare this with assurance, not as a doctrine but as our experience day by day. When we have this kind of living, then in reality we are serpentine beings in the process of transformation into the bride of Christ. This is the transformation revealed in the New Testament. As we are transformed from serpentine beings into Christ's being, we become His increase, His bride. The consummation of this bride will be the New Jerusalem as the tabernacle of God and the wife of the Lamb.

I urge you to bring this matter to the Lord in a serious way and pray, "Lord, show me by what person I am living. Am I living by my old person or by my new person? Am I living by the old nature or by the new nature? Lord, am I living You? Am I practicing being one spirit with You?" We all need to pray to the Lord like this. May the Lord have mercy on us that we may learn to live by our regenerated being. (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," pp. 140-144)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," chs. 7,10-11

WEEK 6 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

John 3:30-31 He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is from the earth is of the earth and speaks out of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

35 The Father loves the Son and has given all into His hand.

In chapter 3 of John we can see at least nine aspects of the unlimited Christ. First, the unlimited Christ is from above, that is, from the heavens ...(v. 31). At that time Christ was in the flesh, and the flesh is from earth. But within Him there was a part that was from above, from the heavens. The unlimited Christ not only comes from above but also is above all. The One who comes from the heavens is above all. Even though He was on earth, under the heavens, yet He was above all. Because Christ is all-inclusive, unlimited, and universal, He is above all. While He was on earth, He was still in the heavens (v. 13). (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2, "The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," pp. 154-155)

Today's Reading

John 3:35 says not only that the Father loves the Son but also that the Father has given all things into the Son's hand. The Father has given all things, including us, to Christ. The entire universe has been given to the Christ whom God the Father loves. He is the unique recipient of the Father's love and gifts.... If we would enjoy God's love, we need to be in Christ. Likewise, if we would participate in what God gives, we also need to be in Christ. Paul says that all things are ours and that we are Christ's (1 Cor. 3:21-23).

This One who is from above, who is above all, who is loved by the Father, and who has been given all things by the Father, has also been sent by God....Christ is God's Ambassador. He was sent by God and from God.

According to John 3:34, Christ as the One sent by God speaks the

words of God....First, the Lord indicated that for giving life, He would become the Spirit. Then He said that the words He speaks are spirit and life. This shows that His spoken words are the embodiment of the life-giving Spirit. He is now the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, and the Spirit is embodied in His words. When we receive His words by exercising our spirit, we receive the Spirit who is life.

John 3:34 says of the unlimited Christ,"He gives the Spirit not by measure."...He gives us the Spirit by speaking the word of God....If we handle the Word of God rightly and digest it in our spirit, we will be filled with the Spirit of God. The unique way for us to become the universal increase of the unlimited Christ is to receive the Spirit and be filled with the Spirit. The more we have of the Spirit, the more we will be Christ's increase. This increase begins with our regeneration, and it consummates with our being filled with the immeasurable Spirit.

We need to learn not merely to read the Word or study it but also to eat it. We must learn to receive the Word of God into our spirit and digest it there. This is to enjoy the Word of God in our spirit. Through the Word we receive the Spirit, and when we have the Spirit, we have eternal life....The unlimited Christ is the One who gives eternal life to His believers [vv. 15-16].

The unlimited Christ has the bride as His universal increase [vv. 29-30]. This universal increase, Christ's bride, is the aggregate of all those who have been regenerated. It is a living composition of all regenerated human beings. This is the bride as the universal increase of the unlimited Christ. This is possible only as we receive the rhema of God so that we may be filled with the life-giving Spirit. If we receive the word and are filled with the Spirit, we will enjoy eternal life. The result is that we become the bride, the universal increase of the unlimited Christ. (CWWL, 1982, vol. 2,"The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," pp. 155-156, 161-163)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1982, vol. 2,"The Fulfillment of the Tabernacle and the Offerings in the Writings of John," chs. 12-13

<< WEEK 6 — HYMN >>

Hymns, #1089 Lamb of God so pure and spotless

Praise of the Lord—His Death

1

**Lamb of God so pure and spotless,
Lamb of God for sinners slain.
Thy shed blood has wrought redemption,
Cleansing us from every stain.
Lamb redeeming, Lamb redeeming,
Bearing all our sins away,
Bearing all our sins away!**

2

**Brazen serpent, to Thee looking,
Son of Man, uplifted high.
Thou didst bear the flesh of sin in
Likeness on the cross to die.
Old creation's termination;
Finished, Satan and the world,
Finished Satan and the world!**

3

**Grain of wheat, so small and lowly,
Without death abides alone;
Life divine enclosed within it,
Into death it must be sown.
Life releasing, Christ increasing,**

**Many grains to birth to bring,
Many grains to birth to bring!**

4

**Lamb of God—our sin's redemption,
Brazen serpent—Satan's end,
Grain of wheat—life's reproduction,
Now with many grains we blend.**

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

**What an all-inclusive death,
What an all-inclusive death!**

