

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophecy Message Three : The All-inclusive, Extensive Christ Having the Preeminence in Things

I. Overview:

God's intention in His administration is to give Christ the preeminence in all things, to cause Christ to have the first place in everything. Under His heavenly rule God is using the environment to make Christ the centrality and the universality to us. Christ has the first place, the preeminence, in God's economy; Christ is preeminent in the triune Godhead; Christ is preeminent in God's exaltation of Him. Both in the old creation and in the new creation, both in the universe and in the church, Christ occupies the first place, the place of preeminence. Christ should have the preeminence in our personal universe; Christ should have the preeminence in our love, Christ should have the preeminence in our tripartite being, Christ should have the preeminence in our spiritual experiences, Christ should have the preeminence in our human living.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Why are we not simple due to there being two aspects in us?

On the one hand, we, the believers in Christ, are God's elect; we need Christ to be wrought into us as our centrality and universality. On the other hand, we are parts of the old creation. However, the old creation in us is sometimes a beast, and at other times an Antichrist seeking to defeat God's elect. We need to be a Daniel and pray that Christ will come in to terminate everything in us that is natural and part of the old creation.

B. Expound the book of Daniel covers three crucial matters.

God's heavenly rule, the preeminence of Christ, and the portion of God's people. As those who have been chosen by God to be His people for Christ's preeminence, we are under God's heavenly rule. This is especially true of the things in our personal universe. In our universe many things happen day by day for the purpose of making Christ preeminent. We need to realize this and be submissive to God's heavenly rule.

Day 2 —

A. Explain in God's new creation in resurrection, Christ is the Firstborn from the dead. Christ is the first in resurrection as the Head of the Body, having the first place in the church. Jesus was the first in resurrection that involved divinity. Jesus, once resurrected, will live forever; He will never die again. Therefore, He has the preeminence. Christ as the firstfruits of resurrection is the Firstborn from the dead to be the Firstborn among many brothers and the Head of the Body.

B. Expound the preeminence of Christ in God's exaltation.

Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God in the third heaven. It took a tremendous amount of power to land a man on the moon, but that was very insignificant compared to the power it took to raise Christ from the dead and seat Him at the right hand of God. In God's exaltation of Christ, He has been given to be Head over all things. God has also given Him the name above every name. Even the entire earth is under His ruling.

Day 3 —

A. Expound the significance of both the old and the new creation Christ being the first.

In both the old and the new creation Christ is the first and occupies the first place, the place of preeminence. In the Bible to be the first is to be all. Since Christ is the first both in the universe and in the church, He must be all things in the universe and the church. As the first, He is all.

B. Explain what we will be if we are occupied with the revelation of Christ in Colossians.

If we are occupied with the revelation of Christ in Colossians, we will be revolutionized, reconstituted, and transformed. When we see this vision, we will hate everything that issues from the self. We will despise not only our hatred, but even our love, kindness, and patience. As this vision causes us to hate the self, it will constrain us to love the Lord.

Day 4 —

A. State what the cause of the desolation of God's temple in the Old Testament was.

Apparently it was because the children of Israel were evil and sinful. However, the intrinsic reason for the desolation was that Christ was not exalted by God's people; they did not give Him the preeminence, the first place,

in everything. Actually their failure to give Christ the preeminence, their failure to honor and exalt Him, was the cause of being desolate. The desolation of the church today always issues from the negligence of the experience of Christ.

B. Expound the way of restoration being the exaltation of Christ.

Whenever God's people exalt Christ, there will be restoration and revival. If a church is somewhat cold and old and desires revival, that church should give Christ the preeminence, recognizing Him as the One who is at the right hand of God. Whoever calls upon Him as such a One will be restored and revived. In our private life, married life, family life, and church life, Christ needs to be at the right hand of God.

Day 5 —

A. Explain how Christ become everything to us in our daily living.

The Christ who indwells us is not a small, limited Christ. Such a Christ now dwells in us and is waiting for the opportunity to spread Himself throughout our being. We need to live by Him moment by moment. All the room within us should be given over to the all-inclusive Christ who dwells in us to be our hope of glory. Once we see this vision, the culture within us will be replaced by Christ.

B. Why do we say that Christ is both objective and subjective to us?

We know Christ both according to doctrine and according to experience. On the one hand, our Christ is on the throne in the heavens. On the other hand, He is in our spirit. We worship the enthroned Christ in the heavens, but we experience, enjoy, and partake of the indwelling Christ in our spirit. We are one with Him in a very subjective way.

Day 6 —

A. Explain the matter of the living of the saints in union with Christ.

In 3:12-15 he speaks of the necessity of being ruled by the peace of Christ, and in verses 16 and 17, of the word of Christ dwelling in us richly. To live in union with Christ means that in our living we are not apart from Christ. In John 15 the Lord tells us to abide in Him, for apart from Him we can do nothing.

B. Expound God desires that Christ be expressed through human life.

We see this in Colossians 3:18—4:1, a sister passage to Ephesians 5:22—6:9, regarding the believers' ethical relationships. In Colossians the emphasis is that we should hold Christ as our Head and take Him as our life by having His rich word dwelling in us, that the highest ethical relationships, issuing not from our natural life but from Christ as our life, may be realized for His expression.

III. Conclusion:

Colossians reveals that if we want to escape the influence of philosophy and religion in our culture, we must give Christ the preeminence in all things. In Greek, preeminence means the first and has given the highest honor, not only in its status, but also in status that is worthy of His dignity, transcendence, and nobility. In the Old Testament, whenever God's temple was desolate, apparently it was because the children of Israel were evil and sinful. However, the intrinsic reason for the desolation was that Christ was not exalted by God's people; they did not give Him the preeminence, the first place, in everything. Today, the principle does not change, and the reason why the church is desolate is that the believers neglected the experience of Christ. If we desire the church or individual revival, then the church should give Christ the preeminence, recognizing Him as the One who is at the right hand of God in our private life, married life, family life, and church life.