

# THE WILL OF GOD

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

## Message Two

### Knowing and Participating in God's Great and Lofty Will to Head Up All Things in Christ

EM Hymns: 981

Scripture Reading: Eph. 1:9-10; 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; 1 Cor. 8:1b

- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- 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;
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- 1 Cor 8:1b ... Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

#### I. “Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself, 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”—Eph. 1:9-10:

- A. The economy, or dispensation, that God, according to His desire, planned and purposed in Himself is to head up all things in Christ at the fullness of the times.
- B. This is accomplished through the dispensing of the abundant life supply of the Triune God as the life factor into all the members of the church so that they may rise up from the death situation and be attached to the Body.
- C. *The times* refers to the ages, and the fullness of the times will be when the new heaven and new earth appear after all the dispensations of God in all the ages have been completed:
1. A dispensation is the act or instance of dispensing, and it refers to God's dispensing of Himself into His chosen people; we need the element of God with His life and nature to be wrought into our being.
  2. Altogether there are four ages: the age of sin (Adam), the age of the law (Moses), the age of grace (Christ), and the age of the kingdom (the millennium).
  3. God dispensed Himself into Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with Joseph; He had an even greater dispensation with Moses and, of course, with the Lord Jesus.
  4. This dispensing continues in the New Testament Epistles; God's dispensation is even greater than it was at the time of the apostle Paul; today there is a deeper, higher, and wider dispensation of the grace of God—cf. Eph. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:10.  
Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,  
1 Pet 4:10 Each one, as he has received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good stewards of the varied grace of God.
  5. This dispensation will continue through the millennium until the fullness of the times; the ultimate, the consummate, dispensation will be the dispensing of the Triune God into the whole city of the New Jerusalem—Rev. 22:1-2.  
Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of

- the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Rev 22:2     And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
6.    We enjoy a miniature of this consummate dispensation in the church life today; as we enjoy the Spirit as the living water and eat Christ as the tree of life in the church life, we await the consummate dispensation, in which we will be fully saturated with the Triune God—1 Cor. 10:3-4; 12:13; Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14; John 6:57.
- 1 Cor 10:3    And all ate the same spiritual food,
- 1 Cor 10:4    And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.
- 1 Cor 12:13   For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
- Rev 2:7       He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- Rev 22:2     And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.
- Rev 22:14    Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.
- John 6:57     As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
7.    Where life is, there is light also (1:4; 8:12); because the New Jerusalem is saturated with light, it has no need of the light of the sun; the glory of the Triune God will be our shining and controlling light (Rev. 21:23).
- John 1:4      In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 8:12     Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- Rev 21:23     And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
8.    In the New Jerusalem there will be no night, no death, and no darkness; instead, there will be life and light, causing everything to rise up and be in good order and thus be fully headed up in Christ (v. 24; Eph. 1:10).
- Rev 21:24     And the nations will walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.
- 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;
9.    When we are fully headed up in Christ in the New Jerusalem, that will be God's eternal administration and economy.
- D.    The heading up of all things in Ephesians 1:10 is the issue of all the things covered in verses 3 through 9—God has chosen us, predestinated us, redeemed us, forgiven us, and graced us for the purpose of heading up all things in Christ.
- 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;
- 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,
- Eph 1:4       Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
- Eph 1:5       Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:6       To the praise of the glory of His grace, with which He graced us in the Beloved;
- Eph 1:7       In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses, according to the riches of His grace,
- Eph 1:8       Which He caused to abound to us in all wisdom and prudence,
- Eph 1:9       Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He

- purposed in Himself,
- E. Verses 22 and 23 reveal further that this heading up is “to the church” so that the Body of Christ may share in all that is of Christ as the Head, having been rescued from the heap of the universal collapse in death and darkness, which was caused by the rebellion of the angels and the rebellion of man; to be rescued from the collapse is to be headed up.  
 Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,  
 Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- F. When everything is headed up in Christ, there will be absolute peace and harmony (Isa. 2:4; 11:6; 55:12; Psa. 96:12-13), a full rescue out of the collapse; this will begin from the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21).  
 Isa 2:4 And He will judge between the nations, / And will decide matters for many peoples. / And they will beat their swords into plowshares, / And their spears into pruning knives; / Nation will not lift up sword against nation, / Nor will they learn war anymore.  
 Isa 11:6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb; / And the leopard will lie down with the kid, / And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; / And a young boy will lead them about.  
 Isa 55:12 For you will go out with rejoicing, / And you will be led forth in peace; / The mountains and the hills / Will break forth before you with a ringing shout, / And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.  
 Psa 96:12 Let the field and all that is in it exult; / Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy  
 Psa 96:13 Before Jehovah, for He is coming; / For He is coming to judge the earth; / He will judge the world with righteousness, / And the peoples with His truth.  
 Acts 3:21 Whom heaven must indeed receive until the times of the restoration of all things, of which God spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from of old.
- G. The picture in Ezekiel 37 of the dead, dry, and scattered bones shows that the unique way to have the Body, the church, and the house of God in the genuine oneness is the way of life:  
 Ezek 37 be omitted.
1. When the breath entered into the dead ones, it became life to them, and they lived and stood up in oneness to become an exceedingly great army.
  2. The dead bones were enlivened and became one as the issue of the dispensing of life and the growth in life—vv. 1-14.  
 Ezek 37:1 The hand of Jehovah came upon me, and He brought me out in the Spirit of Jehovah and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.  
 Ezek 37:2 And He caused me to pass all around among them, and there were very many on the surface of the valley, and they were also very dry.  
 Ezek 37:3 And He said to me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Jehovah, You know.  
 Ezek 37:4 Then He said to me, Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah.  
 Ezek 37:5 Thus says the Lord Jehovah to these bones: I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.  
 Ezek 37:6 And I will put sinews on you and bring flesh back on you and cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you will know that I am Jehovah.  
 Ezek 37:7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone.  
 Ezek 37:8 And I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh came back, and skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.  
 Ezek 37:9 Then He said to me, Prophesy to the wind; prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.  
 Ezek 37:10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them; and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.  
 Ezek 37:11 Then He said to me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Now they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off

- completely.
- Ezek 37:12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Now I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, O My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel.
- Ezek 37:13 And you will know that I am Jehovah, when I open your graves and bring you up out of your graves, O My people.
- Ezek 37:14 And I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live; and I will place you in your own land. Then you will know that I, Jehovah, have spoken and that I have performed it, declares Jehovah.
3. God's way to head us up is to work Himself as the factor of life into us so that we may rise up and be attached to one another in the Body.

## II. In order to be headed up in Christ, we need to grow up into Christ, the Head, in all things—in all things means in everything big or small in our daily life and in our work—Eph. 4:15; Zech. 4:10:

- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
Zech 4:10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; they are the eyes of Jehovah running to and fro on the whole earth.
- A. The organic building up of the Body is the growth of the Body, which is the growth of God, the increase of God as life, in all the members—Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16; Col. 2:19.
- Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;  
Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.  
Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- B. The growing members are the building members; to grow in life is to have more of God in us; our problem is that we are short of God—Eph. 4:16; cf. Job 1:1-5; 42:1-6.
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and this man was perfect and upright, and he feared God and turned away from evil.  
Job 1:2 And seven sons and three daughters were born to him.  
Job 1:3 And his possessions were seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred female donkeys and a great many servants; and this man was greater than all the sons of the east.  
Job 1:4 And his sons would go and hold feasts in each one's house, each on his own day, and they would send word and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them.  
Job 1:5 And when the days of feasting ran their course, Job would send word and sanctify them; and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, Perhaps my children have sinned and have cursed God in their heart. Job did this continually.
- Job 42:1 Then Job answered Jehovah and said,  
Job 42:2 I know that You can do all things / And that no purpose of Yours can be restrained.  
Job 42:3 Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? / Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, / Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.  
Job 42:4 Hear now, and I will speak; / I will ask of You, and You shall inform me.  
Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;  
Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.
- C. In order to grow up into the Head, we must hold to truth in the element and sphere of the divine love; *truth* in Ephesians 4:15 means things that are true— Rom. 3:4:
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
Rom 3:4 Absolutely not! But let God be true and every man a liar, as it is written, "That You

- may be declared righteous in Your words and may overcome when You are judged."
1. We need to hold to God's eternal economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4:
    - 1 Tim 1:3 Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
    - 1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
    - a. This is the economy of the mystery hidden in God—Eph. 3:9.
      - Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
    - b. This economy is to have the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate in the New Jerusalem for the manifestation of Christ as God's multifarious wisdom—vv. 10-11; 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 1:30.
      - Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
      - Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
      - Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
      - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
      - 1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
  2. We need to hold to the all-inclusive Christ— John 14:6; Eph. 1:23:
    - John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.
    - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
    - a. His measure is immeasurable—3:18.
      - Eph 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
    - b. His riches are unsearchable—v. 8.
      - Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
    - c. His love is knowledge-surpassing—v. 19.
      - Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
  3. We need to hold to the church as the Body of Christ—1 Tim. 3:15:
    - 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
    - a. The Body of Christ is the corporate Christ—Acts 9:4; 1 Cor. 12:12.
      - Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?
      - 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.
    - b. The Body of Christ is the fullness, the expression, of Christ and of God— Eph. 1:23; 3:19.
      - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
      - Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.
- D. We grow up into the Head through acknowledging the authority of the headship of Christ— Col. 2:19; cf. Josh. 9:14; 1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 20:25-27; 23:10-11:
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
  - Josh 9:14 And the men took some of their provisions, but they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah.

- 1 Pet 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- Matt 20:25 But Jesus called them to Him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great exercise authority over them.
- Matt 20:26 It shall not be so among you; but whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant,
- Matt 20:27 And whoever wants to be first among you shall be your slave;
- Matt 23:10 Neither be called instructors, because One is your Instructor, the Christ.
- Matt 23:11 And the greatest among you shall be your servant.
1. Christ is the Head of everyone—1 Cor. 11:3.
    - 1 Cor 11:3 But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.
  2. Christ is the Head of the church—Eph. 5:23.
    - Eph 5:23 For a husband is head of the wife as also Christ is Head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the Body.
  3. Christ is the Head of all things—1:22, 10.
    - Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
    - 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;
- E. The believers participate in Christ's heading up by being willing to be headed up in the church life, that is, by growing in life and by living under Christ's light— John 1:4; 8:12; Eph. 4:15-16; 5:8-9; Rev. 21:23-25.
- John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
- John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Eph 5:8 For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light
- Eph 5:9 (For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),
- Rev 21:23 And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
- Rev 21:24 And the nations will walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.
- Rev 21:25 And its gates shall by no means be shut by day, for there will be no night there.
- F. We grow up into the Head by allowing Christ to increase and grow in all the inward parts of our being:
1. In order to grow in life, we must pay attention to our spirit (Rom. 8:6); we must know, we must use, and we must exercise our mingled spirit (1 Tim. 4:6-8):
    - Rom 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.
    - 1 Tim 4:6 If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished with the words of the faith and of the good teaching which you have closely followed.
    - 1 Tim 4:7 But the profane and old-womanish myths refuse, and exercise yourself unto godliness.
    - 1 Tim 4:8 For bodily exercise is profitable for a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the present life and of that which is to come.
      - a. Ephesians 1:17 shows that we need to pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to fully know Christ and God's economy.
        - Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,
      - b. Ephesians 2:22 says that all the believers are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
        - Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in

- spirit.
- c. Ephesians 3:5 says that the mystery of Christ has been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit.  
Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,
  - d. Ephesians 3:16 shows that we need to pray to be strengthened into the inner man, which is our regenerated spirit with God's life as its life.  
Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
  - e. Ephesians 4:23 tells us to be renewed in the spirit of our mind.  
Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
  - f. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be filled in spirit.  
Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,
  - g. Ephesians 6:18 tells us to pray at every time in spirit.  
Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
2. In order to grow in life, we must feed on the milk and food of the holy Word, as the embodiment of Christ, the living Word of God—1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13-14.  
1 Pet 2:2 As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation,  
Heb 5:13 For everyone who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant;  
Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the full-grown, who because of practice have their faculties exercised for discriminating between both good and evil.

### **III. As we grow up into the Head in life, our function will come out from the Head for the building up of the Body—Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19:**

- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- A. When we allow Christ to be the Head in everything and when we grow up into Him in all things, we will be supplied with the riches of His life, receiving something from Him to transfuse into other members of the Body—1 Cor. 14:4b; John 7:37-39:  
1 Cor 14:4b ... but he who prophesies builds up the church.  
John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.  
John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.  
John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
  1. To build up the Body of Christ is to minister Christ as the life-giving Spirit into the saints for their growth into Christ—2 Cor. 3:6, 8.  
2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.  
2 Cor 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?
  2. We must help the saints learn to enjoy the Lord and be nourished by the Lord so that they can grow—Phil. 1:25; 2 Cor. 1:24.  
Phil 1:25 And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of the faith,  
2 Cor 1:24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are fellow workers with you for your joy; for by faith you stand.
- B. Under Christ's headship all the Body causes the growth of the Body of Christ— Eph. 4:15-16:  
Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head,

- Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
1. This growth is through every joint of the rich supply—all the particular gifts in the Body of Christ—vv. 11-12.
    - Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
    - Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
  2. This growth is through the operation in the measure of each one part—every member in the Body of Christ—vv. 7-8.
    - Eph 4:7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
    - Eph 4:8 Therefore the Scripture says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men."
- C. The building up of the Body of Christ under His headship is in love and by love:
1. Love is the most excellent way to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ; nothing but love can keep us in a proper relationship with the Lord—1 Cor. 12:31b—13:13.
    - 1 Cor 12:31 ... And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.
    - 1 Cor 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
    - 1 Cor 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
    - 1 Cor 13:3 And if I dole out all my possessions to feed others, and if I deliver up my body that I may boast, but do not have love, I profit nothing.
    - 1 Cor 13:4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
    - 1 Cor 13:5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil;
    - 1 Cor 13:6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
    - 1 Cor 13:7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
    - 1 Cor 13:8 Love never falls away. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless.
    - 1 Cor 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;
    - 1 Cor 13:10 But when that which is complete comes, that which is in part will be rendered useless.
    - 1 Cor 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; since I have become a man, I have done away with childish things.
    - 1 Cor 13:12 For now we see in a mirror obscurely, but at that time face to face; now I know in part, but at that time I will fully know even as also I was fully known.
    - 1 Cor 13:13 Now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.
  2. The goal of the book of Ephesians is to bring us into love as God's inner substance (1 John 4:8, 16) so that we may enjoy God as love and enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love and thereby love others as Christ did (Eph. 5:25; 6:24; 1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2).
    - 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
    - 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
    - Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her
    - Eph 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.
    - Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
    - Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being



- rooted and grounded in love,  
 Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,  
 Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
 Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.  
 Eph 5:2 And walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.
3. “Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Cor. 8:1b); this refers to the building up of the corporate Body of Christ under the headship of Christ.
- D. To grow in life is to grow up into the Head, Christ, but to operate in the Body of Christ is to operate out from Him; first, we grow into the Head, and then we have something that is out from the Head for the building up of the Body; this is to participate in God’s great and lofty will to head up all things in Christ— Eph. 4:15-16.
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,  
 Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **THE MEANING OF DISPENSATION**

Now we need to understand what a dispensation is. According to one teaching, a dispensation refers to an age. However, this understanding is not accurate. Another teaching is that a dispensation refers to the way God deals with people during a particular period of time. For example, in the dispensation of innocence God dealt with man in one way, and in the dispensation of conscience He dealt with man in another way. Likewise, God deals with people in different ways in the ages of human government, promise, law, grace, and the kingdom. This understanding of dispensation is not incorrect, but it falls short. A dispensation is the act or instance of dispensing. It refers to God’s dispensing of Himself into His chosen people. Although I have studied this matter of the dispensations for many years and have studied a number of diagrams, I have never been told that God’s dispensation is the dispensing of Himself into His people. We need to forget all the diagrams and remember one basic point: God is now dispensing Himself into us.

### **THE DISPENSING OF LIFE**

As we have pointed out, when Satan, the power of death, injected himself into man, Satan became death and darkness to man. Death brings in corruption, and darkness brings in confusion. Satan’s goal is to corrupt God’s creation and to cause confusion. But praise the Lord that where death abounds, life abounds all the more! After Satan came in to deaden, God came in to enliven, to impart life. Where there is life, there is light also. Death ruins, but life heals; darkness brings in confusion, but light brings in the proper order. We need to keep in mind that Satan came in to deaden God’s creation and that death ruins and darkness confuses. God, however, has come in to enliven the deadened creation and to bring in order. In this order all things are headed up in Christ.

God’s dispensation is the dispensing of life into people who have been deadened. Although Adam had become deadened, God came in to dispense something of Himself into Abel. He did the same with Enosh and Enoch. Do not think that in himself, a deadened person, Enoch was able to walk with God for three hundred years (Gen. 5:22). This was possible only through God’s dispensing of Himself into him. The same was true of Noah. Noah walked with God and had strong faith because

God was dispensing Himself into him. God's dispensing of Himself began with Abel and has increased with each generation. Thus, the dispensation with Enoch was greater than with Enosh and greater with Noah than with Enoch. With Abraham it was still greater. Acts 7:2 says that the God of glory appeared to Abraham. That appearing certainly was a dispensing. Abraham could have faith in God because God had been dispensed into him.

The same thing happened to us when we heard the gospel and repented. As we were repenting and confessing our sins to God, God was dispensing Himself into us, although we might not have been conscious of God's dispensing at the time. As we recall our experience, however, we realize that this was the case. On the day I repented and made confession to God of my sinfulness, something was dispensed into my being. I wept, but inwardly I was on fire. This was God's inspiration and also His dispensation. When God comes to inspire us, He dispenses Himself into us. Nothing can change us like God's dispensation. It can transform a robber into a saint, because it dispenses the holy nature of God into him. I encourage you all to go to the Lord for thirty minutes for His dispensation. During that time, forget your problems and your environment. Simply open to Him and confess your shortcomings and wrongdoings. The more you confess to Him, the more the way will be open for Him to dispense Himself into you.

No matter what term we use—*dispensing*, *inspiring*, *transfusing*, or *infusing*—the experience is the same. I do not care for terminology; I care for the divine element being imparted into you. We need God to get into us. We need the element of God to be wrought into our being. This is the meaning of dispensation.

There is a shortage of this dispensation of God into man among most Christians today. Many teach about the seven dispensations but never tell people that a dispensation denotes God's dispensing of His life and nature into His chosen people. Our burden today is not to teach doctrine; it is to dispense God's life and nature into His people. Please do not bring to this ministry your opinions or concepts. If you do, you will be wasting your time. We are not interested in arguing doctrinal points or concepts. Our burden is to transfuse God into you. You may know a great deal of doctrine but be very short of the divine element. What you need is the dispensing of the element of God into your being. I was with the Brethren for years and eventually became bored with their disputes over doctrine. We may not be short of doctrine, but we are short of the divine element. God's dispensation is to impart His very element into us.

### **THE ULTIMATE DISPENSATION**

We have seen that God dispensed Himself into Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. He had an even greater dispensation with Moses and, of course, with the Lord Jesus. The dispensing continues in the New Testament Epistles. It may surprise you to know that God's dispensation at the present time is even greater than it was at the time of the apostle Paul. I doubt that when Paul was on earth there was a congregation who had the privilege of hearing the things that you are hearing today. Today there is a deeper, higher, and wider dispensation of the grace of God. This dispensation will continue through the millennium until the fullness of the times. The dispensation of the fullness of the times will be the highest and the broadest. This dispensation will be in eternity, as revealed in Revelation 21 and 22.

In these chapters we have a new environment, the new heaven and the new earth with the New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:1 says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more." In the Bible the sea signifies death. For there to be no more sea means that there will be no trace of death. By that time death will have been swallowed up. At the end of the millennium, death, the last enemy, will be abolished and cast into the lake of fire. In place of death, there will be a new environment, a new sphere, a new circumference, in the center of which will be the New Jerusalem.

If you read the book of Revelation carefully, you will see that the New Jerusalem is actually a

great mountain with a height of twelve thousand stadia, more than thirteen hundred miles. At the top of the mountain there is the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 22:1). Out of the throne flows the river of water of life; it flows down the mountain and reaches the twelve gates of the city. The water of life is for drinking, for the life supply, not for bathing or for baptizing. In the water of life grows the tree of life (v. 2). This indicates that when you drink the water of life, you eat the tree of life. Therefore, when you drink the water, you receive the life supply. Here we see the ultimate, the consummate, dispensation: the dispensing of the Triune God into the whole city of New Jerusalem. This will cause the city to be filled, saturated, permeated, and soaked with the water of life. This is the highest dispensation purposed by God for the fullness of the times.

### **THE MINIATURE IN THE CHURCH LIFE**

We enjoy a miniature of this consummate dispensation in the church life today. In the church we have the flow of life, we drink the water of life, and we eat the tree of life. This is God's dispensation in the church life. However, it is not the highest dispensation, the dispensation of the fullness of the times. As I enjoy the living water in the church, I am awaiting the ultimate dispensation. We shall all be in this consummate dispensation, and we shall be fully saturated with the Triune God.

God on the throne refers to the Father, the Lamb refers to the Son, and the river of water of life refers to the Spirit. John 7 reveals clearly that the river of life denotes the Spirit. Thus, in Revelation 22 we have God the Father, God the Son as the redeeming One, and God the Spirit flowing with God the Son as the tree of life to be our life supply. This is the dispensation of the Triune God, the top dispensation, the dispensation of the fullness of the times.

This dispensation began with Abel and has been increasing throughout the ages until it eventually will reach the dispensation of the fullness of the times. We are getting close to that dispensation. If we realize this, we shall be beside ourselves with joy. Not even the apostle Paul was as close to the ultimate dispensation as we are. Hallelujah, we all shall share in the consummate dispensation! In the Lord's recovery we have in the church life a miniature of that coming dispensation. How wonderful! This is why we enjoy singing these lines from *Hymns*, #1151:

Drink! A river pure and clear that's flowing from the throne;  
Eat! The tree of life with fruits abundant, richly grown;  
Look! No need of lamp nor sun nor moon to keep it bright, for  
Here there is no night!

Oh, in the church life we drink the water of life and eat of the tree of life! By eating and drinking, we become saturated with God's very life through His dispensation. The more life that is dispensed into us, the higher we rise up. This is the heading up in Christ.

### **THE LIGHT OF LIFE KEEPING EVERYTHING IN ORDER**

Where life is, there is light also. John 1:4 says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." This light is the light of life (8:12). In Revelation 21 we have both life and light. Because the New Jerusalem is saturated with light, it has no need for the light of the sun. Revelation 21:23 says, "And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon that they should shine in it, for the glory of God illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." In the New Jerusalem we shall have the glory of the Triune God as our shining light. In the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem there will be no night, no death, and no darkness. Instead, there will be life and light. This will cause everything to rise up and be in good order.

Wherever there is light, things are kept in order. Suppose there were no lights in the city of Los Angeles. What darkness and confusion there would be! Life regulates, and light controls. In the church life we do not have regulations, but we do have the regulating life and the controlling light. When the church is full of life, it is also full of light. Then everyone in the church is regulated by the inward life,

not by outward regulations; and everyone is controlled and kept in order by the light of life. Here in life and in light, we are headed up. In Revelation 21 we see the Head, the Body surrounding the Head, and all the nations walking in the light of the city (v. 24). This will cause the new heaven and the new earth to be a bright sphere. Therefore, in the new heaven and the new earth with the New Jerusalem as the center, all things will be headed up in Christ. This will be the fulfillment of the heading up of all things in Christ spoken of in Ephesians 1:10.

In order for this to take place, we need the dispensation of life. The life that is dispensed into us eventually becomes the light of men. In the dispensation of the fullness of the times, all the nations will walk in the light of the city. This means that there will be no death, no darkness, no corruption, and no confusion. Instead, everything will be in good order, headed up under Christ, the unique Head, to express the Triune God in eternity. This heading up of all things will be an eternal expression of the Triune God. Today's church life is a foretaste of this. It is a miniature of the new heaven, the new earth, and the New Jerusalem. As those in the miniature, we are enjoying the dispensation of life with light, and we are being headed up in Christ. (*Life-study of Ephesians*, pp. 90-96)