

Week Twelve

Life and Blessing under the Government of God

JL Hymns: 12, 796 (tune of 495)

Scripture Reading: Deut. 30:15-20; Psa. 36:9a; 133:1, 3; Ezek. 34:26;
Eph. 1:3

Outline

Day 1

- I. In order to extend their days in the good land, the children of Israel were required to live under the government of God, doing all that God had commanded them through Moses—Deut. 30:15-20; 3:23-28; 4:1-24.
- II. Moses set before the children of Israel life and death and charged them to choose life—30:15, 19-20:
 - A. With God is the fountain of life—Psa. 36:9a:
 1. God wants us to take Him as the fountain, the source, of our life and our being—v. 9a.
 2. The divine life may be considered the first and the basic attribute of God—Eph. 4:18; John 5:26; 1 John 5:11-12; Rom. 8:2:
 - a. According to the divine and eternal nature of the life of God, God's life is the unique life; only the life of God can be counted as life—John 1:4; 10:10b; 11:25; 14:6.
 - b. Life is the content of God and the flowing out of God; God's content is God's being, and God's flowing out is the impartation of Himself as life to us—Eph. 4:18; Rev. 22:1.
 - c. Life is the Triune God dispensed into us and living in us—Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11.

Day 2

B. In Genesis 2:9, 16-17 we see two choices before man—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:

1. The tree of life signifies the Triune God embodied in Christ as life to man in the form of food—v. 9; Rev. 2:7; John 1:4; 14:6a; 10:10b; 6:35, 57, 63.
2. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil signifies Satan as the source of death—Heb. 2:14.
3. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represent two principles of living—the principle of life (dependence on God) and the principle of right and wrong (independence from God)—Gen. 2:9, 16-17; 4:3-4; Jer. 17:5; John 15:5.
4. These two trees are working within us as two principles of living.
5. The Gospel of John reveals that the tree of life is versus the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—4:10-14, 20-21, 23-24; 9:1-3; 11:20-27.
6. In our Christian life and church life, we should discern matters not according to right and wrong but according to life and death—2 Cor. 11:3; Gen. 2:9, 16-17.

Day 3

C. By the resurrection life of Christ in our spirit, we can be victorious over the attack of death upon the church—Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:24; 2 Tim. 1:10:

1. Death is the characteristic of Satan's work; the ultimate goal of his work is to saturate man with death—Heb. 2:14-15.
2. Matthew 16:18 shows us from what source the attack upon the church will come—"the gates of Hades," that is, death:
 - a. Satan's special object is to spread death within the church, and his greatest fear with regard to the church is her resistance to his power of death—Rev. 2:8, 10-11.
 - b. The church that is built upon "this rock" can discern between death and life, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against the church—Matt. 16:18.
3. If we would overcome the attack of death, we need to know Christ as the First and the Last and the living One—the One who became dead and lived again and the One who has the keys of death and of Hades—Rev. 1:17-18; 2:8.

Day 4

III. Moses set before the children of Israel blessing and curse—Deut. 30:19:

- A. In Genesis 1:26-28 God blessed man to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it, because God saw on earth a living creature bearing His image and having His dominion.**
- B. In order to be a blessing to His chosen people, God must have a kingdom, a realm, a sphere, on earth to exercise His administration under His full, divine authority—Matt. 6:10; Col. 1:13:**
 - 1. Without such a kingdom, God does not have a realm in which to accomplish His purpose.
 - 2. Once there is a kingdom, the kingdom becomes the realm, the sphere, for God to exercise Himself to bless us—Rev. 11:15.
 - 3. We all want to receive blessing, but we may not realize that the blessing requires a sphere of God's authority, a sphere under God's administration.

Day 5

- C. God “has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ”—Eph. 1:3:**
 - 1. God has blessed us with His speaking; all the speaking in verses 4 through 14 is God's blessing.
 - 2. Every indicates the all-inclusiveness of God's blessings.
 - 3. Spiritual indicates the relationship of God's blessings to the Holy Spirit:
 - a. All the blessings with which God has blessed us are related to the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The Spirit of God is not only the channel but also the reality of God's blessings.
 - c. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are all related to the blessings bestowed upon us—vv. 4-14; 3:16-17; 4:4-6.
 - d. God's blessing is mainly the dispensing of the Triune God into us—2 Cor. 13:14.
 - 4. Heavenlies indicates not only the heavenly place but also the heavenly

nature, state, characteristic, and atmosphere of the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us:

- a. These blessings are from the heavens, having a heavenly nature, heavenly state, heavenly characteristic, and heavenly atmosphere.
 - b. The believers in Christ are enjoying on earth these blessings, which are spiritual as well as heavenly.
5. In Christ indicates that Christ is the virtue, the instrument, and the sphere in which God has blessed us:
- a. In Christ God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens.
 - b. We praise the Lord that we are in Christ, who is the virtue, the instrument, the sphere, and the channel in which we have been blessed.
6. Since the nature of these blessings is spiritual, we need to exercise our spirit to realize, experience, and partake of them in our spirit—Rom. 8:4.

Day 6

D. God's blessing is intrinsically related to oneness—Psa. 133:1, 3:

1. The unity spoken of in verse 1 is a picture of the genuine oneness in the New Testament; this oneness is the processed and consummated Triune God mingled with the believers in Christ—John 17:21-23.
2. There in Psalm 133:3 refers to the oneness upon which the Lord commands the blessing—life forever.

E. Through His shepherding in His recovery by life, the Lord brings us into the enjoyment of His blessing and causes us to become a source of blessing under the showers of blessing—Ezek. 34:23, 26-27a, 29; Zech. 10:1:

1. First, we ourselves enjoy the Lord's blessing, and then the Lord will cause us to become a source of blessing to others so that they may be supplied—Ezek. 34:26.
2. God will cause the showers of blessing to come down in season—Zech. 10:1.

F. The greatest blessing that we receive from the Lord is not what the Lord gives us; it is what the Lord makes us, what He enables us to become—Rev. 3:12:

1. The Lord's promise in Revelation 3:12 is to make the overcomer a pillar in the temple of God:

- a. Becoming a pillar in the temple of God involves transformation and building—1:22; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16.
- b. It is a great blessing for the Lord to transform us and build us into His temple; this involves our being, what we are in Christ—Col. 1:27-28.
- 2. If we see this vision, we will realize that in the church life the Lord's intention is not to do something outside of us but to transform us into another kind of being for His corporate expression—Rev. 21:10-11.
- 3. In the church life we should not expect outward blessings; rather, it is crucial for us to realize that the Lord's blessing is to transform us into precious material and then build us into His dwelling place—Eph. 2:21-22.
- G. The normal life of a Christian is a life of blessing, and the normal work of a Christian is a work of blessing—Num. 6:23-27; Matt. 5:3-11; 24:46; John 20:29; Gal. 3:14; 2 Cor. 9:6; Rom. 15:29.**
- H. We must realize that in our work, in our Christian life, and in our church life, everything depends on the Lord's blessing—Eph. 1:3; Mal. 3:10.**
- I. We need to pray, "Lord, please give us a vision that we may see the meaning of Your blessing, and have mercy on us that, unhindered, we may be able to receive Your blessing."**

WEEK 12 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Deut. 30:15-16 ...I have put before you today life and good....If you obey the commandments of Jehovah your God, which I am commanding you today, to love Jehovah your God and walk in His ways and keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, then you will live and multiply, and Jehovah your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to possess.

The children of Israel not only enjoyed the oracle of God; they were also saturated with the fatness of God's house (Psa. 36:8). God's house refers to the temple, which was the continuation and enlargement of the Tent of Meeting. In Psalm 36:9 the psalmist goes on to say, "With You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light." This verse is also related to the temple. Only in the temple could God's people enjoy the fountain of life. Furthermore, it was in the temple that they could see light in God's light. This is an...indication that the essence of the oneness of God's children is life and light. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," p. 247)

According to God's economy, the one who trusts in God is like a tree planted by water, signifying God as the fountain of living waters (Jer. 17:7-8; 2:13a). The tree grows beside the river by absorbing all the riches of the water into it. This is a picture of God's dispensing. In order to receive the divine dispensing, we as the trees must absorb God as the water. (Life-study of Jeremiah, p. 111)

Today's Reading

Life (zoe) is eternal. Eternal means "immortal." First John 1:2 says, "The life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us." Then Psalm 90:2b says, "Indeed from eternity to eternity, You are God." Strictly speaking, all lives that are mortal are not life. The real life is immortal and

eternal, and this real life is God Himself because God is from eternity to eternity. God is eternal, so only God Himself is the real life.

Life is God's content and God's flowing out. God's content is God's being, so life is God's inner being (Eph. 4:18a). God's flowing out is the impartation of Himself as life to us. In Revelation 22:1 we see the river of water of life flowing out from the throne of God. This is God's flowing out. Life is God's content, His inner being, and life is God flowing out into us and being imparted into our being.

Life is Christ (John 14:6a; Col. 3:4a; 1 John 5:12a). Christ is the embodiment of God, who is life. Colossians 2:9 says that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily. God as life is embodied in Christ, and Christ is the expression of God. John 1:18 says that no one has ever seen God, but the only begotten Son has declared Him. Then Hebrews 1:3 shows that Christ is the effulgence of God's glory. This means that Christ is the expression of God, who is life.

Finally, we need to point out that life is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the reality of Christ (John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:45b). The Son is the embodiment of the Father, and the Spirit is the reality of the Son. Romans 8:2a uses the term the Spirit of life, and 2 Corinthians 3:6b says that the Spirit gives life. Thus, the Holy Spirit today is the Spirit of life who gives life to us. We must stress that the Spirit in the New Testament has two aspects. On the one hand, He is the Spirit of power; on the other hand, He is the Spirit of life.

Life is the Triune God dispensed into us and living in us. The Father is the source, the Son is the course, and the Spirit is the flow. The Triune God is dispensed into us in His Divine Trinity and is now living within us. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 1, "Basic Lessons on Life," pp. 517-518)

Further Reading: Life-study of Deuteronomy, msgs. 1-4; CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," ch. 2; Life-study of Jeremiah, msg. 16; CWWN, vol. 37, ch. 2

WEEK 12 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Deut. 30:19-20 ...I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your seed may live, in loving Jehovah your God by listening to His voice and holding fast to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, that you may dwell upon the land which Jehovah swore to your fathers...

God wanted man to depend on Him for his living in the same way that he was dependent upon food for his living. "For in Him we live and move and are" (Acts 17:28). Thus, God uses two trees to speak to us in a parable. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are a kind of parable. They show us that man has two different kinds of food and can live either by life or by the knowledge of good and evil, that is, the knowledge of right and wrong....The two trees were put there to show us that man, especially a Christian, can live on earth according to two different principles. Man can live according to the principle of right and wrong or according to the principle of life. Some Christians take the principle of right and wrong as the standard for their living, while other Christians take the principle of life as their standard for living. (Watchman Nee, Two Principles of Living (booklet), pp. 2-3)

Today's Reading

[We need] to see these two principles for living. What does it mean when a person lives according to right and wrong? What does it mean when a person lives according to life? Many people only have the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in their lives. Other people have the tree of life in their lives. Some have both trees. The Word of God tells us, however, that he who eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil shall surely die, while he who eats of the tree of life shall live.

If our conduct is controlled by the principle of right and wrong, then we ask if something is right or wrong whenever we have to make a decision.

Would it be good to do this, or would it be evil? When we ask whether it is good, we are, in effect, asking ourselves, “Am I right to do this or not?” Many people consider much whether something is good or evil. They consider whether they can or cannot do a certain thing. They ask, “Is this right or wrong?” As they carefully consider a certain matter, being Christians, they determine whether it is good and right to do that thing. By taking care to decide whether or not something is good and right, they consider themselves to be good Christians.

God’s Word says, “The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17). At the most, this practice is only a discerning of good from evil. At best, it is merely choosing and rejecting—choosing good and rejecting evil. This is...the Old Testament, the law, worldly religions, human morality, and human ethics, but it is not Christianity.

Christianity is life,...not a matter of asking whether something is right or wrong...[but] of checking with the life inside us whenever we do something. What does the new life which God has given us tell us inwardly about this matter?...What does our inner life say? If the life is strong and active within us, we can do this; if the life is cold and retreating within us, we should not. Our principle for living is inward instead of outward. The standard of Christian living does not only deal with evil things but also with good and right things. Many matters are right according to human standards, but the divine standard pronounces them wrong because they lack the divine life....Decisions should be made according to God’s life as it rises up or recedes within us....Do we feel joyful inwardly about this matter? Do we have spiritual happiness and peace? These are the matters that decide our spiritual path. (Two Principles of Living (booklet), pp. 2-3, 6-9, 13-15)

Further Reading: Life-study of Deuteronomy, msgs. 9, 24, 27, 30; CWWN, vol. 56, “Two Principles of Living,” pp. 418-432; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 265; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 3, “The God-man Living,” ch. 14

WEEK 12 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Rev. 1:18 And the living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am living forever and ever; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

The riches of God are in Christ, and the riches of Christ are manifested through the church....Since the church is the testimony of the riches of God, its characteristics must be the characteristics of Christ....The characteristics of Christ are encapsulated in the words He said when He raised Lazarus from the dead, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25)....Since the church is the vessel of Christ on earth, it should express this life and resurrection. God intends for the church to manifest the life of Christ. Hence, the church must be full of life.

The main goal of the Lord coming to earth is for man to have life (John 10:10), that is, for man to receive God's life....God's Christ is life, and God's Christ is resurrection, and the church is the vessel of this life and resurrection. (CWWN, vol. 44, pp. 881-882)

Today's Reading

Since God's goal today is the church, Satan's attacks are directed specifically against the church. Satan does not necessarily stumble Christians or the church with the enticement of sin or the world, because these things are too obvious....The ultimate weapon Satan uses to attack the church is death. Death is not easily identifiable; it can creep secretly into the church. This does not mean that Satan will not use the world and sin to attack the church. It means that Satan can use refined and moral things, not just filthy and treacherous sins to attack Christians. Many refined and moral things are filled with death, and Satan can easily utilize these deadly things to attack the church.

Matthew 16:18 says that the foundation of the Lord's church is Christ

the Rock, and the gates of Hades cannot prevail against this church. Hades is death....The only reason that death cannot prevail over the church is that the church is built upon Christ the Rock....If the church is built on Christ the Rock, it will distinguish between death and life, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

Romans 8:10 is on the body and the spirit, while John 12 is on the soul, both the preserving and the losing of the soul....Everything that issues from the body or from the soul results in death, which is Hades, whereas everything that issues from the spirit results in life. A man may be very talkative; he may be very wordy and may love to speak vain and improper words. A man also may be clear in logic and excellent in eloquence. All these things are but the products of the flesh, the soul, and the natural life. None of them is of the spirit or of Christ. Hence, there is no life; there is only death. A Christian should not ask whether a thing is good or evil but should ask from where a thing originates. Does it originate from the natural life, the flesh, the soul, or does it originate from the spirit? Of all the things that a Christian possesses, only those that originate from the spirit are of life, and only they can give others life. Nothing else—no matter how good, profitable, or nice—gives life.

The church does not need good doctrines, good theology, or wonderful expositions. The church needs life, the resurrection life of Christ. No doctrine, idea, theology, or exposition can replace the life of Christ. Only the life of Christ and that which issues from it will prevail against the gates of Hades. Everything else is just disguised forms of death and cannot withstand the attacks of Satan. May the Lord be merciful to us, and may He keep us from touching death or bringing death into the church. May God fill the church with life, and may Satan find no opening to attack the church. (CWWN vol. 44, pp. 882-885)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 44, chs. 113-114

WEEK 12 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Deut. 30:19 ...I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your seed may live.

Gen. 1:28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion...

God blessed man to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and conquer it (Gen. 1:28)....God is rich and God is rich in blessing, but before the creation of man there was no object to receive His blessing in full....According to the record of Genesis 1, God did not begin to bless until the time when the living creatures came into being (Gen. 1:22). Yet, only the human life is up to the standard to receive God's blessing in full. After God created man, He was able to see on earth a living creature bearing His image and having His dominion. Immediately God bestowed His full blessing upon man. (Life-study of Genesis, p. 105)

Today's Reading

If we are to receive God's blessing, we need to meet the qualifications..., [which] are image and dominion. If there is the image of God with God's dominion in your home, you can be assured that the blessing of God will be there....God's blessing always follows His expression and His representation.

God's blessing is always with the priesthood and the kingship....The priesthood is for God's image; the kingship is for God's dominion. As long as we exercise the priesthood to contact God, to behold God and to reflect the image of glory, we have the kingship. God's blessing follows immediately.

The blessing is fruit-bearing, increase, multiplication, and the filling of the earth....God...created a man in His image, giving him authority to have dominion for the Almighty on earth. This man was ready for God's blessing. God's blessing was to enable this man to be fruitful. One would become ten,

ten would become one hundred, one hundred would become a thousand, a thousand would become a hundred thousand, a hundred thousand would become a million, and a million would become a billion, until the whole earth was filled with beautiful faces expressing God and representing God.

How much God is able to bless us depends on how much we express Him and represent Him. If we express Him and represent Him in an adequate way, we will surely have His full blessing in multiplication and fruit-bearing. (Life-study of Genesis, pp. 105-107)

We must see that the Lord withholds no good thing from us. If the work is not going well, if the brothers and sisters are in a poor condition, or if the number of saved ones is not increasing, we should not use the environment or certain people as an excuse. We cannot blame the brothers. I am afraid that the real reason lies with our harboring of some frustrations to the blessing. If the Lord can get through in us, the Lord's blessing will be greater than our capacity. Once God said to the Israelites, "Prove Me, if you will, by this,...whether I will open to you the windows of heaven and pour out blessing for you until there is no room for it" (Mal 3:10). God is still saying this today. The normal life of a Christian is a life of blessing, and the normal work of a Christian is a work of blessing. If we do not receive blessing, we should say, "Lord, perhaps I am the problem." (Expecting the Lord's Blessing (booklet), pp. 7-8)

The principle of God's blessing is also seen in the case of Naomi in the book of Ruth....Since Naomi was humbled and subdued under God's judging hand, God's blessing was brought in....This case shows that God's heart is to bless, but man's questionable condition requires God's judging hand first....Whoever is willing to judge and condemn himself under God's judging will meet grace and receive blessing. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "The Living God and the God of Resurrection," pp. 46-47)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msg. 9; CWWL, 1957, vol. 3, "The Living God and the God of Resurrection," ch. 6; CWWN, vol. 56, "Expecting the Lord's Blessing," pp. 435-446

WEEK 12 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

Rom. 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

The praise in Ephesians 1:3 is deep and profound, encompassing the entire New Testament economy. Here we have not only creation, indicated by the title God, but also incarnation, indicated by the title the God of our Lord Jesus Christ....In the incarnation He is the Father to impart His life to all His sons....The highest praise to God says that our God the Creator became a man and that our God is also the life-imparting Father....Whatever Christ has attained and obtained is transmitted to the church.

The title Our Lord Jesus Christ is rich in meaning. Lord signifies Christ's lordship, Jesus signifies His humanity to be our Redeemer and Savior, and Christ signifies that He is God's anointed One. This is a further indication that 1:3 is the top praise, the highest well-speaking of God. We all need to speak well concerning God in this way: in the way of creation, incarnation, impartation of life, and transmission, with redemption, the Redeemer, the Savior, and the anointed One to accomplish God's eternal purpose. (Life-study of Ephesians, pp. 17-18)

Today's Reading

God has blessed us with His good, fine, and fair speakings. Every such speaking is a blessing to us. Ephesians 1:4 through 14 are an account of such speakings, such blessings. The word every [in 1:3] indicates the all-inclusiveness of God's blessings. It includes all, with no exception.

All these blessings are spiritual. This indicates the relationship of God's blessings to the Holy Spirit. Being spiritual, all the blessings with which God has blessed us are related to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is not only the channel, but also the reality, of God's blessings. In this verse,

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are all related to the blessings bestowed upon us....God's blessing is mainly the dispensation of the Triune God into us.

Heavenlies here indicates not only the heavenly place, but also the heavenly nature, state, characteristic, and atmosphere of the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us. They are from the heavens with a heavenly nature, heavenly state, heavenly characteristic, and heavenly atmosphere. The believers in Christ are enjoying on earth these heavenly blessings. They are heavenly as well as spiritual....The blessings bestowed upon us are of God the Father, in God the Son, through God the Spirit, and in the heavenlies.

Finally, all these spiritual blessings are in Christ. Christ is the virtue, the instrument, and the sphere in which God has blessed us. Outside of Christ, without Christ, God has nothing to do with us. But in Christ He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. If we are in ourselves, we are through with God's blessing. Hallelujah, we are in Christ, who is the sphere, the channel, the instrument, and the virtue in which we have been blessed! (Life-study of Ephesians, pp. 21-22)

If these blessings were physical, material blessings, they would need to be enjoyed and experienced by us in our physical body. Likewise, if they were psychological blessings, we could realize them by exercising our soul—our mind, emotion, and will. However, these are spiritual blessings, the blessings of the Holy Spirit. Since the nature of all these blessings is spiritual, we need to exercise our spirit to realize, enjoy, and partake of them in our spirit. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 2, "The Divine Spirit with the Human Spirit in the Epistles," p. 305)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 2; CWWL, 1966, vol. 2, "The Divine Spirit with the Human Spirit in the Epistles," ch. 7

WEEK 12 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 133:1-3 ...How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity! It is like the fine oil upon the head that ran down...; like the dew...that came down upon the mountains of Zion. For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: Life forever.

Ezek. 34:26 ...I will make them...a blessing, and I will cause the showers to come down in their season; there will be showers of blessing.

Psalm 133 is the praise of a saint, in his going up to Zion, concerning Jehovah's commanded blessing on brothers who dwell in oneness. When Zion is built up and when God is resting there and dwelling in Jerusalem,...we have a place where we can gather and where we can dwell together in oneness. How good and how pleasant this is! (Psa. 133:1, footnote 1)

The eternal life of God (John 3:16; Eph. 4:18)...is commanded by God as a blessing to those who dwell together in oneness in the church life...Psalm 133 typifies the church living—the highest living, a living in which the brothers dwell together in oneness. Such a living causes God to come in to bless us with the anointing Spirit, the watering grace, and the eternal life. (Psa. 133:3, footnote 3)

Today's Reading

[In Ezekiel 34:26] the Lord promised not only that His people would receive His blessing but also that He would make them a blessing....First, we ourselves will enjoy the Lord's blessing, and then He will cause us to become a source of blessing to others so that they may be supplied.

The Lord promises that there will be "showers of blessing"...Many times in the meetings of the local churches we sense that something is not only flowing but also coming down like a shower. Sometimes even at home after the meeting, we have the sense that the showers of blessing are still coming down upon us. This is the strongest sign that the Lord's blessing is

upon the local church. He sends us showers of blessing in season, so timely. (Life-study of Ezekiel, pp. 183-184)

The Lord's promise in Revelation 3:12 is not to give us something but to make us something. Whenever we think of the Lord's promises, we always think that He will give us something. According to our concept, a promise is related to a blessing. To us, without a blessing, there can be no promise. But in 3:12 the Lord did not say, "Him I will give"; He said, "Him I will make." In 3:12 the Lord does not promise to give us holiness or a heavenly blessing. No, here He promises to make us become something—a pillar in the temple of God.

Becoming a pillar in the temple of God involves two things—transformation and building. Since I came to this country, my burden has been on these two matters. The greatest blessing the Lord can render us is to transform us and to build us into His temple....[What does it mean] to be made a pillar in the temple of God?...Those who have reached the level of the church in Philadelphia have the proper understanding within them. If we are on this level, then we are ready for the Lord to transform us. If we use the little power we have received of the Lord on His word and mean business with Him, then we are ready to be transformed and are in the proper position for the Lord to make us a pillar. This requires that we firstly be transformed into precious material and secondly that we be built into a pillar. How can we, who are clay, become a pillar in God's temple? There is no way except to be transformed from clay into precious stone and then to be built into God's building....Revelation 2:17...indicates that we can be transformed into a white stone by eating Him as the hidden manna. This is truly the greatest blessing. This involves our very being, for it is related to what we are. The greatest blessing is not what the Lord gives us, but what the Lord makes us. (Life-study of Revelation, p. 370)

Further Reading: Life-study of the Psalms, msg. 42; Life-study of Jeremiah, msg. 20; CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "The Administration of the Church and the Ministry of the Word," ch. 5

<< **WEEK 12 — HYMN** >>

Hymns, #546 I love my Lord, but with no love of mine

Experience of Christ — Love for Him

**1 I love my Lord, but with no love of mine,
For I have none to give;
I love Thee, Lord, but all the love is Thine,
For by Thy love I live.
I am as nothing, and rejoice to be
Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in Thee.
2 Thou, Lord, alone, art all Thy children need,
And there is none beside;
From Thee the streams of blessedness proceed,
In Thee the bless'd abide.
Fountain of life, and all-abounding grace,
Our source, our center, and our dwelling-place.**

Hymns, # 1191 From my spirit within flows a fountain of life

Experience of God — As Life

**1 From my spirit within flows a fountain of life—
The Triune God flowing in me;
God the Father's the source, Christ the Son is the course,
And the Spirit imparts life to me.
Lord, I treasure the sweet flow of life,
And my soul-life at last I lay down;
O Lord, deepen the pure flow of life;**

At Your coming may life be my crown.

2 In the fresh, tender grass Jesus makes me lie down;

He leads me by waters of rest;

No more struggle and strain; all self-effort is vain;

In the flow I am perfectly blessed.

3 Jesus called me one day to the Holiest Place,

To live in His presence divine;

Hallelujah, I've heard an encouraging word:

"Abide—you're a branch in the vine."