

## Message Four

### **The Factor of Authority in the Body of Christ and in the Local Churches**

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Rom. 9:23; Matt. 28:18;

Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 4:16; Rev. 4:2; 22:1-2

- Rom. 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
- Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
- 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.
- Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.
- Rev. 4:2 Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting;
- 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.

#### **I. God is the supreme authority; He has all authority—Rom. 9:21-22:**

- Rom. 9:21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?
- Rom. 9:22 And what if God, wishing to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction,
- A. God's authority is actually God Himself; authority issues out from God's own being—Rev. 22:1.
- 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.
- B. All authority—spiritual, positional, and governmental—derives from God—2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; John 19:10-11; Gen. 9:6.
- 2 Cor. 10:8 For even if I should boast somewhat more abundantly concerning our authority, which the Lord has given for building you up and not for overthrowing you, I will not be put to shame.
- 2 Cor. 13:10 Therefore I write these things while being absent in order that when present I would not have to use severity, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for building up and not for overthrowing.
- John 19:10 Therefore Pilate said to Him, You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You and I have authority to crucify You?
- John 19:11 Jesus answered him, You would have no authority against Me if it were not given to you from above; for this reason, he who has delivered Me to you has the greater sin.

- Gen. 9:6      Whoever sheds man's blood, / By man shall his blood be shed, / For in the image of God / He made man.
- C.    **Knowing authority is an inward revelation rather than an outward teaching—Acts 22:6-16.**
- Acts 22:6      And as I journeyed and drew near to Damascus about midday, suddenly a great light flashed out of heaven around me;
- Acts 22:7      And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?
- Acts 22:8      And I answered, Who are You, Lord? And He said to me, I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you persecute.
- Acts 22:9      And those who were with me beheld the light, but did not hear the voice of the One who was speaking to me.
- Acts 22:10     And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me, Rise up and go into Damascus, and there it will be told to you concerning all the things which have been appointed to you to do.
- Acts 22:11     And as I could not see because of the glory of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.
- Acts 22:12     And a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well attested to by all the Jews dwelling there,
- Acts 22:13     Came to me, and standing by, said to me, Saul, brother, receive your sight! And in that very hour I looked up at him.
- Acts 22:14     And he said, The God of our fathers has previously appointed you to know His will and to see the righteous One and to hear the voice from His mouth;
- Acts 22:15     For you will be a witness to Him unto all men of the things which you have seen and heard.
- Acts 22:16     And now, why do you delay? Rise up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.
- D.    **The Lord Jesus was a man under authority; He humbled Himself, did the Father's will, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross—Matt. 8:9; John 4:34; 6:38; Phil. 2:7-8.**
- Matt. 8:9      For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does it.
- John 4:34      Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.
- John 6:38      For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.
- Phil. 2:7      But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;
- Phil. 2:8      And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.
- E.    **In His divinity, as the only begotten Son of God, the Lord had authority over all, but in His humanity, as the Son of Man and the King of the heavenly kingdom, all authority in heaven and on earth was given to Him after His resurrection—Matt. 28:18.**
- Matt. 28:18    And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
- F.    **Now as the Ruler of the kings of the earth, the God-exalted Jesus is the Ruler over all the ones who are in power; He is the chief Ruler in the divine government for the fulfillment of God's eternal plan—Acts 2:23, 36; 5:31; Rev. 1:5.**
- Acts 2:23      This man, delivered up by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you, through the hand of lawless men, nailed to a cross and killed;
- Acts 2:36      Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

Acts 5:31 This One God has exalted to His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.  
Rev. 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

- G. In Christ's ascension God made Him the unique Head of the Body, the church, and inaugurated Him into the headship of the universe; the Head of the whole universe is Jesus—Col. 1:18; Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:22-23.

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;  
Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.  
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.

## II. Christ is both the Head corporately of the Body, the church, and individually of all the believers; He is the Head directly of every one of us, and we all are under His authority—Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 11:3:

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;  
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.

- A. For Christ to be the Head is for Him to have all the authority in the Body—Rom. 9:21, 23; Matt. 28:18:

Rom. 9:21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?  
Rom. 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,  
Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

1. The Body cannot move freely; it can move only at the direction of the Head.

2. The authority to direct the Body and all its members rests with the Head.

- B. Whether we are under the authority of the Head determines whether we know the life of the Body—1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 1:18; 3:4:

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.  
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. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;  
Col. 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

1. The Body can have only one Head and can submit only to one Head—1:18.

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

2. Only Christ is the unique Head, and we must submit to Him, honoring and testifying to the unique headship of the God-exalted Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; Matt. 23:8-12.

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.

Matt. 23:8 But you, do not be called Rabbi, for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.

Matt. 23:9 And do not call anyone on earth your father, for One is your Father, He who is in the heavens.

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.

Matt. 23:12 And he who will exalt himself shall be humbled, and he who will humble himself shall be exalted.

C. In order to live in the Body, we need to recognize the authority in the Body—Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 2:19:

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.

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

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. Concerning the authority in the Body, first and foremost is the need for the authority of the Head flowing throughout the whole Body—Eph. 5:23-24:

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.

Eph. 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be subject to their husbands in everything.

a. When we submit directly to the Head, we also care for the Body; it is impossible for us to say that we are submitting to the authority of the Head without caring for the Body.

b. Only the Lord is our Head, and only He has the authority to direct the moves of the members of His Body.

2. In the Body the elders and the apostles are deputy authorities, carrying out the authority of the Head—Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:17a; 1 Cor. 12:28:

Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.

1 Tim. 5:17 Let the elders who take the lead well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and teaching.

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

a. On the one hand, all the members of the Body submit directly to the Head—Eph. 5:24a.

Eph. 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be subject to their husbands in everything.

b. On the other hand, the members submit to the deputies of the Head—Heb. 13:17.

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

### **III. The order of the church comes out of the authority in the church—the honoring of the unique headship of Christ—Col. 1:18; Phil. 1:1:**

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Phil. 1:1 Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

A. In the church there is no human organization, but there is a spiritual order—v. 1; 1 Cor. 14:40; 11:34b.

Phil. 1:1 Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

1 Cor. 14:40 But all things must be done becomingly and in order.

1 Cor. 11:34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, that you may not come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

B. The Head of the church is Christ the Lord, and the authority in the church is the headship of Christ—Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:18.

Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

C. In the church there must be order, but this order comes from the headship of Christ—Eph. 1:22-23.

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.

D. We can have the real practice of the church life only by submitting to the unique headship of Christ—Col. 1:18; 2:19:

Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

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. The order in the church comes from the headship of Christ being realized by us in a practical way—1 Cor. 11:3, 16; Eph. 1:22.

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.

1 Cor. 11:16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we do not have such a custom of being so, neither the churches of God.

Eph. 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

2. If we do not have the spiritual order in the church that comes from realizing the headship of Christ in a practical way, there is no possibility for us to practice the real church life—1 Cor. 11:3; 14:40.

- 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.
- 1 Cor. 14:40 But all things must be done becomingly and in order.

#### **IV. In the church God's authority is expressed and represented by the apostles and elders—12:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3:**

- 1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.
- 1 Pet. 5:1 Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:
- 1 Pet. 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet. 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
- A. God has appointed elders and apostles to be the authority in the church—1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 14:23.
- 1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.
- Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
- B. Apostles and elders have no authority in themselves; they have authority only as they stand under the authority of the Head; they exercise authority in the church by representing the authority of the Head.
- C. In order to manifest His authority in the church, God appoints elders in every local church to represent His authority—v. 23; Titus 1:5:
- Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
- Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things which I have begun that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:
1. In the universal church there is the office of apostleship, which gives the apostles the position and the right to appoint elders for the administration of the local churches—1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.
 

1 Cor. 12:28 And God has placed some in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then works of power, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.

Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.

Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things which I have begun that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:
  2. The Holy Spirit was one with the apostles in their appointment of the elders, and the apostles did this according to the leading of the Holy Spirit—Acts 20:28.
 

Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.
  3. The authority of the elders is for representing and expressing God's authority—1 Pet. 5:1-3.

- 1 Pet. 5:1 Therefore the elders among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory to be revealed:
- 1 Pet. 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet. 5:3 Nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.
4. The main responsibility of the elders as overseers is not to rule but to shepherd, to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock, the church of God—Acts 20:28.
- Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.
5. The scriptural principle with regard to eldership is plurality; with the plurality of the eldership, there is no definite leader, and the unique headship of Christ is regarded, preserved, and respected—14:23; Titus 1:5.
- Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
- Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things which I have begun that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:
6. In the church life we need to obey the ones leading us and submit to them (Heb. 13:17); if we cannot submit to God’s appointed deputy authority, we cannot submit to God.
- Heb. 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.

**V. There is a divine government in the church life today, and this government comes from the throne of God and of the Lamb—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.
- A. The divine authority in the church is for God to dispense Himself into us as life, as the life supply, and as the all-sufficient grace; only by submitting to the throne can we share in His all-sufficient source of the flowing grace—2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 22:1-2, 16a.
- 2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- 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.
- Rev. 22:16 I Jesus have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright morning star.
- B. The throne of grace in Hebrews 4:16 is the throne of authority in Revelation 4, which becomes in Revelation 22:1-2 the throne of God and of the Lamb, out from which flows “a river of water of life, bright as crystal” (v. 1):
- Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

- Rev. 4:1 After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you the things that must take place after these things.
- Rev. 4:2 Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting;
- Rev. 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.
- Rev. 4:4 And around the throne there were twenty-four thrones, and upon the thrones twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and upon their heads golden crowns.
- Rev. 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;
- Rev. 4:6 And before the throne there was as it were a glassy sea like crystal; and in the midst of the throne and around the throne, there were four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.
- Rev. 4:7 And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.
- Rev. 4:8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings apiece, are full of eyes around and within; and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God the Almighty, who was and who is and who is coming.
- Rev. 4:9 And when the four living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits upon the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,
- Rev. 4:10 The twenty-four elders will fall before Him who sits upon the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever; and they will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,
- Rev. 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.
- 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.

1. Although the throne is the throne of authority, the throne of headship, out of the throne flows the river of water of life—v. 1.

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.

2. The fact that the throne is not only the throne of God but the throne of God and of the Lamb means that God in the Lamb is flowing out as grace for our enjoyment:

a. We should never separate authority from grace or grace from authority; grace and authority are one—Heb. 4:16; Rev. 22:1.

Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

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.

b. Whenever we come to this throne, we have the sense that the grace of God is like a river flowing into us—Heb. 4:16; Rev. 22:1-2.

- Heb. 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.
- 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.

3. Today the Lord Jesus does not reign merely with authority; He is reigning in the church, among the churches, and over all the churches through the flowing of His life as grace—4:2-3; 5:6; 7:9; 22:1-2.

- Rev. 4:2 Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting;
- Rev. 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.
- Rev. 5:6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
- Rev. 7:9 After these things I saw, and behold, there was a great multitude which no one could number, out of every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palm branches in their hands.
- 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.

C. The throne, the authority, of God and of the Lamb is not only the source of the divine administration; it is also the source of the divine fellowship—vv. 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.

1. Authority and fellowship are two lines in the Body—1 Cor. 11:3; 12:12-13, 18; 1:9; 10:16-17.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 1 Cor. 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.
- 1 Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- 1 Cor. 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?
- 1 Cor. 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

2. Whereas the throne is a matter of authority, the flowing river is a matter of fellowship,

signified by the street, which is of “pure gold, like transparent glass”—Rev. 21:21:

Rev. 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

a. The throne represents the divine authority, and from the throne flows the river of water of life for us to enjoy the divine fellowship—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.

b. In this fellowship there is the divine authority, for in God’s economy authority always goes together with fellowship—2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10, 14.

2 Cor. 10:8 For even if I should boast somewhat more abundantly concerning our authority, which the Lord has given for building you up and not for overthrowing you, I will not be put to shame.

2 Cor. 13:10 Therefore I write these things while being absent in order that when present I would not have to use severity, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for building up and not for overthrowing.

2 Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

3. In order to build up a local church in a practical way, we need both the throne of God and of the Lamb and the water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne and flowing on the street—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.