

# CHRIST AS THE SEED OF LIFE

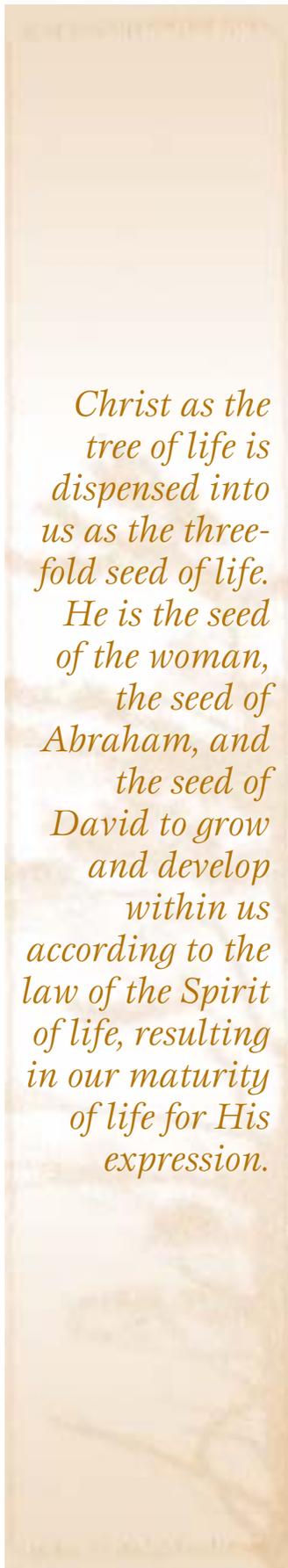
## *Sown into Us to Grow within Us for God's Building*

by Ed Marks

The central thought of God is that Christ is the reality of the tree of life sown as the seed of the divine life into His believers for the growth of this life within them, that they may experience the transformation of life to make them treasures of life for God's building of life. This centrality of God's thought is elucidated in the apostle Paul's telling the believers in 1 Corinthians 3:9, "You are God's cultivated land, God's building." (*God's cultivated land* may also be translated as "God's farm.") This statement reaches back to the blueprint of God's eternal purpose in Genesis 1 and 2 before man's fall and reaches forward to the finished product of His eternal purpose in Revelation 21 and 22 after man's fall. Genesis 1:26 says that man was created to express God, having God's image, and to represent God, exercising God's dominion. Man bearing the image of God is for the glory of God, and man exercising the dominion of God is for the kingdom of God. Genesis 2 shows that God accomplishes His purpose for man by dispensing Himself into man as life, signified by the tree of life. This makes man God's garden, the garden of Eden, God's cultivated land of pleasure (vv. 8-9). God's desire is to sow Himself into man as the seed of the tree of life so that man can have God as his inner life-flow to grow with the growth of God (Matt. 13:3; Luke 8:11; Col. 2:19). This issues in man being transformed into the precious material of life to be built up as the corporate bride of Christ (Gen. 2:10-12, 22). Revelation 21 and 22 show this corporate, bridal, built-up city of life as the finished product of the tree of life, the flow of life, the growth of life, and the transformation of life (21:2, 9-10, 18-21; 22:1-2).

The growth of the divine life in the believers as God's farm issues in their transformation of life to make them the precious treasure of God's building. We are God's farm so that Christ may be sown into us and grow within us. We are God's building so that we may be transformed with Christ's element into precious materials to be the constituents of God's building. The greatest prophecy in the Scriptures is uttered by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 16:18, where He said, "I will build My church." His church is not only the living Body of Christ but also the farm of the Triune God, and the way that He builds His church is a divinely organic way, the way of the dispensing of life, the growth of life, and the transformation of life. Because the apostle Paul saw this vision, he spoke of working together with God by planting Christ as the seed of life into the believers. By Paul's planting and others' watering, God would cause the growth of the believers (1 Cor. 3:6-7). To plant the seed of life into the believers and to water the believers with the water of life for the growth of this seed are not only a ministry of life but also a ministry of transformation. The ministry of Christ as life into others is our building the Triune God into them, signified by gold, silver, and precious stones (v. 12). Gold signifies God the Father in His divine nature, silver signifies Christ the Son in His redeeming accomplishments, and precious stones signify God the Spirit in His transforming work. Paul charges us to take heed how we build. If our work issues in the





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believers' growing in life to be transformed into precious material for God's building, we will receive a reward. If our work is with the worthless material of things other than the Triune God—the wood of the natural man, the grass of the flesh, and the stubble of lifelessness—then our work will be consumed, and we will suffer loss (vv. 12-15). Paul tells us that the ministers of the new covenant are not ministers of the killing letter of the tree of knowledge but ministers of the vivifying Spirit of the tree of life, the Spirit of the reality of the Triune God (2 Cor. 3:6; John 16:13-15).

**C**hrist as the life-giving Spirit is the seed of life that is sown as the word of God and the seed of God into His chosen and redeemed people. They are regenerated “not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23). It is remarkable that everyone who has been begotten of God has God's seed abiding in him (1 John 3:9). The seed of God is the seed of Christ as the divine life, making His believers hereditary and divinely genetic children of God, those who have been born of God (v. 10; John 1:12-13). Just as the gene, the seed, of a human being has the essence of all the characteristics and traits of the life of that human being, so the gene, the seed, of God has the essence of all the characteristics and traits of the life of God. All that Christ is as the tree of God's life grows out of the seed of God implanted into us to make us exactly like Him in life and nature but not in the Godhead. Because Christ as God's seed abides in us, we are now the children of God, and eventually by the full growth of this seed “we will be like Him” (1 John 3:2). Colossians 2:19 says that the Christ-enjoying believers grow with the growth of God. This does not mean that God grows in Himself but that God in Christ as the seed of the divine life grows in us so that we may grow up into Him in all things. Just as a person's physical body is built up by the growth of his human life in him, Christ's mystical Body is built up by the growth of the divine life in us (Eph. 4:15-16).

#### **Christ as the Tree of Life Being the Threefold Seed of Life Dispensed into Us for the Growth of God in Us**

Christ as the tree of life is dispensed into us as the threefold seed of life for the growth of God in us (Col. 2:19). He is the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4), the seed of Abraham (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16), and the seed of David (2 Sam. 7:12-14; Rom. 1:3-4) to grow and develop within us according to the law of the Spirit of life (8:2), resulting in our maturity of life for His expression. As the seed of the woman, He destroys Satan and saves us from sin and death. As the seed of Abraham, He causes us to receive the all-inclusive Spirit as our blessing and inheritance. As the seed of David, He builds Himself into our being by growing in us for the building of the house of God (causing us to participate in God's sonship) and by growing in us for the building of the kingdom of God (causing us to participate in Christ's kingship). The following hymn of praise to the Lord (*Hymns*, #191) is full of the divine truths of the all-inclusive Christ as the threefold seed of life:

- 1 Lord, Thou art the “Seed of woman,”  
Born to bruise the enemy;  
Thou didst take the human nature,  
Die to win the victory.  
As the very God incarnate,  
Flesh and blood Thou didst partake;  
Thou thru death hast crushed the devil  
And his pow'r of death didst break.
- 2 “Seed of Abraham,” Thou art, Lord,  
By God's promise Thou hast come,  
That the blessing He hath promised  
On all people thus might come.  
Abraham Thou hast preceded,

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For Thou art the great "I AM,"  
Yet Thou cam'st to be his offspring  
And become God's promised "Lamb."

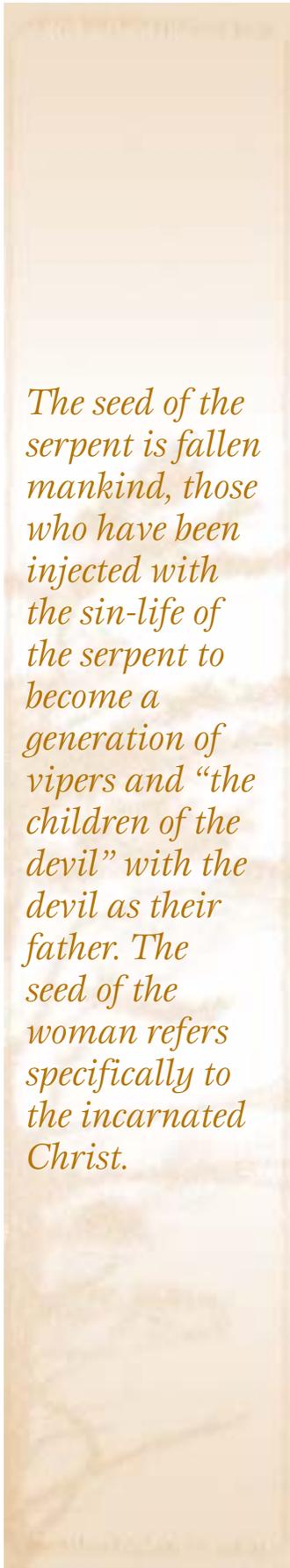
- 3 Lord, Thou art the "Seed of David,"  
For the kingdom Thou wast raised;  
For God's glory and His building  
On the throne Thou hast been placed.  
Truly Thou art "David's offspring,"  
Yet "my Lord" he calleth Thee,  
For Thou art his "root" and fountain,  
"Lord of all" eternally.
- 4 Thou "a child" born with our nature,  
Thou the "Mighty God" art called;  
Thou, "a son" to us art given,  
"Everlasting Father" called.  
All the blessings God hath promised,  
With our faith on Thee depend;  
Thou art "Yea" and "Amen" for them,  
All the content and the end!

May the Lord grant us a spirit of wisdom and revelation to see Him in His all-inclusiveness as the threefold seed of life, and as the Spirit of reality, may He guide us into the reality of all that He is for His growth in us to build us up as His Body. Let us turn our heart to Him with a spirit of prayer as we now consider from the Holy Scriptures the revelation of Christ as the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of David.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Christ as the Seed of the Woman*

Genesis 3:15 is the first great prophecy of Christ in the Scriptures. God told Satan, the deceiving serpent, "I will put enmity / Between you and the woman / And between your seed and her seed; / He will bruise you on the head, / But you will bruise him on the heel." The seed of the serpent is fallen mankind, those who have been injected with the sin-life of the serpent to become a generation of vipers (Matt. 23:33; 3:7) and the "children of the devil" (1 John 3:10) with the devil as their father (John 8:44). The seed of the woman refers specifically to the incarnated Christ (Matt. 1:16), the son born of a virgin, and we may say that this seed also consequentially refers to all those who will receive Him as their life and Savior, as the Spirit of God's Son, to become the regenerated sons of God (Gal. 4:4-7). Isaiah prophesied of this coming seed by declaring, "Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel" (7:14). This seed of God in humanity, the embodiment of all the fullness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9), would bruise, destroy, Satan on the cross for his sin of rebellion against God (Heb. 2:14) and would be bruised, wounded, by Satan on the cross for our transgressions (Isa. 53:5). The complete God became a perfect man through the dispensing of Himself into humanity to become Immanuel, "God with us" (8:8, 10; Matt. 1:23; John 1:1, 14). Hebrews 2:14-15 says that Christ partook of blood and flesh "that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil, and might release those who because of the fear of death through all their life were held in slavery." Although Christ was absolutely without sin, He became in the "likeness of the flesh of sin" in order to condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3; John 1:14). He was lifted up on the cross as the bronze serpent, being in the likeness of the "serpent of sin" without possessing the "sin of the serpent" to deliver a death-blow to the serpent, to terminate the serpentine nature in fallen man, and to take away the sin of serpent (Num. 21:4-9; John 3:14; 1:29).

God's judgment on the serpent is ultimately executed in the overcoming believers, who are the corporate seed of the woman, "the man-child" born in and through the



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*Through our constant contact with Christ and His growth within us as the overcoming seed of the woman, we become His corporate seed to overcome God's enemy as Christ's martyrs, His witnesses, sent forth into all the earth to be a living testimony of the resurrected and ascended Christ.*

totality of God's corporate people, who are typified as a universal woman (as portrayed in Revelation 12:1-11). "The Lord as the leading Overcomer (3:21) is the Head, center, reality, life, and nature of the man-child, and the man-child as the following overcomers is the Lord's Body" (Recovery Version, Gen. 3:15, note 3). These overcomers are fully given to the Lord and give the Lord the full ground to grow within them unto maturity (Heb. 6:1). They allow Christ as the indwelling seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head in them, as expressed in a song of prayer to the Lord by Charles Wesley in the fourth stanza of *Hymns, #84*: "Come, Desire of nations, come! / Fix in us Thy humble home: / Rise, the woman's conqu'ring seed, / Bruise in us the serpent's head; / Adam's likeness now efface, / Stamp Thine image in its place: / Final Adam from above, / Reinstat us in Thy love." Christ, as the woman's conquering seed, bruises the serpent's head in us by growing in us to make His home in us so that our fallen image is effaced and replaced with His divine image (Eph. 3:17; 2 Cor. 3:18). As the divine-human seed, He became the life-giving Spirit in resurrection so that He could be sown into His believers to grow within them and daily save them in His life from Satan, sin, and death (1 Cor. 15:45; Rom. 5:10).

**T**his daily salvation is according to the law of the divine life of the divine seed in us (Heb. 8:10; Rom. 8:2). The law of the divine life is the spontaneous power of the divine life; it is the natural characteristic and the innate, automatic, and spontaneous function of the divine life (Mark 4:26-29). The spontaneous life-power of Christ as the life-seed bruises the serpent's head in us as we employ the blood of the Lamb, speak forth the word of our testimony, and love not our soul-life even unto death (Rev. 12:10-11). The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, not only cleanses us from every sin but also answers all of Satan's accusations against us. Satan may accuse us, but we can answer that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin (1 John 1:7). "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (v. 9). We should confess our sins in the light of God's presence to enjoy His instant forgiveness and cleansing, but any condemnation that we feel after such confessing is not of God's enlightenment but is Satan's accusation. We must always apply the blood of Christ, telling the devil that although we are not perfect, we are under the perfect blood. We must also speak the word of our testimony, which is our proclaiming the victory of Christ. We must proclaim that Jesus is Lord, that the Lord is victorious, and that Satan has been crushed under our feet (1 Cor. 12:3; Phil. 2:9-11; Rom. 16:20). Furthermore, we should be those who do not love our soul-life, which is embodied in our fallen self, by continually exercising our spirit to deny the self and live by Christ as our inward life (Matt. 16:24-26; Gal. 2:20; 1 Tim. 4:7). We need to be constrained with the love of Christ to live to Him and to die to Him (2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 14:7-9). Our personal and intimate love for the Lord, our relationship of nearness and dearness in our closest contact with Him, activates the spontaneous power of Christ as the seed of life in us, causing us to reject our self and be martyrs for Him (Rev. 2:10; Rom. 8:35-39). Through our constant contact with Christ and His growth within us as the overcoming seed of the woman, we become His corporate seed to overcome God's enemy as Christ's martyrs, His witnesses, sent forth into all the earth to be a living testimony of the resurrected and ascended Christ (Acts 1:8).

### *Christ as the Seed of Abraham*

Christ as the seed of life sown into our being is also the seed of Abraham to be the blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen. 17:8; 12:3, 7; Gal. 3:16; Matt. 1:1-2). God told Abraham that in his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:18). In Galatians 3:16 the apostle Paul pointed out that the seed of Abraham is Christ. God in Christ through incarnation became a man by entering into the Hebrew lineage of Abraham to become the seed of Abraham, the son of Abraham as a blessing to all the nations (Matt. 1:1). Galatians 3:14 says that the blessing of Abraham is actually the promised Spirit, who is the reality of Christ: "In order that the blessing of Abraham

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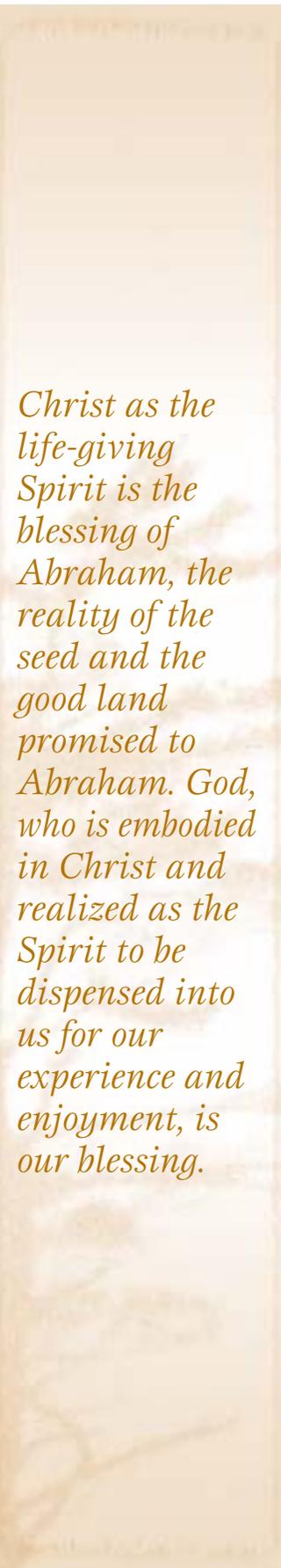
might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Thus, the blessing of Abraham is the incarnated Christ who died and rose to become the life-giving Spirit.

First Corinthians 15:45 says that Christ as the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. Because the seed of Abraham is the incarnated Christ as the last Adam, and the last Adam was transfigured in resurrection to become a life-giving Spirit, we may say that the life-giving Spirit is a transfigured descendant of Abraham. Christ, the Lord Spirit, as the transfigured descendant of Abraham is dispensed into us, His believers, to make us the sons, the descendants, of Abraham (Gal. 3:7). Because Christ is in us, and we are in Christ, being one with Christ and a part of Christ, we too are now the corporate seed of Abraham. Galatians 3:29 says, "If you are of Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." Because we are Abraham's seed, we can receive and inherit the blessing of Abraham.

The physical aspect of the blessing that God promised to Abraham was the good land (Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 26:3-4), which was a type of the all-inclusive Christ...Since Christ is eventually realized as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17), the blessing of the promised Spirit corresponds with the blessing of the land promised to Abraham. Actually, the Spirit as the realization of Christ in our experience is the good land as the source of God's bountiful supply for us to enjoy. (Recovery Version, Gal. 3:14, note 3)

Christ as the life-giving Spirit is the blessing of Abraham, the reality of both the seed of Abraham and the good land promised to Abraham. Our blessing today is God Himself, who is embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit, to be dispensed into us for our experience and enjoyment. We bless our God and Father, who has blessed us with the Spirit as the unique blessing in the universe in His multifarious aspects, as every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 1:3). God's promise to Abraham was that He would bless him and make him a blessing (Gen. 12:2-3). We need to pray that God would bless us with Himself as the Spirit and make us a blessing as a channel of the Spirit to others. To be blessed with the Spirit is to honor God by being filled with the Spirit to walk by the Spirit for Christ's magnification in us (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16, 25; Phil. 1:20). To bless others with the Spirit is to honor man by overflowing with the Spirit to minister the Spirit for Christ's impartation into others (John 7:38; 2 Cor. 3:6; Judg. 9:9).

We can continually receive, experience, and enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit for His growth in us as the seed of Abraham and for our enjoyment of Him as the land promised to Abraham by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2, 5). Although we received the Spirit at the time we believed in Christ, we need to continually receive the Spirit day by day throughout our Christian life so that we can be saturated with the Spirit to be men of the Spirit with the ministry of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8). To receive the Spirit we need to have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches (Rev. 2:7). The title of a book written by R. A. Torrey, *The Voice of God in the Present Hour*, succinctly describes what our great need is. The Lord Jesus charged us concerning our spiritual hearing of His voice in the following way: "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear...Take heed what you hear. With what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you, and it shall be added to you. For he who has, it shall be given to him; and he who does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him" (Mark 4:23-25). The measure of the Spirit that can be dispensed into our inward parts depends on the measure of our hearing. If we are dull of hearing, we will only be able to receive the milk of the word and not its solid food (Heb. 5:11-14). We need to be like the servant in Exodus 21:2-6 who said that he loved his master, his wife, and his children and that he would not go out free. Then his master took him to the doorpost and bored his ear through with an awl so that he could serve his master forever. The servant here is a type of Christ as the Slave-Savior



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who loved the Father (His Master—John 14:31), His wife (the church—Eph. 5:25), and His children (His believers—Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:2). We need to be one with Christ, the Slave-Savior to God, as our pattern in our absolute consecration to Him as our Master (6:9; Col. 4:1; Matt. 23:8, 10; John 13:13-14), which comes out of our love for Him, the church, and the believers. Such absolute consecration gives the Lord the way to open our ear to hear His divine instructions and communication, which dispense the divine Spirit into us for our service to Him by the Spirit of God (Phil. 3:3). If we allow the Lord to awaken us morning by morning to spend time to be infused with Him, He will open our ear to hear as an instructed one, and He will give us His word to speak with the tongue of an instructed one, putting His words of spirit and life in our mouth for the sustenance of the weary ones (Isa. 50:4-5; John 6:63). We must continually receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith so that we can minister the Lord's words of spirit and life to others for the growth of the seed of life in them. It is by the hearing of faith that we enjoy Christ as the reality of the seed of Abraham, the transfigured descendant of Abraham, who is our blessing and who flows out of us as a blessing to God's people to build them up as His Body and to transform them to be His bride.

### *Christ as the Seed of David*

The revelation of Christ as the seed of David was first spoken by God to David through Nathan the prophet in 2 Samuel 7. God told David,

When your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, which will come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. It is he who will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he will be My son. (vv. 12-14)

This is a prophecy in typology revealing that Christ as the seed of David would become the Son of God to be the Builder of the church as the house of God and as the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:18-19). The apostle Paul refers to these verses when he says that the gospel of God is "concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:3-4). The entire Bible reveals that God's building is a person. God's building is Christ, who is the building of God into man and the building of man into God. God's incarnation was His building Himself into the man Jesus to become God's building as the tabernacle of God and the temple of God (John 1:14; 2:19-21). He came into the womb of a virgin who was a descendant of David to build divinity into humanity.

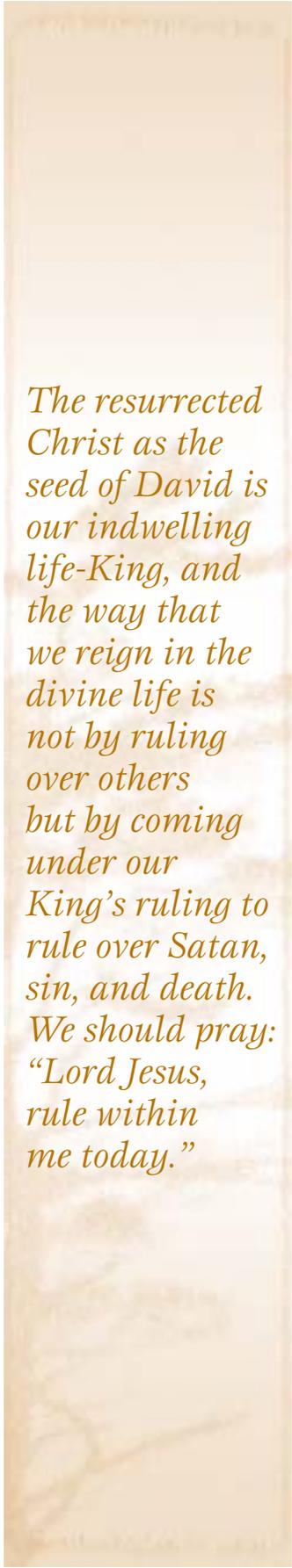
As the Word, God became flesh to tabernacle among men (1:14), but Romans 8:3 says that Christ was only in the likeness of the flesh of sin. He did not possess in any way the sin of the flesh (2 Cor. 5:21). Even though He was the complete God and a perfect and sinless man, Christ still put on the human flesh, the humanity of the old creation, something that had nothing to do with the divinity of His divine sonship in eternity past. By His incarnation, as the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18), He brought divinity into humanity to build God into man. By His resurrection He brought humanity into divinity to build man into God. The Bible reveals that resurrection was a birth to the man Jesus (Acts 13:33). In resurrection His humanity was begotten into divinity; that is, His humanity was sanctified, uplifted, transformed, and transfigured, "divinized," to be brought into the divine sonship. By His incarnation Christ, who was the Lord of David and the root of David, built God into man, into David's lineage, to become the seed of David, the son of David, the offspring of David (Matt. 1:1; 22:41-45; Rev. 22:16). In resurrection Christ's humanity was deified, "sonized," meaning that He became the Son of God not only in His divinity but also in His humanity; in resurrection He was designated to be the firstborn Son of God, possessing both divinity and humanity (Rom. 8:29). Now this resurrected God-man, the building of God into

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man and of man into God, is the life-giving Spirit, and this life-giving Spirit is the seed of life, the seed of David, sown into us so that He might grow in us, live in us, develop in us, and be expressed from within us as the form of God for the building up of the church as the house of God and the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 3:9; Rom. 14:17).

The seed of David is the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit sown into us to be God's sure mercies shown to David through his descendant Mary, the mother of Christ (Matt. 1:16), for the dispensing of God Himself into all the believers of Christ in His resurrection (Acts 13:32-35; Isa. 55:3-4). In Acts 13:33 Paul says that on the day of resurrection Jesus was begotten to be God's Son, that is, the firstborn Son of God. Then in verse 34 Paul refers to the resurrected Christ as "the holy things of David, the faithful things," and in verse 35 to the resurrected Christ as the "Holy One." Footnote 1 of Acts 13:34 in the Recovery Version points out that the Greek word used for *Holy One* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *chesed*, which is translated as "mercies" in Isaiah 55:3. In this verse the Lord says, "Incline your ear and come to Me; / Hear, so that your soul may live; / And I will make an eternal covenant with you, / Even the sure mercies shown to David." Isaiah 55:4, prophesying concerning Christ, shows that these sure mercies are a person, because this verse says, "Indeed, I have given Him as a Witness to the peoples, / A Leader and a Commander to the peoples." Actually, God's eternal covenant with us is the sure mercies shown to David, and these sure mercies shown to David are the resurrected Christ Himself as the firstborn Son of God and the life-giving Spirit. He is God's Witness so that we may be His witnesses, and He is our Leader and Commander so that He may rule within us to bring us into the kingdom age where He will be the Leader and Commander of all the nations of the earth. The resurrected Christ as the seed of David is the Prince, the King, living within us so that we may share His kingship and reign in the divine life for God's administration by receiving Him as the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (Rev. 17:14; Rom. 5:17). He is our indwelling life-King, and the way that we reign in the divine life is not by ruling over others but by coming under our King's ruling to rule over Satan, sin, and death. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens is Christ as the life-giving Spirit ruling within us. We should pray: "Lord Jesus, rule within me today. Head me up. I want to consult You in everything. I want You to be the Lord in me. I enthrone You in the center of my being today. Keep me absolutely open to You all day long so that I may continually receive You as the river of abundant grace and as the Giver of the gift of righteousness to remain in the restriction of You as my life and under the ruling of You as my Lord."

All the unsearchable riches of the resurrected Christ as the seed of David, our Lord and King, are embodied in and realized as the life-giving Spirit to be God's mercies to us. Whatever we need, He is. All the aspects of the Spirit (such as the mind of the Spirit, the love of the Spirit, the grace of the Spirit, the peace of the Spirit, the joy of the Spirit, the wisdom of the Spirit, the counsel of the Spirit, the power of the Spirit, and the life of the Spirit) are mercies to us and have all been covenanted to us (Isa. 55:3). The new testament is the new covenant, and a testament is a will (Heb. 8:8-12; 9:16-17). The enactment of a person's will, with all of that person's wealth bequeathed to his inheritors, requires the death of that person. Christ's death enacted the new covenant (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; Heb. 9:15). What is remarkable is that He died to enact the new covenant so that in resurrection He could *become* the new covenant. God spoke concerning the resurrected Christ becoming the new covenant when He said through Isaiah, "I have kept You and have given You / As a covenant for the people, as a light for the nations" (42:6). As the life-giving Spirit in resurrection, Christ is the reality of all the bequests of the new covenant, the eternal covenant. Now in His heavenly ministry in His ascension as our great High Priest, He is the Executor of the new covenant, making sure that all that He is as the bequests of God's eternal covenant, as multifarious aspects of Himself as the life-giving Spirit, and as God's sure mercies are being dispensed into us for our enjoyment (Heb. 8:1, 6; 9:15; 12:24).



*The resurrected Christ as the seed of David is our indwelling life-King, and the way that we reign in the divine life is not by ruling over others but by coming under our King's ruling to rule over Satan, sin, and death. We should pray: "Lord Jesus, rule within me today."*

*The first great evil in the sight of God is for us to forsake Him as our fountain, our source of life. The second great evil is to turn to a source other than God, to labor painstakingly to make something or have something as some kind of enjoyment to replace God in our lives.*

Isaiah 55 reveals that the sure mercies shown to David are Christ as the life-giving Spirit bequeathed to us to be our spiritual drink, our spiritual food, our heavenly rain, and our heavenly snow so that we may be His drinkers, eaters, and sowers. God's call to His people is, "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, / And you who have no money; / Come, buy and eat; / Yes, come, buy wine and milk / Without money and without price" (v. 1). We need to be His seekers and enjoyers who drink of Him as the fountain of living waters by calling upon His name (v. 6; 12:3-4). We have been called by God to enjoy Christ as our spiritual drink. We have all been given by God "to drink one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). We can eat of Christ as our spiritual food by abiding in His word. The words that He speaks to us are spirit and life (John 6:63). We can enjoy Christ as our new wine (Matt. 9:17) and also as the wine producer, sacrificing Himself for the sake of God's interests and God's children (Mark 10:45). We can be filled with Him as the invigorating newness of life (Rom. 6:4), as the reality of the new wine, so that we may serve Him in newness of spirit (7:6) to cheer God for God's satisfaction and to cheer man for man's enjoyment (Judg. 9:13). Christ as the life-giving Spirit is also our spiritual milk embodied in His pure and guileless word, by which we can grow for the building up of God's spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:2-5). Isaiah 55 also reveals that Christ as the life-giving Spirit bestows His sure mercies on us as the heavenly rain and snow. His ascended and heavenly ways and thoughts water the soil of our heart by His word to supply us with Himself as the seed of life to sow into others and as the bread of life for us to eat and feed others (vv. 8-11).

In order to enjoy Him as the sure mercies of God, we need to give ourselves to seek Him, repent of our evil ways and thoughts, and enjoy His gracious compassion and forgiveness. "Let the wicked forsake his way, / And the evildoer, his thoughts; / And let him return to Jehovah, and He will have compassion on him; / And to our God, for He will pardon abundantly" (v. 7). The footnote on Isaiah 57:20 in the Recovery Version says, "The evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat and enjoy the Lord (cf. 55:1-2). They do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him. In the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this." This is both a remarkable revelation of the desire of God's heart and a holy warning from Him to stay in the central lane of His economy by keeping ourselves in the enjoyment of Christ as the life-giving Spirit so that He may dispense Himself into our entire being for our full salvation and His ultimate expression. The Lord tells us in Jeremiah 2:13, "My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water." The first great evil in the sight of God is for us to forsake Him as our fountain, our source of life. The second great evil is to turn to a source other than God, to labor painstakingly to make something or have something as some kind of enjoyment or pleasure to replace God in our lives. Any replacement of God or substitute of Christ in our lives is an idol in God's sight, and our labor to seek enjoyment outside of God by being lovers of self, lovers of pleasure, or lovers of money is to hew out broken cisterns which hold no water. In these grievous days of decline and apostasy, we need to give ourselves to be lovers of God, giving Him the first place in every part of our being, in every area of our life, and in every aspect of our service for His glory and kingdom (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Col. 1:18). The lovers of God are the enjoyers of God, who is embodied in Christ and realized as the life-giving Spirit, the totality of the sure mercies of God covenanted to His chosen and redeemed people.

#### **Having a Fresh, Up-to-date, Daily Consecration to Christ So That He May Grow in Us as the Seed of Life for the Building Up of His Body**

For the growth of the seed of life within us, we need to have a fresh, up-to-date, daily consecration to Him of our human spirit, our human heart, and our mortal body so that the divine seed of life can grow in us with the full supply of all the human nutrients of our inner being for Christ to be magnified in our mortal body and for us to be swallowed

up by life for the building up of Christ's Body (Matt. 5:3, 8; Prov. 4:23; Phil. 1:20; Col. 2:19). According to the Bible, growth equals building; this takes place by the growth of Christ as the seed of life within us (1 John 3:9; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16). The Lord sows Himself as the seed of life into men's hearts, the soil, so that He may grow and live in them and be expressed from within them (Luke 8:11-15). The seed is sown into the soil to grow with the nutrients of the soil; as a result, the produce is a composition of elements from both the seed and the soil (Mark 4:26-28). We have within us certain nutrients created by God as a preparation for His coming into us to grow in us; God has created the human spirit with the human nutrients along with the human heart as the soil for Himself as the divine seed. The rate at which we grow in life depends not on the divine seed but on how many nutrients we afford this seed; the more nutrients we supply, the faster the seed will grow, and the more it will flourish. This means that we need to give our human spirit to the Lord, asking Him to grant us the blessing of being poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3). To be poor in spirit is to be unloaded and emptied in our spirit so that we can receive a new revelation of Christ, have new experience of Christ, and be open to receive new thoughts from Christ. This to be as the little children who live in the reality of the kingdom of God (18:3-4). We need to give our heart daily to the Lord, seeking pureness of heart; to be pure in heart means that we have no other goal or aim but Christ Himself (5:8; Prov. 22:11). If we are going to have the Lord as the seed of life grow within us to be our full enjoyment, we have to open to the Lord absolutely and cooperate with Him to deal with our heart in the light of His presence so that our heart is maintained to be the good soil in which He can grow without any obstacles, frustrations, or hindrances (Matt. 13:3-9, 19-23). Such a practical, daily consecration of our human spirit and human heart to the Lord so that we may magnify Him in our mortal body gives Him the way to grow in us so that we may be men of life by the growth of life for the building up of the Body of Christ.

**O**ur fresh and daily consecration to the Lord involves the following practical points and life principles, by which we can cooperate with Him for Him to have the full way to grow as the seed of life within us so that we may dispense Him as the seed of life into others:

(1) We need to take time to have a daily, private, and personal time with the Lord morning by morning so that we may be rooted in Christ to absorb God and grow with the growth of God for the building up of the church as the house of God and the kingdom of God (Col. 2:19; Isa. 50:4-5; Mark 1:35; cf. Luke 8:15). This means that we need to develop a hidden life with the Lord as a "root system," a life of our being rooted deeply in Christ and of Christ being rooted deeply in us (Col. 2:7; Eph. 3:17).

(2) We must daily ask God the Father to strengthen us with power through His Spirit into our inner man so that we may worship God in and with our spirit and with Christ as our truthfulness for Christ to make His home in our heart (Eph. 3:16-19; John 4:23-24).

(3) Our heart needs to be established blameless in holiness, we need to ask the Lord to direct our heart into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ, and we need to deal with our heart so that it may be the good earth in which Christ can grow in an unhindered way (1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Thes. 3:5; Matt. 13:8).

(4) We need to forgive others from our heart by the indwelling Christ as our forgiving life, allowing Him to rule in us for the reality of the kingdom, and to forgive others from our heart by the indwelling Christ as our arbitrating peace, allowing Him to preside in us for the one new man; we need to release others by forgiving them so that we may be released to be forgiven by God for the freedom of the growth of the seed of God in us (6:15; 18:35; Col. 3:12-15; Luke 6:37).

(5) We need to give our material possessions in secret for the sowing and spreading of

*In order for the seed of life to grow within us, we have to open to the Lord absolutely and cooperate with Him to deal with our heart in His presence so that it can be maintained as good soil in which He can grow without any obstacles, frustrations, or hindrances.*

*In the New Testament there is only the unique work of the Triune God to dispense and work Himself into man for the building up of His unique church. As God's co-workers, we need to have an ear to hear and obey when God's word comes through the fellowship of the Body.*

the seed of life, giving our material supply to the church of God, to the needy saints of God, to the full-time servants of God, and to the poor people in the love of God and with the kindness of God for the gospel of God (v. 38; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Matt. 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; Acts 11:29; Rom. 15:26; Phil. 4:16-17).

(6) All of our service to the Lord must originate from God as we cooperate with Him to sow Him as the seed of life into others and to water the seed of life within them for their growth in life. M. E. Barber was a missionary to China who was perhaps the greatest help to Watchman Nee in his pursuit to know Christ as the inner life for the building up of the church. Witness Lee, an intimate co-worker of Watchman Nee, in his book entitled *Knowing Life and the Church*, quotes Miss Barber as saying, "Whoever cannot stop working for the sake of God cannot work for the sake of God" (198). David was an excellent example of this. Although David had the opportunity, saw the need, and had the ability to build the temple of God, he stopped when God's word came to him (2 Sam. 7:18, 25, 27; cf. Luke 1:38). David was the king of Israel, and he had an intimate relationship of nearness and dearness with the Lord. Out of his love for the Lord, he wanted to build the Lord a temple, a house, but God spoke to David through the prophet Nathan that He did not want David to be the builder of His temple but that his son would build the temple. David could have been proud and said, "Nathan, who do you think you are? I have my work. I know the Lord very intimately, and I am the king. I do not care what you say. I am going to build the temple and carry out my work." But David did not work according to his preference, his way, or his desire. He stopped when he heard the word of God, because he loved God. He did not serve God according to his preference. He did not want his own work for his self-exaltation. Actually, in the New Testament there is only one work; that is the unique work of the Triune God to dispense and work Himself into man for the building up of His unique church. Because we are God's co-workers in His unique work, we need to have an ear to hear and obey when God's word comes to us through the fellowship of the Body, the counsel of those with whom we labor in the Lord.

Witness Lee notes that "David's stopping established a twofold testimony in the universe. First, all the work in the universe should come from God, not from man. Second, all that matters is what God does for man, not what man does for God" (*Knowing Life* 198). All of our service to God must be initiated by Him as the source, must be through Him as the means and the power, and must be to Him for His glory (Rom. 11:36). Otherwise, we can sin in our service to God; this is what Numbers 18:1 calls "the iniquity of the sanctuary." Thus, we need to look to the Lord by praying, "Lord, I ask that all of my service would come out from You as my source, that all that I do would be through You as my means, my power, my life, and my everything, and that all that I do would be to You for Your glory." In order to serve God and work together with Him according to His nature, desire, way, and preference, we need to let God speak to us and command us out of our fear of Him, our godly awe, respect, and reverence of Him, and out of our intimate and burning love for Him (Exo. 21:1-6; Psa. 86:11; 1 Cor. 2:9).

Our service to God must be like David's service, who "served his own generation by the counsel of God" (Acts 13:36). David's service to God came out of a life of brokenness, a life in which his natural strength and ability were torn down by God through his failures so that God could gain David for His building. Both the builder of the temple and the site of the temple came out of David's failures and out of his being forgiven by God of his sins. David's moral failure with Bath-sheba and his repentance to God issued in Solomon, the builder of the temple (2 Sam. 12:13, 24-25; Matt. 1:6). This shows that our confession and repentance "married" to God's gracious forgiveness issues in God's being built into our being and our becoming useful to God to become a building member of the Body of Christ (Psa. 51). David also failed by numbering God's people, which was a manifestation of his hidden pride and boast in numbers and

not in God. God's judgment was abated by David's repentance and confession of his sin, and his obeying God by going to the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite to offer acceptable sacrifices to God (2 Sam. 24:1-10, 18-25; 1 Chron. 21:18). Solomon built the temple on this very place that David prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, which was on Mount Moriah (2 Chron. 3:1). This shows that God's building was accomplished not out of what David did for God but out of what God did for David in His mercy to David, His forgiveness of David, His restoration of David, and His purifying of David's spirit and transforming of David's heart so that all of David's work would come out of God and be by God for the glory of God.

(7) We need to work together with Christ as the Sower to sow the seed of life as the word of God through our preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God to the whole inhabited earth, both to the unbelievers for their conversion to Christ and to the believers for their growth in Christ; this is the sowing, planting, and watering of the seed of life by announcing the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel and by prophesying for the building up of the church as the house of God and the kingdom of God (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 1:1; Eph. 3:8; 1 Cor. 3:6; 14:4b, 31).

The intrinsic significance of Christ as the seed of life, the tree of life, implanted in us and growing within us is the intrinsic significance of the heavenly vision of God's economy, of our living the life of a God-man according to this heavenly vision, and of our working together with God to carry out this vision. This is the intrinsic significance of the vision of eternity, the life of eternity, and the work of eternity. We must see the vision of eternity, which is the vision of the central thought of God, the vision of His economy to sow Himself in Christ into us, His believers, that He may grow within us and transform us into His image for the building up of Christ's Body, which is the preparation of His bride, the holy city, the New Jerusalem. We must live the life of eternity by cooperating with Christ to daily consecrate our spirit and our heart to Him so that He may have the full ground to grow in us and be magnified in our mortal body as we live Him for the building up of His Body. Finally, we must work the work of eternity by sowing Christ as the seed of life, the word of God, into others and by ministering the living water of the Spirit for the growth of Christ as the seed of life within them. In this way we can propagate Christ as the seed of God's kingdom and minister Christ for the spread of God's kingdom by preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth to turn the age from the age of grace to the age of Christ's kingdom of one thousand years, consummating in His eternal kingdom in which He and we will reign forever and ever (Rev. 11:15; 22:5). This is the ultimate consummation of Christ as the seed of life sown into us to grow within us for God's building. 

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The primary sources for the major thoughts and utterances concerning Christ as the three-fold seed of life (the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of David) come from chapter 10 of *The Crucial Revelation of Life in the Scriptures* by Witness Lee, published in Anaheim, California, by Living Stream Ministry, 1987; and from Messages 8 and 9 of *The Central Line of the Divine Revelation* by Witness Lee, published in Anaheim, California, by Living Stream Ministry, 1991.

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