Christ As Life Series

Like A Dove

R.T. Nusbaum

Cover Design by Vision Designs, Superior, CO Email: info@beyondthemachine.com

Web: www.beyondthemachine.com

Like A Dove ©2013 by Dying Seed Press

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	7
An Introduction To The Christ As Life Series	9
Like A Dove	11
INTRODUCTION	13
CHAPTER ONE: Noah And The Dove	17
CHAPTER TWO: The Dove As Eliezer	49
CHAPTER THREE: The Dove And The Bride	77
CHAPTER FOUR: Relationship With The Dove	91

Acknowlegements

No work on this level could ever be accomplished by one individual. Many more people who could ever be named have a part in making the Christ As Life Series possible. My thanks go out to all these people.

To name a few who have had a major role in this endeavor, let me begin with acknowledging Mallory Patrick. She has been a faithful friend and co-worker for many years. There is almost no book I have written that she has not been the editor. This series is no exception. Aside from that, she was also the one who wrote most of the study questions for these manuals. She is a valued and trusted laborer.

Special thanks also to my daughter, Cassie Koshatka, who has been an editor in this series and for other books as well. She also has worked extremely hard in laying out these books on the computer. "I have no greater joy then to see my children walk in truth" (III Jn. 4).

Another worker who has assisted in editing, lay-out and study questions is Kelly Koshatka. My thanks for having the "spirit of the thing" as well as for all the work. Kelly has authored many books pertaining to Christ as life that are found in the recommended reading section. Please take advantage of this prolific and Christ-centered author.

Nothing could be accomplished without the support of my loving wife and life-long companion. She has stood by me through all these years. Thank you, Debbie.

Finally, I would just like to say thank you to some who have support this endeavor all along. Thank you to Mitch Anthony who, in many ways, inspired the idea of the series and who also has used his own finances to make them possible. Thanks also to Doug Fischer who has promoted, raised funds and spent much energy in getting these books into the hands of the hungry. Thanks to Jeff and Roxanna Sherrill who translated many of the books into Spanish.

To all of you I am eternally grateful.

An Explanation of the Christ As Life Series

This Christ As Life Study Manual is one of a series that are meant to set forth a whole body of truth concerning Christ being the life of the believer. At this point there are seven different manuals with the hope of adding more in the future. Each manual is a compilation of several smaller books which were put together to comprise each volume.

Volume One in the Christ As Life Series is a combination of five smaller books which set forth the truth in a more general way. Each of the volumes after that are given to specific areas of the message. The emphasis of each volume is described below:

Christ As Life Series Study Manual

Volume One: General Presentation
Volume Two: The Revelation Of Christ

Volume Three: Living In Christ Volume Four: The Cross Of Christ

Volume Five: Christ In You

Volume Six: The Nature Of Christ Volume Seven: The Bride Of Christ

Additional manuals to come!

Each separate book is accompanied by study questions for each chapter, answer keys to the questions, and a list of recommended reading of other books that further expand the explanations of the specific subject of each study manual.

Though every effort has been made to make each manual as thorough as possible pertaining to the subject it represents, these books are not comprehensive in scope. It is for this reason that we suggest that each person follow up by obtaining books from the recommended reading list.

While each book is filled with truth, no book is meant to stand alone. When read together, all the books together set forth the larger picture of truth that the author wishes to convey. Because the whole series is inter-related some truth from each of the books can be found in the other books also.

These books can be used as curriculum in schools, churches, Sunday School classes, home groups, personal study or in a variety of other ways. They were put in

a "study format" with questions so that the reader may look up scriptures pertaining to the subjects and verify it in the Word of God. Taking time to search the scriptures pertaining to these things can be immensely valuable.

The author knows that there are many basic subjects in the Bible that are not mentioned in these books. It is assumed that the average person reading these manuals has had a basic foundation of Christian beliefs laid. No attempt is given in this direction.

However, it is believed that much of modern day religion has left out the truths set forth in these books and are majoring on "minors". Embracing the realities set forth in the Christ As Life Series does not require a person to leave off concerning prayer, ministry to the poor or any other subject. But when Christ is given His rightful place, areas that were once done by religious duty may now be carried out in a spirit of life.

To embrace the teachings of Christ as life does not make a person superior in any way. If Christ is seen rightly, there will be no lifting up of men or ministry. Christ alone will be glorified.

-1CDE

Cike
A
Dove

Introduction

Preface

This book is a labor of love, written out of appreciation for the Holy Spirit. For anyone who really loves and honors Jesus as preeminent, he or she will need a relationship with the Holy Spirit. Our aim has not been to paint such a clear picture of the Holy Spirit through gaining information about Him that we assume that we understand all about Him. Rather, our heart's desire has been to introduce the reader more intimately to the Person of the Holy Spirit in order that we may love, honor, and relate to Him in the way that will most deeply bless Him. May this be a time to draw closer to the Holy Spirit, our great Teacher and Guide. He is the one who will bring us into all fullness. As we come to know the Holy Spirit, may we be more gentle, tender, and concerned about Him on a day-to-day basis. As we become more sensitive to Him, we will also be more aware of Him as an actual Person so that we may cultivate a fellowship of the Spirit. Mere words can do nothing unless our hearts sincerely turn and become awakened to the reality of His Person.

The Person of the Holy Spirit

Throughout this book we will look into certain passages of Scripture so as to broaden our view of the Holy Spirit, aspiring to transcend the realm of religious presentation and be ushered into a place of true relationship with Him. The aim is to go beyond our own understanding and begin to know the thought and desire by which He functions. We believe that seeing His heart, rather than merely acquiring a basic religious understanding of the theology of the subject, will align us more clearly with His purposes.

To begin with, let us look at the heart of the Holy Spirit as a Person. He is not an invisible mist or influence but the third Person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is as much a part of this Triune God as is the Father and the Son. Insomuch as the Father is a Father to us and Jesus is our Lord and Life, the Holy Spirit is also meant to be very intimately in relationship with us. But how shall we truly understand our relationship to Him until we see His relationship within the Godhead?

"FOR US TO REALLY FATHOM WHAT IS IN HIS HEART AS HE RELATES TO US, WE MUST FIRST BE AFFECTED WITH THE DEPTH OF HIS HEART FOR THE FATHER AND THE SON. TO GAZE UPON HIM IN THIS WAY WILL BEGIN TO EXPLAIN HIS TRUE MINISTRY TO THE CHURCH."

To see how the Holy Spirit relates within the Godhead is to understand His place within the flow of Three as One. The Holy Spirit is the One sent out from the Father and Son to us (cf. Jn. 14:26). He is sent by Them with a divine purpose. For us to really fathom what is in His heart as He relates to us, we must first be affected with the depth of His heart for the Father and the Son. To gaze upon Him in this way will begin to explain His true ministry to the Church. Our purpose in examining Him in this way is so that we might more intimately discover His relating within the Godhead.

Introducing the Holy Spirit as a Dove

The Holy Spirit is represented by a dove. Let us look at Matthew 3:13-17 for an example of this in the scriptures.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized of Him. But John forbad Him saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and cometh Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness, Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, this is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Notice that these scriptures show us a picture of the Holy Spirit being presented "like a dove." It does not say that a dove descended but that the Spirit of God descended like a dove. In a similar comparison, we find the Scriptures describing

Introduction

Jesus as a Lamb (cf. Jn. 1:29). There are many reasons why we may think the Holy Spirit would be pictured as a dove. Some say it is because doves are peaceful and gentle birds. Others notice that you have to be quiet to hear Him and that He is easily grieved (cf. Eph. 4:30). It is wonderful that these pieces can help us know the Person of the Holy Spirit just by this representation of Him being like a dove.

The Mission of the Holy Spirit

Many who have been in the Lord awhile are familiar with the temporal ministry of the Holy Spirit. We know that He brings us gifts and empowers us for ministry. But there is a deep and eternal work that He bears in relationship to the Body and Bride of Christ. This eternal purpose relates to Him bringing us into the fullness of our union in Christ. How can we know how to relate to the Holy Spirit correctly unless we comprehend the basis upon which He has come, who He is, and the heart in which He ministers?

We can come into a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit when we understand His motivations. Again, His work in our lives goes beyond temporal ministries into an eternal work and call in relationship to the Body of Christ, the Bride.

Greater than coming to us to endow us with ministries, the Holy Spirit flows forth unto us from His relationship with the Father and the Son. The plan for His mission began well before us, reaching far back into eternity. It is back to this place that He is seeking to bring us. He is not trying to bring us back to something that once was but to an eternal place, a place in which the Godhead has always existed. To understand where we are going, we must first see from where He is coming.

When we do become aware of the heart of the Holy Spirit, we can begin to have vision and flow with Him in His purpose. Then we will understand that He can be taken advantage of because of His dove nature that will just keep bowing to and serving others. Failing to protect the Holy Spirit and relate to Him properly could put Him in the position of becoming our servant who does the bidding of our own desires rather than freeing Him to function as the Father's servant who does the bidding of His Son that He might have a Bride. Some may assume that they know the purpose for which He has come is to bless them in their lives and business, making them happy and comfortable. But our purpose should be to make the Holy Spirit happy and comfortable, giving Him the liberty to bring unto the Son the one that is after His kind – a Bride. We will discuss these things further in the upcoming chapters.

My Relationship with the Holy Spirit

Before we go further, we may ask ourselves a question: "Do I care about the Person of the Holy Spirit, or do I only care that He takes care of me?" We may feel confident that we love and care deeply for Jesus and the Father, but what about the Holy Spirit? Do we really care about Him, or is He almost not like a Person to us? Many feel that they can visually understand the Father and the Son to some degree, but because we do not have a clue what the Holy Spirit looks like, we could assume that He is just some kind of a vapor or energy field. The reality is that He is a Person, and in one sense He is closer to us than anybody else. He has limited Himself just as Jesus did when He came to the earth in His incarnation. He has emptied Himself, just like Jesus did, and just like the Father did. The Father, Son, and Spirit are One, and they are of one spirit because they have one nature and one way. Therefore the Holy Spirit is no different than the Father and Jesus, other than the obvious expressions of the way they manifest in their Persons. In nature they are the same. The Jesus that you love because of His precious nature is at work in the Holy Spirit also. If you hold the Lamb as precious, the Dove is just as precious. If you have never really seen that before, can your heart be touched by that? May we open our hearts to Him.

He Is a Dove

The Bible refers to the Holy Spirit as a dove, and that is why we have named this book "Like A Dove" in honor of Him. The title defines the Holy Spirit in His nature much like Jesus is called the Lamb of God. Very few people consider the Dove in the proper manner. Very few know Him according to His nature. If they did, it would cause them to cling to Him in the sense of loving and being with Him, instead of grasping after Him for personal blessings and freedom.

We will bring all of these aspects into sharper focus in the upcoming chapters. As we continue, may we seek to genuinely gaze upon the heart of the Holy Spirit, preparing our hearts to realize the kind of Person that He really is.

This book is divided into several sections. Each section shares different aspects of the Holy Spirit in His being, way, and ministry.

Chapter One Noah And The Dove

"And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

II Peter 2:5

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Hebrews 11:7

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

I Peter 3:20

As we will find throughout the rest of this book, there is a necessity for cultivating sensitivity to the Holy Spirit as a Person, Who is actively at work in us to reveal the Son. In this particular chapter we will look at an aspect of the Holy Spirit as seen in the dove that was with Noah during his time in the ark. In examining the experience of Noah, we will be able to observe this relationship with the Dove more closely with reference to the inworking of the Cross in a believer.

To explore the work of the Holy Spirit, we will use types and shadows dealing with the flood in Genesis chapters six and seven. The flood itself clearly represents the judgment of God upon that which is unsaved (cf. II Pet. 2:5). That being said, we can easily embrace the people in the ark as a type of those who are saved (cf. Heb. 11:7). As such, they represent the blood-bought, born-again believers who are safe in Christ (cf. I Pet. 3:20). Through our picture of Noah and the flood, it would be easy to assume that God's goal is to save us from destruction by saving us in

Christ; however, a new creation awaited those eight souls when they departed from the ark after the flood. That New Creation that Christians are invited to partake of is not referring to heaven. It relates to saved believers coming into the fullness of union with Christ through His death and resurrection. The appearance of the Dove takes place as the "saved ones" near this new existence by Christ (cf. Gen. 8:8-12). The only way they will discover it is by means of the dove, represented by the Holy Spirit.

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto

thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

Genesis 6:1-22

Before we can fully set forth the work of the Holy Spirit, we must set the stage by presenting the conditions under which He works. Let us consider God's view of the old creation and then God's remedy, which is the Cross. His perspective concerning the old creation involves fallen man, who has no hope (cf. Eph. 2:2-6). God's remedy for that fallen condition is the Cross. The flood during the time of Noah represents the Cross, and the ark that Noah and his family entered also represents the Cross, but from a different angle. The flood represents the Cross as applied to fallen man, but the ark represents the Cross for the people of God. As Christians, we know that life comes out of death. For the Christian the Cross represents death, but unlike the sinner, there is life that comes forth from it (cf. Jn. 12:24; I Cor. 15:36). This is the picture we get from Noah and his family as they went into the ark.

"WHEN NOAH AND HIS FAMILY ENTERED THE ARK, THEY ALSO ENTERED A TIME PERIOD OF DEATH AND BURIAL. IT IS A SEASON BETWEEN HAVING LEFT THE OLD CREATION AND YET NOT HAVING ENTERED FULLY INTO THE NEW CREATION IN AN EXPERIENTIAL MANNER."

For a time Noah's family remained restricted to the ark; they could not leave. Those eight people shared that small space with countless pairs of animals. Can you imagine what it would have smelled like, shut up in the ark day after day and unable to get away? The stench would have been unbearable. When Noah and his family entered the ark, they also entered a time period of death and burial. It is a season between having left the old creation and yet not having entered fully into the New Creation in an experiential manner. Once the flood waters arose they knew the work of putting away the old creation was finished, but they had to continue in burial until resurrection was revealed.

Many Christians are in this same place spiritually. They know the old creation is done away, and they know the old man is crucified, but as far as their personal walk and experience is concerned there is still a stench of the old (consider Romans chapter seven). Personal issues still remain because the fullness of the Cross calls for a personal confrontation with our lives. In other words, the Cross must be applied personally. Until you have come through the Cross in a real way – not just in a theological way – it remains nothing but doctrine or deep teaching.

Truth or Reality?

Although going through the ark experience definitely includes resurrection and sets forth the truth of resurrection in certainty, the reality of resurrection is not being set forth in the lives of some believers. There is a distinction between the truth and the reality of something. We can set forth the truth of something and walk away from that truth in our daily walk, having no reality of it in our lives. The Holy Spirit's ministry is to first begin to set forth the truth of the reality, and then bring us into the reality in a practical way. This is an enormously important principle. So many people, at best, are only seeking the truth of the reality at best, and that is not the completion of what God wants at all.

Noah Partakes of the Death He Has Been Preaching

Let us set forth Noah as an example of a man moving from the truth of something into the reality of it. Before entering into the ark, God spoke to Noah and he began to preach righteousness (cf. Gen. 6:3), continuing for one hundred and twenty years (cf. II Pet. 2:5). At that time Noah had not yet experienced the reality

"THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRY IS
TO FIRST BEGIN TO SET FORTH
THE TRUTH OF THE REALITY, AND
THEN BRING US INTO THE
REALITY IN A PRACTICAL WAY.
THIS IS AN ENORMOUSLY
IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE."

of what he was preaching, but once the ark was finished the time came for him to go down into that death. This scenario can be something true of a believer's experience today. It is feasible that some who follow Jesus have learned deep truths concerning the Cross but have yet to experience those truths becoming life within. Anyone can gain the

terminology of the message of Christ and Him crucified, but not all have come into the experience of it. The ark was the vehicle by which Noah might experience the death ordered by God in Christ.

As was mentioned, there were two "deaths" that took place when the flood occurred. Though we will deal with this at length later, it is good to realize that everyone on the face of the earth went into death when the floods came, but Noah partook of that death in Christ as seen in the type and shadow of the ark (cf. I Pet. 3:20-22). Noah was not personally in the water in the flood, but he experienced it in the belly of the ark. He was inside the ark with all the animals that were gathered in by twos. These truths are best kept in mind as we begin our study of Noah.

Removal into the Ark

When the time came for Noah and his family to enter the ark, God shut them all in (cf. Gen. 7:16). It is important to remember that it was God who shut the door. In this sense He sealed their fate, for they were going down into a death wherein they would never again see their home, friends, or all the things that were familiar to them. The world as they knew it was over when they stepped into the ark. The Lord has locked them away. During that long period of time, there would be many upheavals and no true peace. Even in the midst of these troubles, some could find comfort that at least they are not outside of the ark. Nevertheless, when you are suffering troubles such as these, this thought does not bring very much conciliation. Time went by, and it was raining constantly. Noah's family could not see the sun clearly through the clouds, so it was hard to mark days. It was loud and smelly. After a while in this setting, someone could easily become quite bewildered and confused. This experience would be similar to that of a caterpillar entering into a cocoon. For that caterpillar, that confined and dark place is a death to his old life, but the end result is breaking out into a new creation existence. Both the cocoon and the ark are examples to us today of God's dealing in our lives to bring us into His greater plan. During this time, God is trying to work in us an openness to the message of the Dove when He arrives. The Dove wants to first bring us a message, and this message becomes clear as we see our need in the middle of that dark, confining and smelly ark.

"THIS ARK CREATES A SITUATION IN WHICH THE STENCH OF THE FIRST CREATION IS BROUGHT TO THE FOREFRONT SO THAT THOSE WITHIN CAN EXPERIENCE IT FOR WHAT IT REALLY IS. THIS IS NOT A HAPPY AND COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT!"

Within the ark they had one window, and that window looked up (cf. Gen. 6:16; 8:6). Is not God good to provide a window into the heavenlies (cf. Eph. 1:3, 17-21)? Yet with only one window it would still be quite dark, even during full daylight. Imagine being sealed in with one window and this window was higher than you so that you had to be raised up just to look out from it. Dwelling in that ark would mean existing in what amounted to total darkness, except for a few candles. Within this dark ark, there would have been many odors coming from the many animals within. This ark creates a situation in which the stench of the first creation is brought to the forefront so that those within can experience it for what it really is. This is not a happy and comfortable environment! People like camping, but not for a year locked in with lots of stinky animals. It is important that we take a good hard

look at these different elements, for they represent a process we will all go through in coming into the New Creation in fullness. If we comprehend these things, we will be more prepared to embrace the ministry of the Holy Spirit during this season.

The Word as Water

The flood during Noah's time represents death for the old man, the old creation, and the whole of fallen mankind, but there is something else happening simultaneously. In the midst of the death of the old creation, the Word was being poured out. The abundance of water speaks of an increase of the Word for Noah at this time, for in the Scriptures water represents the Word of God and the washing of water by the Word (cf. Eph. 5:26).

What does the water do? It begins to lift up the ark. The Word is bringing about the resurrection. Now, this is still not the fullness of the reality of resurrection. Ultimately resurrection does not occur while a believer is in the ark, for the fullness of the reality of resurrection is found with the revealing of the New Creation and entering into it, not just believing it. Nevertheless, for the people in the ark the process involves being surrounded by water, surrounded by the Word. Saturating in the Word causes a resurrection that will ultimately bring them to their final destination: the New Creation. It is the living Word that lifts them above the fallen creation and the corruption below. The Word is causing a separation from the old creation that is below by raising up the ark, but it has not yet brought those in the ark into the fullness of the New Creation that can only be found upon exiting the ark.

The rain for forty days points to an abundance of the Word that brings a great washing and separating. Herein lies the potential for deception. The goal of the abundant Word is to bring us into the New Creation, but the experience of the washing of the Word can make us feel like we have already attained before fully entering in. We may be tempted to remain in an old creation understanding while believing in the doctrines of the New Creation, but this is never what God intended. We must not allow the experience of the abundant Word to keep us from seeing this process through to the very end, at which point we experientially enter into the New Creation.

There is one element related to the season in the ark that can keep a person from deception, but it can also be quite a confusing thing at the same time. Part of the enigma of the ark is that even though there is a lifting up taking place, the stench

of the old still remains with those who are in the ark. The washing of water by the Word is going on constantly, and yet grime is still clinging to everything on the inside. The abundance of the Word is so great that you would think that there could be nothing more powerful, and you are certain that all traces of the old creation will be completely washed away. Even with so much abundance, with so much separation from and a clear cutting away of the old, with the clear understanding that the old creation is dead and buried, there is still a sense within us that there must be something wrong because the grime of the old creation still remains.

"IN THE MIDST OF THE DEATH OF THE OLD CREATION, THE WORD WAS BEING POURED OUT. THE ABUNDANCE OF WATER SPEAKS OF AN INCREASE OF THE WORD FOR NOAH AT THIS TIME, FOR IN THE SCRIPTURES WATER REPRESENTS THE WORD OF GOD AND THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD."

Think about it! There has been a pouring out of the Word from heaven. God is moving in the lives of those represented by Noah and his family, opening the Word to them. God has been showing them so much out of the Word that it is beyond human conception. They know that the old creation has been crucified. The old man is dead. The old creation has passed away, and it is not coming back. Still, the clinging elements of the old seem to contradict everything that God has been saying. That can be very troubling for us, causing us to ask questions like, "If God is truly washing me with His Word, what is wrong with me? Why is there still a smell, a stickiness, and thick, stale air around me? Where is the fresh breeze that blows across the whole New Creation? I believe it is true. I have seen it in the washing of the Word over and over, and yet I am still in this state."

The answer is that we have not yet been brought into the New Creation experientially even though we are seeing the reality of its existence. Part of the confusion is simply because of the abundance of the Word. That abundance is from heaven. It is God and from God. Our lack of understanding is what is causing the confusion. He is trying to keep you moving forward by the poured out Word until the reality of it has overtaken you. Finality comes not with learning the truth of the New Creation but when you can say you are different from those of the old creation. Even though a resurrection of sorts has been occurring, you are not much different in your outward walk as yet, for you still smell like the old. You do not think like those who are of the old in the sense that you are beginning to know the New Creation reality. You are purer in your mental activity than you are in your walk because you know about death and resurrection. But your resurrection has been on the water, i.e., in the Word.

For God but Not Of God

Up to this point, essentially everything that Noah and his family had been going through had been for God. And everything within the ark was basically for Him. This can be a picture and an example for us today when we are in this place spiritually.

Although everything in the belly of that ark is for God, there are many times we may not feel that we are of God. In John's first epistle he comforts the saints by confirming to little children that they are of God, (cf. I Jn. 4:4). A child is the one who questions; a son knows that he is a Son of God by Christ. But there is a time in which we are meant to question whether we are

"SOON WE REALIZE THAT THE
GOAL OF GRACE IS NOT JUST TO
SAVE SELFISH PEOPLE AND
LEAVE THEM THAT WAY; IT IS TO
PARTAKE OF GOD'S SUFFICIENT
GRACE WHICH IS FOUND IN
CHRIST AS OUR SOURCE OF
INFINITE SUPPLY."

of God. It is part of being a child who has yet to enter into sonship and full maturity.

As believers, we have been saved out of the flood of destruction, meaning that we have received Christ in new birth. By means of the ark, we have been removed from that which is set apart for destruction, and yet we do not feel worthy of salvation because so much of the old life remains evident in our daily walk. Just as with the case with Noah, we may be confident that we have found grace in the eyes of the Lord (cf. Gen. 6:8), yet there remains a sense that God wants something more. Soon we realize that the goal of grace is not just to save selfish people and leave them that way; it is to partake of God's sufficient grace which is found in Christ as our source of infinite supply. When we learn to draw from Christ as our life, then in our weakness His strength comes forth (cf. II Cor. 12:9).

Noah Finds Grace in the Eyes of the Lord

Genesis 6:3, 5-8 says,

"And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years... And God saw that wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

If anyone thinks that Noah was a great man, they can just mark that out of their mind because Noah was a man who found grace. If we observe the condition of the earth before the flood, we can then prepare ourselves to comprehend what the flood meant to God. In like manner, we can also remember our own condition before the grace of God came into our lives. If we have anything going for us at all, it is the grace of God. Sometimes God brings about such changes in our lives that we may assume that we are basically good people. But the truth is that we are no different than we were before; it is the grace of God that is working in us. Paul said, "I labored more than they all," but then he said, "...not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (I Cor. 15:10). That is the wonder of the Lord overshadowing and overtaking us. If He did not do this, then we would be overshadowed and overtaken by a flood.

Time Period in the Ark

There is a season of time which determines how long we stay in the ark. Paul describes this very thing in Galatians 4:1 with the phrase "as long as".

"Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world."

Galatians 4:1-3

The situation is not that after a certain amount of time you automatically graduate and become a son of God. Rather, the time period of childhood is "as long as", until God does what is in His heart to do. To have a set timetable would certainly relieve some tension on our part, but Noah did not know if it would be three weeks, months, or years before the rain stopped. The whole old creation was probably covered and drowned within about three weeks, but the time they spent in the ark was much longer than that because the destruction of the physical earth was not God's full aim with and in the ark. In other words, God's plans are not bound by the limits of time, space, or natural phenomena, but rather are built on eternal principles.

There is a deep groaning that is taking place inside of those who have ears to hear this message but have yet to experience its fullness manifested in them. You feel the grieving and the groaning, and you may have a tendency to think that it is taking place because somewhere you took a wrong turn. You may feel you have missed it somewhere and that the groaning is a groaning of failure or of possible or pending failure. You are equating the groaning with failure when in truth it is the groaning of the sons of God. Romans Chapter 8:19-22, 26 says,

'For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now... Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

The ark represents a place of death, but not just any death; it is a death that has hope within it. It is a death that has a promise of resurrection, including the promise of life. These eight souls had been in the ark for about a year altogether. There was a groaning while they were still in the ark even though they knew that the old creation existed no longer. Those who are in such a position know that they cannot return to the old creation because it is gone, and they know that this has been settled by the Cross. Still, there is a groaning and a waiting for the manifestation into the glorious liberty of the new sons of God. They are like Lazarus, who was raised from death but was yet bound hand and foot by grave-clothes (cf. Jn. 11:44).

The Life Cycle of God

Within this picture of Noah and the ark you have the reality of death, burial, and resurrection, which is the life cycle of God. This is not referring to dying on a cross, being put in a tomb, and then getting up again. We are talking about the principle behind the death, burial, and resurrection. Our discussion surrounds the spirit of giving, of loss, of burying and putting away, and the reality that God brings forth out of death. This is a continuous process. The sooner we learn that this is the way that God operates, the better we will be able to flow with Him.

Some may think that God operates primarily by blessing and miracles, but this is not the full reality of God's eternal way, which is according to His being or nature. God does bless us and perform miracles, but the principle of His nature is death, burial, and resurrection. The basic flow of someone's life who continues to allow

"OUR DISCUSSION SURROUNDS THE SPIRIT OF GIVING, OF LOSS, OF BURYING AND PUTTING AWAY, AND THE REALITY THAT GOD BRINGS FORTH." Christ to live in them will eventually involve a process of death, burial, and resurrection. It is a cycle in which we will constantly find ourselves. It is clearly demonstrated in

the life of the Apostle Paul over and over again. Paul understood what he was going through and did not see these situations as random trials. Contrary to popular belief, life is not just alternating between trials and good times, being emotionally up and down. In union with God's flow through Christ, we will find ourselves going through times of death and resurrection. There is a process at work that we need to understand, for it is the way of Christ's life in us.

As in the case of Lazarus who experienced resurrection but was still bound by his grave-clothes, so Noah in the ark had been raised out of the old but had not yet walked in the new. There is a groaning that seeks a glorious liberty, and yet the carnal mind gets confused with the sense of the groaning because it thinks that groaning means you are not entering into liberty. As noted before, you are still very much aware of the stench of the old. Sometimes when you approach people, you notice that they take a step back from you because they still smell the stench instead of a sweet savor of Christ. Of course, I am speaking figuratively. God has subjected you to all of the trials within the ark with this hope: to bring forth the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We ought to groan because we are the sons of God. We would not be in the ark if we were not. The groaning is not because of the desire to become a son of God but a deep desire for it to be manifested. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be..." (I Jn. 3:2).

A Time of Burial

Genesis 8:1 occurs after the flood: "And God remembered Noah, and every living thing..." Noah and his family have been in the ark for forty days and nights, locked in with all of the animals and all of their smells and sounds. In the light of these things, God's word about remembering Noah would be precious to him. The time Noah and his family spent locked up in the ark is an illustration of those believers who undergo a deep burial. Consider being shoved into a casket, and in that place calling to mind God's word that He would remember you,

"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark; and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided; The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated."

The whole situation lasted for one hundred and fifty days, and then the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. At that point, the family's anticipation for release from burial would have begun to build, but the time for that was not quite at hand.

Going Down Further

After about three weeks of burial, we may feel that the work is done, and so we begin to pray, wanting to let God know that we are ready to come out from the ark now. We may feel that we are broken and have reached the lowest point. And yet the lowest part of the ark is filled with the excrement of all the animals and people. We have not yet arrived to the lowest part. We may think that we are very low and deeply broken, but there are depths that we are not yet aware of. And so the Lord cannot bring you up until He brings you down. Many times He has to spend more time tearing things down then He does building things up. He can do a quick work in our lives if we get the hindrances out of the way, yet oftentimes He has to tear so much down that the time is consumed in the process. But thank God for His grace!

This whole process is still based on grace, and we must never forget that. This is the grace of God at work in our lives. And so there is a sinking down that causes you to see what you are in yourself apart from Christ in resurrection. Everything about you in the natural is filthy, smelly, dirty, and all is touched by the first creation. This must happen so that the "as long as" time period takes place, for God knows when it has reached its end (cf. Gal. 4:1). This timing factor might be different from one person to another, but God knows and faithfully brings us to the point where we are ready to step out into the new creation.

The Introduction of the Dove

In view of the thick air inside the ark, the possibility of rising above the old creation stench seems so glorious, but that is nothing compared to what is coming. Fullness of resurrection does not take place within the ark. If we could only see what is in God's heart and what He hopes to bring us into! If only we could look into His heart and see the groaning of the Spirit of God! It is not just we who are groaning; He does, too (cf. Rom. 8:26). Let us quit trying to get Him to hear our groans and start hearing how deeply the Spirit longs to bring us out of the ark and into all fullness.

The same Noah who found grace to get into the ark will find grace to get out of the ark. What is the method to be utilized to get out of the ark? Is the answer for us to open the door? No, God shut the door, so we have no business opening the door. In its panic, the carnal mind will search for a way out of the ark. Our thought is that God could not have meant for us to stay in there forever! It seems that everybody today has a plan as to how they may escape death and burial. If you

want to know the latest plan, turn on the television. To God, however, there is only one plan. Even though resurrection does not take place in the ark, God's means for reaching the New Creation is focused there. And so in the midst of the stench within the ark there is the sense of something moving, something free. It is the movement of the Dove within the ark. To find the true plan, we must leave our concerns for our little realm and our understanding and have the Holy Spirit speak to us of realities beyond our present awareness.

"AND SO IN THE MIDST OF THE STENCH WITHIN THE ARK THERE IS THE SENSE OF SOMETHING MOVING, SOMETHING FREE. IT IS THE MOVEMENT OF THE DOVE WITHIN THE ARK... WHEN OUR EYES BEGIN TO LOOK ABOVE AND DESIRE TO EMBRACE CHRIST WITHIN, HIS SPIRIT WILL FILL US."

In the case of Noah, eight souls and two of every kind of animal were placed firmly in God's hand. Only the pure Dove flying above their stench and strivings was allowed to open their hearts and eyes that they might learn to focus on what was above. I myself and maybe you too have been entrenched in the mire of this lower dwelling, but when our eyes begin to look above and desire to embrace Christ within, His Spirit will fill us. That is when His purposes will be established, continuing through the process and in our vessels for this time and in the generations to come.

I believe all of Noah's family had the opportunity to embrace this Spirit of grace from God and to become enveloped in Him. They were left for twelve months in the ark having all that flesh in their faces constantly while the Spirit of this Seed was being formed (cf. Gal. 4:19). God covered them with the purpose of His grace being fulfilled in the ark as they waited for the time of manifestation.

The Ark Represents Christ in Death and Burial

In covering the earth with a flood, God could have just wiped out all of the inhabitants of the earth, and that would have been the end of everything. But the ark represents Christ. More specifically, the ark represents Christ in death and burial. The New Creation represents Christ in resurrection. Noah and his family coming out of the ark represents resurrection into the New Creation. Going into the ark and being raised up on the waters does not represent resurrection in its fullness.

The Need and Reality of the New Creation

Genesis 6:5-7 told us that God looked at the earth, the first creation, and said that there was nothing redeemable about it. Everything about it was wrong. It had lost its way and missed the mark. It was not out from the Son and did not bring forth after God's kind. It brought forth after the kind of fallen man. There is only one answer for this situation in light of God's eternal way. The answer had to be death – a death comprehended through the work of the Cross. There is only one answer for the flesh. God said that His Spirit would not strive with flesh forever (cf. Gen. 6:3). This is the case because flesh will never change; it will just remain flesh (cf. Jn. 3:6).

We must remember that God's answer, as so clearly seen with Noah, is not to fix the old creation. God's answer is a new creation. If there is a problem, the answer is not going to be found in just praying and fasting so that earth problems will be remedied. God's answer is something altogether new; it is something that never was before. And the very best illustration of God's view of the New Creation that this type and shadow can give us is when the eight souls exited the ark. In this New Creation there is no flesh roaming around; there is no fallen man or every thought being evil only. There is only freshness that man has never touched. It is a NEW creation. As the waters abated, the trees were new and everything was coming forth in new life.

The Dove Revealing the New Creation

In Genesis 8:8 we find signs of the New Creation coming forth, for eight is the number of new beginnings! "Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground." If Noah sent forth a dove from him, then where had the dove been all the time that Noah was in the ark? This dove representing the Holy Spirit was right there with them in the ark all that time. But is the Dove part of an earthly existence? No, He is from above. He has come and has clipped His own wings, if you will, for a period of time to be with us. Our appreciation for the Person of the Holy Spirit should be growing! Do you see what He has done? It is the same spirit in which the Father gave up His Son, as seen in the example of Abraham's offering. God gave us that picture to show us that the Father had sacrificed as much as the Son had. It was hard on the Father, for He had to give up His most precious possession. Here in these scriptures concerning Noah and the ark, we get to see a picture of the Holy Spirit. He has locked Himself into the earth, in a smelly and dark environment that is not His environment. It is an environment that limits Him

in His flight. This atmosphere limits Him, and that is why, in this place, we can only get the earnest of the Spirit. But the earnest of the Spirit is just a foretaste, not of heaven, but of the fullness of Christ. Yet we must be in contact with the Holy Spirit to begin to obtain the earnest, to move on to know the fullness, or to even be aware of fullness that is coming.

When we see the Dove flying in the ark – flying around in our earthly environment – it seems wonderful to those of us who have sunk down into the fecal matter found at the bottom of the ark. To watch Him fly around in the rafters of the ark seems like incredible freedom. We may be struck by the fact that we are limited walking through this refuse from one place to another, but He can fly. Even so, think about the limitations that He has taken on, restricting His flight to the confines of our small realm within the ark. Consider that He has put himself down here for us with one purpose, to bring us into the New Creation. Yet true liberty, life, and peace is discovered when the Dove is free, when we have come away with Him out from the ark into Christ in all newness and fullness. Many people like to quote II Corinthians 3:17, which declares, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," yet what most people have in mind is their own liberty. We must ask ourselves if we really care about the Person of the Holy Spirit, or do we only care that He provides for us?

Many Christians acknowledge doctrinally the need for the Holy Spirit. The difference lies between saying the right Christian thing about the Holy Spirit or actually

"ARE WE AWARE THAT
THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS
VISION AND DESIRES,
EVEN AS WE DO? ...
PERMITTING THE HOLY
SPIRIT TO SPEAK FROM
HIS VIEW SETS US ON
THE RIGHT PATH."

losing our own interests so that we might take up those belonging to the Holy Spirit. Our tendency is to bring the Dove down into our ark in an attempt to make Him relate there. We expect Him to look at all the earth problems and then set about to fix them. In some cases we even clip His wings and make Him serve our interests. Then we force Him to look at our living conditions and expect Him to do something with this mess. We do not give Him the freedom to fly.

We were originally made in the image of God. We have the ability to feel because He feels, and we see because He sees. Are we not aware that the Holy Spirit has vision and desires, even as we do? Some people actually realize that the Holy Spirit is a Person. Permitting the Holy Spirit to speak from His view sets us on the right path. When the Dove flies, what is His view? It is from above. He is not in the earth; He is above it. Let us follow the Dove, then, not just with our words, but in our hearts, according to God's plan.

We should seek out the companionship of the Dove, not to fix the mess in the ark, but to take us to the place that He knows best. The only way out of the ark of burial is to recognize that our fundamental view of things is wrong. Is that too radical for us? What may be right in the earth is just wrong in

the heavens; it is right in man but wrong in God. It has validity in the earth, but it has no validity in the heavens.

Since man is so opposite of God, how can God bring a person to

"NOW YOU TURN FROM SELF UNTO GOD BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. YOU BECOME SORRY THAT YOU GRIEVED THE HOLY SPIRIT. YOU BECOME SORRY THAT YOU HELD HIM WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE ARK FOR YOUR OWN SAKE."

His view? Their earth has to be shaken. Their confidence has to be shaken. What they know and the way they have related to the Dove within the realm of the ark must be given up. They must turn to the Dove, the Holy Spirit, declaring that He is greater than they are and that He knows more of God's reality than they do. They must acknowledge that He searches the length and breadth and height and depth, of which we know nothing.

We need to be awakened by the Dove to this great reality, and the Dove will do that. However, very few find this path because we are so self-centered. We assume that the Dove exists for me and that He only came to bring me gifts.

The Heart Changes

Prior to the flood, Noah, like us, took the time to live for God in a contrary world. We stood for God and went against the odds in the earth. We laid down the pursuits of our lives in order to serve, minister, and build an ark for as many as would enter in. You did well in getting in the ark in the right time. You did well in your service within the ark. You may still smell like the ark, but you have turned from self unto God. There was a time when every step had been a turning from self unto God, and it was all to bring you to the point of opening to the Spirit in a new way.

Now you turn from self unto God by means of the Holy Spirit. You become sorry that you grieved the Holy Spirit. You become sorry that you held Him within the confines of the ark for your own sake. You repent for restraining and confining Him to your own understanding based on your own realm and your own needs.

Your heart changes, and you want to free Him because you believe that He will return, and with each return you will be closer to what God has for you in Christ. You trust that He will do in you what no teaching can do and what no altar call can accomplish. You trust that He will return not with a doctrine or teaching but with the earnest of the New Creation.

You also determine that you will not hold Him to your breast in the midst of the ark and say, "Look what I have, and look what you people in the ark need." Instead, you release the Dove, seeing His heart and knowing what He lives for. He made you one with Jesus, and "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). You allow the Spirit to go in a manner that will bring you out of the old and into the fullness.

Learning to Trust the Dove

The Holy Spirit wants to bring us to the heavenlies, to the New Creation outside the ark. But to ENTER such realities will require that we come to a new relating with the Holy Spirit. We can all hear about the existence of such realities, but who among us will seek a new relationship with the Holy Spirit? How do we do that? We find the answer in the same way as Noah did in Genesis 8:8: "And He sent forth a dove from him."

That is profound. Up to this point the Dove had been confined with Noah and his family in the ark. They had seen the Dove's movements among them and had been comforted by His presence. The Dove had been one of the few bright spots within the ark. But the Holy Spirit is not of this place. He needs to be set free to dwell where He is comfortable and free, even if He never comes back.

Does that sound strange? To do that would mean loving the Holy Spirit more than yourself. The Bible does not say to love the Father with all your heart soul, strength, and mind. It says to love God in that way. The Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead! Do you love the Holy Spirit with all your heart, mind, and strength? We

"HE NEEDS TO BE SET FREE TO DWELL WHERE HE IS COMFORTABLE AND FREE." have spent so many years trying to get the Holy Spirit to liberate us, but Noah actually liberated Him. To do this shows that a person is not reasoning or acting according to the earth. Instead you are releasing Him from the earth to go to what makes Him satisfied and to what makes Him fly. You are releasing Him from simply moving in your

surroundings to begin to establish evidence of another reality that is as yet invisible to you. When Noah released the dove, he was not sure what was outside the ark or where the dove would go. Why would Noah release the dove? By this point in the journey he and his family were convinced that the ark and its environment was not the "new world" they were hoping for.

The Waters Decreasing (Abating)

Along with this new persuasion came a sense that something new was to come forth. We can see this process in the fact that even though the waters were decreasing, the ark had not yet landed. There was a sense of getting close, for the rain was ceasing. Nevertheless, consider that it took approximately nine months for the waters to recede.

A trust begins to take place in the heart of one who does this. You begin to trust the Holy Spirit's heart, just like you trust the heart of the Father and the heart of the Son. He is going to depart from the earth relationship in which you have previously bound Him, and He is going to fly. Genesis 8:8-9 makes this clear: "Also He sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth..." We see here a sending forth, with the result that the Dove did not bring back any declaration, message, or evidence from where He had been. Perhaps we might be tempted to think that Noah's action was fruitless since he gained no obvious benefit from sending out the Dove.

Even so, what had Noah done? He had risked everything by letting the Dove go. Thank God, the Dove came back! When we send forth the Dove, we liberate Him for a time to His place. He faithfully knows the time and the order concerning our journey. He knows when all things are ready both in the ark and in the New Creation. He also knows how to bring it all together. That means that this first sending out was not fruitless at all! It strengthens the believer's relationship with the Holy Spirit, which will in turn enable us to receive from Him in a new way.

Bring Him Liberty

We must still acknowledge that sending forth the Dove had not established anything at this point. It was yet early in the process for Noah. A long time passes and the window, the door to heaven as it were, was still not opened. There was no

thought of leaving through the window, only to look in that direction and find a little fresh water falling from heaven from time to time. The window would allow the water to pass in that could fall on you to refresh you. Someone could experience a little freshness if they stood underneath the window and allowed the rain to fall on them and wash away the smell and the stench. No one may have considered that through that window flies the Holy Spirit, which ultimately means that we will fly, too. However, that will be our destination.

It seems that very few people consider the Dove in the proper manner. Even fewer consider the Holy Spirit in His Person and in His place. A proper view of Him would cause someone to honor Him, look to Him, and cling to Him. A person who loves and is with Him to this degree in relationship frees the Spirit so that "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." We can let liberty come to Him although many only want the Holy Spirit to come into the ark of the earth to give us liberty. We only seek to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit enough so that we can break loose, dance, sing, and act like we are in the New Creation. We are looking for liberty, yet liberty is in Christ, and liberty is the fullness of what God has prepared for them that love Him. God has prepared us to know the fullness of Christ in living union. A joyful celebration in the ark cannot be compared to the newness and freshness found upon entering the New Creation in manifestation.

"GOD HAS PREPARED US TO KNOW THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST IN LIVING UNION. A JOYFUL CELEBRATION IN THE ARK CANNOT BE COMPARED TO THE NEWNESS AND FRESHNESS FOUND UPON ENTERING THE NEW CREATION IN MANIFESTATION."

Being in the ark causes our focus to be upon what is taking place immediately around us. While we are in the ark, we are carrying out our duties, trying to be faithful to God and to that which He has placed around us. But we are bearing the stench of the old even though the old has passed away. By the flood the old creation is already gone. It is removed, but we are still carrying the stench of it. We are trying to be of God while being restricted to life in the ark, and every once in awhile we lift our heads and see the freedom of the Dove flying above. We may rejoice that we saw the Dove move, maybe even breaking out dancing, yelling, and shouting once in awhile. But this does not mean we have comprehended life in the New Creation. Though the death has come to the old creation, we have not been fully liberated from it. In reality the liberation has come, but obviously it has not been fully received. The old creation still has influence over us, but God certainly has a plan

whereby we come into something new. If we do not yet know what the new is, then the quicker we acknowledge that, the quicker we will enter into it. As long as we think we know what the new is while still living in the old, we are both confining ourselves to the old and hindering the Holy Spirit who longs to bring us into the fullness of the new.

If we think we have entered into the fullness of the new while yet dwelling in the ark, then we will let Him flutter around, move, and let that excite us, believing that is the epitome of relating to Him. We must take Him in hand and liberate Him,

"THANK GOD SOMEBODY TRUSTED HIM AND LET HIM BREATHE!" letting Him do what only He can do. We must free Him to do that. Noah took Him and let Him go: "...and also he sent forth a dove from him." The dove returned to Noah, but he had to send it forth from him in the first place. He was not holding the dove to himself, for he was not relating his situation in

the work to himself any longer. He began to desire to release Him to the place He knows best. These things come into our hearts when we get close to the Holy Spirit and spend time with Him. Soon we begin to know what it is that pleases Him and makes Him happy. Have you ever been around somebody that you like, and all of a sudden their eyes light up and all you want to do is find what they are looking at? For example, when a wife sees her husband's face light up, she follows his eyes so she can see what it is that makes him happy. The principle is the same. As our hearts turn towards knowing the Lord, we begin to become more concerned about setting the Holy Spirit free instead of concerned with our own personal liberty.

Noah did two things when he released the dove: 1) He faced the reality of his own selfishness, and 2) he realized that God's goal, purpose, and desire for him was to flow with the Spirit in love. We break with our selfishness by releasing Him, and that is what Noah did when he released the dove. At that point you do not care whether you were selfish before or not. Now you care about Another and your concern is towards the heart of another.

Building a Relationship with the Dove

When we allow the Holy Spirit to leave the ark, how fresh and fragrant must the New Creation be to Him! Finally, He is able to leave the thick atmosphere inside the ark. He is given freedom to soar. Thank God that somebody trusted Him and let Him breathe! Somebody loved Him more than they loved themselves. Noah is about to discover that when the Dove is permitted to depart to His place, He will

Noah And The Dove

come back. At this first stage, it is more important that you learn to trust Him than it is for you to learn the answers He brings. You learn that He is more than a bringer of answers and blessings, He is a person whose name is the Holy Spirit, and you will gain a *relationship* with Him. Even if He returns with nothing, He still returns. You will rejoice that the Dove is here and that the Dove has returned. He does not bring a message yet. He just brings His presence, Himself. You learn to be content, not with what He does for you, but with Him.

"NOW, BECAUSE OF HIS RETURNING TO YOU, YOU LEARN TO GRAB HIM BY FAITH."

Why? What is the purpose for that? There is no obvious benefit to the individual in these initial stages. Such things do not improve our church services. Nevertheless, the wonderful result is that you are getting closer to God. The animals in the ark are the firstfruits of the New Creation borne up on the resurrection of the water, but the Dove, the Holy Spirit, has always been from above. You are learning something about Him, and your fears are being abated, like the waters were abating from the earth.

The Dove was allowed into the freedom of the glory that He had always known from before the foundation of the world, and He eventually came back to you with renewed purpose. The Dove returned to you. Notice the wording, "She returned unto him." She did not just return unto the ark. She returned to the person who sent her. The ascending and returning by the Holy Spirit was not for the purpose of moving in the believer's personal life, service, gifts, or ministry. He did not come to the ark the way we expect the Holy Spirit to come to our church building or a gathering of Christians. He returned to me.

Something happens in you when the Dove returns. You gain a confidence in the invisible that you never had before. You can touch everything in the outward, but you cannot touch the Holy Spirit. Now, because of His returning to you, you learn to grab Him by faith, without material or earthly confirmation or support. A trust level builds in you so that you can begin to relate to the Holy Spirit completely in the Spirit, instead of relating to Him based on the earth.

What a contrast to the type of relationship that most Christians have with the Holy Spirit, in which they are trying to get Him to abate the fears that we all experience without ever trusting Him! This sort of relationship consists only of knowing what

He does, but you must come to know Him. You do not have relationship with Him if you only have relationship with what He does. The first aspects of true living by faith involve nothing in the earth, with no immediate return. It only has to do with relationship. There is no return back to you, except the return of Him. He is the only return that you receive, but that return is eternal while everything else around you is temporal.

After this eternal groundwork has been laid, the next phase takes place in verse 9: "And took her and pulled her in unto him into the ark." Can you see the relationship that is happening between Noah and the dove? He pulled her in unto him. This speaks of fellowship of the Spirit. Noah and the dove spent time together, as seen in verse 10, "And he stayed yet other seven days." You do not send the Dove out on the next day, the day after, or the day after that. You wait seven days, until an entire cycle is accomplished. Seven is the number of completion. Those seven days represent the time it takes for what you have experienced to become life within.

The Dove is not of the earth, and He has a mission to accomplish. At this point we read, "And again he sent forth the Dove out of the ark and the Dove came unto him." Notice the wording again. The Dove is not just doing His duty or performing a ministry. What is continuing to take place is that Noah and the Dove are coming together. There is a union, there is something eternal happening. A relationship is taking place.

Most of the time our efforts and actions are based solely on doing ministry, and we build a relationship with the Holy Spirit on the basis of getting Him involved in our pursuits. In this story, however, the Holy Spirit moved because of something altogether different. Noah did something right. He allowed the Holy Spirit to work on a basis that was as yet unseen at this time. He moved because Noah established a new relationship with the Him based on things above and not on things on the earth. He will move for us in the same way when we have taken the time to learn, to trust, and to see what He is like.

Who Will Come Away with the Dove?

Next we read that Noah sends Him out again: "And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth" (Gen. 8:11). The blessed Dove came with tidings from another place, bearing confirmation not only that it existed, but that it was blossoming with life. The Dove's joy in returning to them was as one bearing an invitation to

come away, rather than simply imparting information that such a place exists. He is not trying to cause us to long for something far away but to awaken to the fact that we can enter it now. Those within the ark had to respond to the Dove in some manner or another. Some would take the information of His return as a way of improving life in the ark. Others would learn to receive information from Him about another place but never actually enter into it. And then there would be those who would perceive the true intention of God's Dove, the Holy Spirit. They will hearken to His call and respond to a reality beyond their present situation, coming

"THE BLESSED DOVE CAME
WITH TIDINGS FROM
ANOTHER PLACE, BEARING
CONFIRMATION NOT ONLY
THAT IT EXISTED, BUT THAT
IT WAS BLOSSOMING WITH
LIFE. THE DOVE'S JOY IN
RETURNING TO THEM WAS AS
ONE BEARING AN
INVITATION TO COME AWAY,
RATHER THAN SIMPLY
IMPARTING INFORMATION
THAT SUCH A PLACE EXISTS."

away to live in the New Creation. These are they who choose to be found in Christ rather than Him having to be found with them in the poor old earth of the ark. The Dove is always trying to draw us out from the ark of our limited and earthly views into the place from whence He has come, the place of His origin. He is inviting us to be with Him in His place, reality, and view that we might be found with Him rather than Him having to be found with us.

The Earnest of the New Creation

The Scriptures do not say that the dove flew over and dropped the branch down through the hole and left. But rather it says, "The dove came in to him." Notice that the dove brings only an earnest of the New Creation. Is this olive branch from the New Creation? Yes, it is from the New Creation. But is it all the fullness of the New Creation? It is not all fullness. It is the New Creation, but it is now separated from the New Creation by being in the ark! So what is it? It is a token meant to be seen in the Spirit. It is meant to direct our attention to a greater reality that exists beyond the ark. It is meant to draw you out of your present place. You believed in this New Creation all along, but the stench of the old was sticking to you and making you doubt. Now what the Dove has just brought is fresh and clearly not out from the environment in the ark.

There is a danger at this point. You can misread what has just taken place. You can think that what this is about is the sending of the Dove out every two days so

that He continues to bring you a little more of the New Creation. Maybe we conclude that He is to come back with some part of this other reality until we have the whole New Creation re-built inside the ark. However, the goal is not to bring the New Creation to you but to bring you to the New Creation. We may misread the work of the Spirit because we have not been with Him long enough to know His heart. Our original goal was to free Him, liberate Him into the New Creation.

Our goal is not to bind Him up by making Him continually come back here. We misunderstand His intentions because we are self-centered. With every time we send Him out, He returns with more reality of the New Creation, but we start getting comfortable in the ark. Our plan becomes to build a new creation here on earth, piece by piece. It is not supposed to be built here, only manifested here. If you continue in this method, you will not see the fullness because the fullness is not here. The fullness is in Christ. Some who comprehend this will then wonder what hope is there for our earth lives. The hope is that you start following the Dove.

Before we could even get to this point we had to make a break with our old relationship with the Holy Spirit. We had to break with being self-centered and trying to keep Him bound up in the confines of the ark. We started a whole new relationship with Him based on His freedom. But now we have come to another crossroads where we have to break with something else: the concept that the whole goal is for the Holy Spirit to keep returning and bringing pieces of heavenly reality into my realm, my world, and my life. In the early stages of Noah's journey there was an abundance of the water of the Word falling. There is a time for simply

saturating in the Scriptures themselves. Then, at a certain point in the progression, saturating in the Word must be accompanied by the movements of the Dove. This progression can be seen in the example of Noah. In its early stages the greater part of the trip simply involved the flow of the water – or Word – as seen in the flood (cf. Eph. 5:26). However, as the emphasis switches from

"THE GOAL IS NOT TO BRING THE NEW CREATION TO YOU BUT TO BRING YOU TO THE NEW CREATION."

the destruction of the old creation to the New Creation, suddenly the dove becomes central to the story. Even so, the combination of the Spirit and the Word in our lives is what ultimately brings forth Christ.

Too many are waiting on the Dove's return during dry seasons. They are looking for just one more piece of the New Creation reality. Those who are in this state have not fully realized the Dove's purpose yet. They have tasted, they have an earnest, but that which the Holy Spirit brings is only an earnest. There is more to be discovered, and we must enter into it.

Knowing: The Next Step

The Dove returns with proof of the new, as seen in Genesis 8:11: "And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off, so Noah knew..." The Bible says that it was at this point that Noah knew. He had believed before, but now he knows about the New Creation for certain. He had believed things about the New Creation for a long time. He never would have built an ark unless he had believed it. He never would have been faithful and stayed faithful through all those years of persecution unless he believed it. But now he knows! I John 4:16 says, "Now we know and have believed." Notice that is no longer just the act of believing. When the Holy Spirit returns to us with an earnest of the New Creation, we no longer just believe; now we know. This is an important step because the knowing is experiencing a taste of the reality.

We can conclude that this return on the part of the Dove shows us a progression. Joshua and Caleb went into the land to examine its fruit (cf. Num. 13:2, 6, 8). One of the clusters of grapes was so big that two men had to carry it between them (cf. Num. 13:23). They carried it back out of the Promised Land and into the wilderness where Israel was. At that point, the people did not enter in. As a result, Joshua and Caleb did not enter in at that moment either, but they had moved a step closer by tasting of the earnest that came from the Land. Eventually they did enter into the Land.

The goal is never to step into the Land for a taste and then return to the wilderness, nor is it to live in the ark for the rest of your life while expecting the Dove to bring some fruit from the Land every now and then. The goal is always to enter in. So Noah knew, and now he was aware there was a new step. Clearly, he had an incredible relationship with the Holy Spirit. We are not supposed to send the Dove out to bring us little tidbits of a greater reality to sustain us in the ark forever. However, the fruit that was brought back from the Land prepared Joshua and Caleb for the eventual next step. And that olive branch prepared Noah for his next step.

The New Creation

When the Holy Spirit returns, He is carrying something new in His mouth. He is bringing something back to bear witness of where He had been. The Dove returned with living fruit from another realm. The witness is more than just the Holy Spirit teaching Noah and his family about the New Creation while they remain fixed

in the ark. No, the Holy Spirit literally brought God's reality from another realm. He did not talk about it; He showed it to them. And what He reveals to you is the very thing that is His own joy and what He declares freedom to really be.

When you opened the window and said "go", you had no idea of what He would return with. He went, and you were still there in the ark. But He returned with hope that your life would not always be sealed up in death and burial.

There is something that we must see: the difference between an earnest of the New Creation and the New Creation itself. The branch in the Dove's mouth is the evidence of the New Creation. When the Dove returns, His heart is beating fast, not just because He was flying but because this is it! This is why He put up with the musty place and with us jumping and shouting. This is His joy, and it ought to be ours also.

Noah recognized that the place where the Holy Spirit always wanted to go is the same place where He has always wanted to bring us. When the Spirit returned with the olive branch, Noah saw what was in the Spirit's heart, which is a much greater understanding than just hearing and hoping for the New Creation. Yes, there is the realization of having come into a whole new realm of reality. Noah realized that God had prepared the New Creation in a place other than where they presently dwelt and that God intended to bring them into it. Noah then knew what was in the heart of the Holy Spirit and that it had always been there from the very beginning and through the entire crowded, smelly journey in the ark.

"NOAH RECOGNIZED THAT THE PLACE WHERE THE HOLY SPIRIT ALWAYS WANTED TO GO IS THE SAME PLACE WHERE HE HAS ALWAYS WANTED TO BRING US."

It is at this point that the believer suddenly comprehends why the Spirit stayed in the musty old ark. You realize what is precious to Him. What has been His utmost desire is to get us out of the old and bring us into the new. The New Creation and the Dove are interrelated in that the Dove is the only carrier of the reality of the New Creation. It is true that we have always been with God inside the ark, but the Holy Spirit is the only one who has brought not just the testimony of the New Creation through sermons or doctrine but the earnest of it in truth. And that was His goal all along; that was His mission. He is now fulfilling His purpose, not to make us dance, not to make us have fun, but awakening us to where we are really headed. By His flight He has entered into His purpose, and we have seen it and joined Him in it.

Noah And The Dove

Before the Dove returns with evidence of the New Creation, we can misread things. We can think that simply soaking and washing in the water is having arrived. We are content that we are surrounded by the water of the Word, but the Holy Spirit has something beyond that, something concerning His purpose. When the Holy Spirit is released in a proper manner, all of a sudden the New Creation starts protruding out of the water — out of the Word. This goes beyond bringing forth truths, subjects, and ministries. It is no longer any of those things that have made up life in the ark. What begins to be brought forth by the Spirit now is something outside of religion and outside of the first creation stench. This is the first thing that has really protruded out from the waters that has been from the Dove's homeland.

The Concept of Branch

What is the one object the Holy Spirit brings from His place? He brings back a branch. Jesus was called the Branch (cf. Isa. 4:2; 11:1), and when He became the Vine, He called us branches (cf. Jn. 15:5). In His incarnation Jesus functioned as a Branch. When anything was produced through Him, like any good branch He claimed it was the work of the Father that dwelt in Him (cf. Jn. 5:16-17; 14:9-10). In other words, the Father was His Vine, and He was the Branch of the Father. Now in resurrection Jesus becomes our Vine, and we function as His branches. By this method, we who function as branches are able to accomplish that which we never could if we operated independently from Jesus. The vine and branch relationship is the heart of God's method for New Covenant believers to implement His plan.

By bringing back that branch from the yet unseen New Creation, the Holy Spirit signifies the method by which those who are in the ark will be able to overcome once they depart. They who are saved will soon reach a higher plane whereby salvation from destruction will no longer be the primary issue, and the emphasis turns to being in Christ and Christ being in them. Of course, being in the ark – or being saved means – that they already have Christ in them and are already in Him, but the revelation of it has not yet come. This revelation must come to the Church and is brought about by the Holy Spirit, which we can see in Ephesians 1:17-18.

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

The example of this is reflected in the fact that once the Dove is released from the confines of life in the ark He is able to return to them through an open heaven

(open window to the heavens) and reveal methods to them that are far greater than what is found in "ark living." The method the Dove of God reveals is that we may become branches of this new life of Christ.

The Dove Does Not Return

Finally Genesis 8:1 says, "And he stayed yet other seven says..." The wording of this is interesting. You can assume that either Noah withheld Him for seven more days or that the Holy Spirit stayed in that realm of the ark seven more days, but then He had to go out. He stayed as long as He could, but then He had to fly again. That is when we read, "...and [Noah] sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him anymore." When this takes place, we may incorrectly conclude that we should not have liberated the Holy Spirit because we have lost something valuable. Indeed you have! You lose the Spirit relating on an earthly level. The Spirit of God may periodically move in the realm of earth, but your relationship with Him now lies in the heavenlies (cf. Eph. 1:3). What this really means is that He leads the way into the New Creation. It is a huge loss to you if you fully intended on staying in the religious ark. You may begin to wonder what just happened.

Song of Songs chapter five is a very good example of this kind of loss. It was Jesus who brought all the ointment and purification to where the Shulamite was living, but because He removed Himself, she eventually left all of that to seek for Him (cf. Song 5:5-7). The issue was no longer what He could do for her in her realm. She left that place of comfort and familiarity. She left that place of security. She left that place of personal contentment and went after Him in His location.

This is similar to the fact that the Dove must return to the New Creation. He must return to the area with which He is most familiar. Why? He does not do this for selfish reasons. He will bring back enough earnest and enough evidence to us to prove its reality. He does not do this to convince us to keep sending Him out again and again while we live in the ark for the rest of our lives. The purpose behind the Dove's trips to the New Creation and back to the ark is to help us to finally realize that we must be delivered from the bondage of the ark and all that it means and enter into the glorious liberty of the New Creation. It is a place where there are no limitations and where it is not musty and small and limited. It is wide open and free and fresh and clean.

If you comprehend the purpose of God, then when the Dove no longer returns you will not be confused. Why? It is because in this process you have built a

Noah And The Dove

relationship with the Dove, the Holy Spirit. He has become a Person to you. You have cared about this Person and what is important to Him. You have fellowshipped with this Person in areas of interest to Him. You have seen the Dove's heartbeat and the joy that He had when He had returned to you for a time.

When you discover that the Dove is not returning, the devil or the carnal mind may tell you that you have been left in this sinkhole, this ark-lifestyle, forever. They may say that He has become selfish and left you here, but you do not consider such things. The Holy Spirit will not just walk out on a friend. You see Him go, and you know the intent with which He flies.

The Spirit Says, "Come"

The Spirit does not fly out the window in such a manner that you cannot see Him. He goes straight up where you can see His path. You see Him climb higher and higher and then you hear Him call, "Come." The Spirit says, "Come." In fact, the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come" (cf. Rev. 22:17). Come out of this ark, break out of this husk, be released from this cocoon, and let the life come forth! Break out of this reality as you know it and follow the Holy Spirit into reality as He knows it! Do not come to this reality in knowledge because knowledge has already come to you. The entire ark was built on knowledge for 120 years before. There was a steady building by means of knowledge. This is only culminating in smarter or deeper people. But the viewpoint the Dove brings will culminate in the reality of the fullness of Christ within us and us in Him.

With every beat of the Dove's wings, you know what He is saying. You no longer need people to put Scriptures together and say, "The Spirit says so-and-so." You know Him. You hear it within the beating of His wings: "Come." Everything about the departure of the Dove says that it is not a departure at all, but a beckoning. The Holy Spirit loves us too much to keep returning. He loves us too much to keep us stuck in a confined, musty place.

In His departure, the Holy Spirit risked our rejection of Him or our thinking bad thoughts concerning Him. He risked that for the hope of being able to pull us away to His place. Before this, the Holy Spirit's frequent returns had brought us a great hunger for deeper things. The things that He had brought us were the most wonderful things that we had ever experienced in our lives, but to know of this reality and to talk of it is still not enough. In His upward movements the Spirit is declaring that we have entered into death and burial, but now it is time for resurrection. The

resurrection on the waters has not been fullness of resurrection, for the end and aim of resurrection is exiting the ark and entering into the New Creation. That is the reality of it, not just believing it or knowing of its existence. The entering into this

reality will do to you and in you what no teaching could ever do.

There are many problems in the ark that we have tried to overcome and for which we have asked for the Spirit's help. The walls, the claustrophobia, the fears, all of the irritating noise — all of these things have taken their toll on us. But the Holy Spirit is

"EVERYTHING IS HEADED TOWARD THE NEW CREATION, FOR IT IS WIDE OPEN. IT IS ALL YOURS...

... FREEDOM AND LIBERTY IN A WORSHIP SERVICE IS FINE, BUT IT DOES NOT COMPARE TO THE LIBERTY IN THE NEW CREATION."

is not going to fly through the window and swoop around a few times and make all the problems disappear. When He is able to take us forth into this New Creation, those things will no longer be an issue, and we shall see fulfilled that which is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh death where is thy sting?" (I Cor. 15:54, 55).

Entering the New Creation in a Practical Way

Now we read Genesis 8:15-17: "And God spake unto Noah saying, Go forth from the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee..." Can you imagine how the donkeys acted when they left the ark? Can you imagine the reaction of the birds? Can you imagine the response by everything that has been cooped up for a year? Everything is headed toward the New Creation, for it is wide open. It is all yours. The animals are just going bananas with freedom. Freedom and liberty in a worship service is fine, but it does not compare to the liberty in the New Creation.

Sacrifice in the New Creation

When Noah left the ark, the first thing He did was offer a sacrifice. Why would there be a need for sacrifice for someone who has entered into the New Creation? Since everything there is clean, fresh, and brand new, it would seem as though sacrifice were no longer necessary.

When you enter the New Creation, your declaration is that what you were before is dead; the entire stench that was upon you is gone. Nevertheless, Noah got

Noah And The Dove

drunk almost immediately, even though he knew all of this. Even though he was dead, buried, and now living in a new creation, he still failed. Notice also that Ham, one of Noah's sons, was quick to point out Noah's faults. Is it not interesting that God cursed this son and not Noah (cf. Gen. 9:21-25)?

We must understand God's view of the New Creation. If God sees it, then God proceeds to say it, and then somebody should start living towards that end. Even if that person fails, God still respects the New Creation as complete. God's view is holy, and those who point out faults are unholy because they deny everything that God declares to be finished and settled. Ham did not just stumble a little. He went against the entirety of the death, burial, resurrection, and Life as God understands it. He did not just commit a sin; he sinned against Christ and Him crucified, the only hope of all mankind.

Noah sacrificing upon his entrance into the New Creation showed his weakness and need (cf. Gen. 8:20). How are we ever going to have strength in us? By being so weak that Christ is our strength. It is a wrong concept to assume that you will become a superman after coming in to the New Creation. Sacrifice is a principle, and God's strength is made perfect in weakness. God does not have to sin or be weak through inability. The weakness of God is stronger than men. The wisdom of God is foolishness to men of personal strength and ability (cf. I Cor. 1:25-28).

"JESUS DID NOT LET THE FATHER LIVE IN HIM BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID OF SINNING OR FALLING SHORT BUT BECAUSE IT IS A PRINCIPLE OF GOD."

Jesus did not let the Father live in Him because He was afraid of sinning or falling short but because it is a principle of God. This sort of weakness is not a weakness confined to sin or failure. For many Christians, the primary point of God's dealing is based on the old creation and on the fall, but the sacrifice of Noah was no longer related to the old creation and sin. He gave a sweet savor offering. This type of offering was unrelated to sin. Sweet savor offerings are not sin offerings. They are a completely different order of offerings.

Do you long for this reality to come in such a manner that no stench or remembrance of the old will remain? We need to get more people out of the ark instead of trying to fix up the ark. These things that we have been setting forth, if embraced, will take you away from all the things that you feared, that you struggled with. They will liberate you, not in the earth but from the earth.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit has His place, and we must understand His place, His heart and His person in the sense of what we have been discussing. As we do, we will discover a completely new realm in contrast to the confines of the ark. This New Creation reality as found in Christ is a place where there is no stench from the old. It is all fresh there and everything is springing forth green. Come away, come up here and come where you will see it!

Chapter Two The Dove As Eliezer

In the previous chapter we discussed the Holy Spirit as seen in the type of the Dove in Noah's ark (cf. Gen. 8:8-12). We saw how He would bring to us evidence of the New Creation. From His flight above in heavenly places in Christ, the Dove would return to us in the confinement of the ark bearing evidence of God's higher reality. We were not satisfied only to discover from the Dove a mere leaf or branch that we would expect to become acclimated to life inside the ark, but rather to receive this evidence as an invitation into another world, a New Creation that was ready to be inhabited. We should see this action on the part of the Dove as more than a mere gift but as an indicator to direct our view to the intention which motivated Him to bear it upon heavenly wings to us. He was bringing proof of a completed work, a finished work. This same invitation comes to us again and again in the scriptures and can be seen in the example given in Genesis as Abraham's servant Eliezer brings Isaac his bride.

His Intention and Our Responses

The Holy Spirit has a very specific intention in what He is doing. It becomes evident that as He brings forth His ministry to us, we have the ability to respond in many different ways. Hopefully as we come to know the heart and true ministry of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to respond to Him correctly. Our goal is that by knowing Him better we may become more aligned with His purposes instead of the basic religious presentation of the Holy Spirit and how we would normally respond to Him within the confines of a church service. In this way we can begin to discover the greater relationship for which God has sent Him to us. We will come to know the Person that we are dealing with more clearly as we continue to take a genuine look at His heart and ministry.

Another View of the Holy Spirit in Eliezer

Most of us are familiar with the story of Abraham seeking a bride for his son Isaac in Genesis 24. Abraham had a servant named Eliezer. In this story we will see a picture of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at work together to bring back a bride. Father Abraham represents our heavenly Father. His son, Isaac, represents Jesus the Son. Eliezer represents the Holy Spirit. It is to this servant Eliezer that Father Abraham gives a very special mission that is close to his heart. He sends Eliezer his servant to the land of his "seed" to bring back a bride for his beloved son Isaac. Abraham is sending his servant to their former home outside of the Promised Land to bring back a bride. This whole chapter deals with this picture of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Eliezer as the servant being sent from the Father is a picture of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to our place of dwelling in the earth to bring out of it a Bride for the Son. Notice that this plan has been initiated by a father as seen in these verses:

"And Abraham was old and well stricken in age, and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shall not take a wife unto thy son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; But thou shall go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land; must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware that thou not bring thy son thither again. The Lord God of heaven which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spoke unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angels before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto thy son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath; only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning the matter."

Genesis 24:1-9

In these scriptures you witness the initial communication between what could be understood as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. In our Christian understanding there can be a tendency only to consider communication between the Father and the Son, but here we see communication between the Father and the Holy Spirit in relationship to the Son. They are moving together on behalf of the Son. They are taking into consideration the desire of His heart for a Bride. However, to obtain that Bride will first require a journey.

Go and Find a Bride – The Missing DNA

"The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell."

Acts 7:2-4

"And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."

Genesis 11:31

'Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."

Genesis 12:1

Originally Abraham came from Ur of Chaldees, or what is also known as Babylon. It was from there that he traveled when God told him to leave his kindred, his home, and everything else, and go unto a land that God would show him (cf. Acts 7:2-4). It also appears that this whole family found and worshipped the true God long before Abraham left Babylon for the Promised Land. Abraham stopped at a location called Haran and stayed there for some time before entering the Promised Land. Abraham's father, along with other family members, had been traveling with him. His father died there in Haran (cf. Gen. 11:31). Possibly other family members also decided to stay there instead of going into the Promised Land with Abraham (cf. Gen. 27:43).

Though Abraham was a believer like the rest of the family, God specifically called him out from Babylon to bring him into something that the Lord wanted to reveal to him. Among those family members whom he left behind in Haran was his brother, Nahor. This is significant, not just because Nahor is of the same physical DNA as Abraham but because they are also both out from the same spiritual womb (cf. Gen. 31:53). It is also evident that Abraham wanted Isaac to marry into something that was spiritually akin to himself. Years later, it is to those who remained in Haran that Jacob was sent, and from among them he would find a bride (cf. Gen. 22:20, 23; 24:15).

Having remained in Haran for awhile, the Lord finally calls Abraham to complete his task by entering into that which God wanted to show him (cf. Gen. 12:1). This more recent call from God to Abraham emphasizes the fact that just leaving something (in this case, Babylon) was not His primary purpose. He is always seeking to bring us into something greater and not just trying to remove us from something negative. In fact, leaving something without fully entering in to what God wants to show us results in that old place continuing to have a hold on us in some form or fashion. In this case, Nahor had left Babylon geographically, but he stopped short of the Land of Promise. In a sense, he was still in Babylon on the inside.

This is especially illustrated by the name of the land in which the family had decided to remain – the land of Haran. Haran was the name of Abraham

"JUST FINDING SEED FROM ABRAHAM'S OWN DNA WAS NOT ENOUGH; A WOMAN WITH A HEART TO COME AWAY TO ISAAC WOULD ALSO BE NECESSARY."

and Nahor's brother, who had died before the family ever left Ur of the Chaldees. Apparently their father Terah named the land to which they had come after his dead son. This, if nothing else, shows clearly how we continue to carry Babylon in our hearts, never departing from it as long as we live outside the Land of Promise. Abraham, on the other hand, obeyed, leaving his family, and entered the Land of Promise. Not in Mesopotamia but in that Land of Promise the promised seed would be brought forth. We know from Galatians 3:16 that all these things only foretold of that which would be fulfilled by Christ as the promised Seed.

Our story picks up at the point where Isaac is fully grown and his father calls his servant to go find a bride for his son. It was of particular importance that his son not marry Canaanites, for they were of a contrary seed (cf. Gen. 24:3; 37-38). It is this trip made by Eliezer into a foreign land that will help us to better see the work

of the Holy Spirit who was sent into the earth after the resurrection of Christ.

"TO FIND SUCH A
PERSON COULD BE A
DIFFICULT TASK, FOR HE
MUST FIND ONE WHO IS
BORN AGAIN OF THE
SAME SEED, BUT IS ALSO
DETERMINED NOT TO
STOP UNTIL SHE
REACHES ISAAC."

As we study Eliezer's journey into Mesopotamia, it is important to remember that the desire of the Holy Spirit's heart is not just to visit and minister to us in our place in the earth but to bring us into the fullness of Christ – to Isaac's place. And so we consider that Eliezer's mandate was not just to find one of Abraham's kindred but to also find one who

would follow him into the Land where Isaac dwelt. Therefore just finding seed from Abraham's own DNA was not enough; a woman with a heart to come away to Isaac would also be necessary. In the reality of the Holy Spirit with the Church, the process involves more than saving souls or "getting people out of Babylon" and into the Promised Land that they might live in a better place. The aim for the Holy Spirit is to come and find someone who has a heart to enter into a union with Christ as a Bride. Such a person will come away from her place in order to join to Him in His place. To find such a person could be a difficult task, for He must find one who is born again of the same Seed, but is also determined not to stop until she reaches Isaac. She will be prepared to respond to God's servant according to the original call, leaving father, mother, and kindred to be joined to One. She will take on his name, life, and views, and in spirit she will become one in a true and living way.

Specific Instructions

Looking again at Abraham's journey from his place in Babylon to the place the Lord was taking him, we see how he obeyed God and left Haran, place of his former habitation. However, some of his own family remained there, never entering into that which God desired to reveal. Although they never fully entered into the land with Abraham, they were still of his family of origin. Remember, Eliezer was seeking for something beyond one who is of the same seed and yet does not enter in (which is what these relatives did). Abraham required one who was of his seed AND was prepared to move according to the original call, which was to go to the land that God would show them. These were his specific instructions to his servant, Eliezer. For that servant to find such a person could be a difficult task; it required him to find one who was not of the Canaanites but born from Abraham's family and also had the same heart as Abraham, one that would leave all to join to another. To find one of this "DNA" would be quite a challenge, indeed. And so began Eliezer's journey to do more than just save souls and bring them into the family of God or of getting them out of Babylon and into the Promised Land. Ultimately the goal is for the Holy Spirit to come and find one who has a heart which is willing to leave everything to become the bride of Isaac.

Prepared to Come

The "sameness" of kind that Abraham desired for his son Isaac speaks of more than just sharing the same lineage and heredity. We have seen that it requires the same kind of heart, even as Abraham had, that would leave father, mother,

and kindred so that all things could be joined in one. The "oneness" that Abraham is pursuing for Isaac exceeds even earthly similarities. For the bride to reach this place of union with Isaac would require her to lose <u>all</u> with the purpose that her husband might become all. In leaving her old identity and place, she will have to take on his identity that she may truly become one with him, swallowed up of another life. Even so, Jesus is seeking for one who will press past new birth to conform to His image in all things. It is this kind of Bride that the Father desires for His Son.

"THEY WERE OF THE SAME SEED BUT WERE NOT CONSUMED OF ONE YET, FOR THEY HAD NOT JOINED IN THE MANNER THAT A BRIDE WOULD BE MADE ONE WITH HER HUSBAND. THEY STILL HAD THEIR OWN NAME, THEIR OWN CONCERNS, AND THEIR OWN LIFE."

We can see that there were those in Babylon (because to not enter the Land is to still dwell in Babylon, no matter where they live) who had embraced the true God but never really heard from God that there was a Land and a union that He yet wanted to reveal to them. They were of the same seed but were not consumed of One yet, for they had not joined in the manner that a bride would be made one with her husband. They still had their own name, their own concerns, and their own life that was carved out of the earth in the land of their own existence (cf. Gen. 24:10; Gen. 11:31). Their desire was to get comfortable, asking God to bless them in the place where they dwelt. Although being born again may suffice for us, there is a greater desire in the heart of God concerning His full intention in saving us. The one that Eliezer is searching for will make the complete journey and fully enter into the Land. She will be one as a bride would be one.

True Oneness Is One

It is true that those who are born again are made one with the Lord, for they that are joined to the Lord are one spirit (cf. I Cor. 6:17). Yet there is a time where all that we are is to be gathered up into the One to which we have been joined (cf. Eph. 1:10). Our spirit may be saved, but the rest of our being may be functioning independently from the Life of Christ within us. True oneness is One. The One we have been made in Christ is not you and me, for the One is Him. When we join to Jesus as His Bride, we are swallowed up of the One who is Christ. It will be Christ all and in all (cf. Col. 3:11). It will be Christ the fullness that filleth all things

(cf. Eph. 1:23). It will be Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Peace, the Love, and the Joy (cf. Jn. 14:6; Gal. 5:22-23). We must continue to journey to the place where all things become summed up in Christ. We can no longer be content with knowing that we have a relative in a faraway place. It is no longer about what He does and gives us over in Babylon that makes us have joy, for He is our joy. It is the difference between Christ adding things to us and us losing our old identity to be found in Him. A person who has this kind of heart is what the Holy Spirit is seeking.

The Pursuit in the Heart of God

The Father, even though He knows there are yet wrong motivations and failures in His people, still says that they are His and out from them He wants to bring forth a Bride whose heart is for His Son. His heart remains the same towards whosoever will come and take the journey with Eliezer to be with Isaac in this relationship of oneness. The depth of God's desire in this matter can be heard in the conversation Abraham has with Eliezer in Genesis 24:1-10.

In this conversation between Abraham and Eliezer, you hear the communing between God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. You can sense the somber tenor of their communications concerning the Son receiving the Bride of His heart. Abraham is well-stricken in age when this conversation takes place. He is saying that he wants a bride for his son. And Eliezer as a type of the Holy Spirit is saying that he will do everything within his power to see that the son gets the bride he is longing for. There is not a lot of surface conversation going on between them, such as, "How is the weather?" or, "How are your servant duties going?" The only insight the Word of God gives us into their conversation is this picture of the Father and the Holy Spirit expressly discussing a Bride for the Son. They are having a very singular, focused conversation. God's eye is fixed on obtaining a Bride for the Son!

It is our responsibility as those who love God to find out what is truly going on in His heart. As we study His Word and seek to know Him, we will find an absence of superficial thought going on in His heart. But somehow the church has found so many other things to which it can give itself. We need to find out what is truly of utmost concern to Him. It is our responsibility to search the Scriptures that we may discover God's heart, and from that place understand His words and actions. The Holy Spirit knows the deep things of the heart of the Father and the Son and comes to share them with us (cf. I Cor. 2:10).

Eliezer's Concern

Even as Eliezer dedicated himself to Abraham's request, the Holy Spirit commits Himself to go and present these things to the church. He will be faithful to the heart of the Father and the heart of the Son, but He will not force anyone to respond to the call, for that is not His nature. Those who have turned their hearts towards the Son will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's call and message. The Holy Spirit's call is never just to certain ones, or to only a few, but rather it is to "whosoever will." Because the Bride is not one person but a corporate entity, the Holy Spirit will present these things to all who are born again. His heart remains the same.

You can hear the concern rise in Eliezer as he considers the people's possible response to his mission. "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land?" (Gen. 24:5) He may have been thinking, "What will I do if I get there, and she says that she is too busy with her life in that place, or that she does not want to go? What if she says the trip will be too hard, or that since salvation is by grace, there is no need to press on to know Isaac?" Eliezer knows this journey upon the backs of camels will be no pleasure cruise. But here we can remember that Jesus told us that narrow is the gate and hard is the way (cf. Matt. 7:14), and Paul reminds us that with much tribulation we shall enter into the kingdom of heaven (cf. Acts 14:22). But for those who love Jesus none of these things will matter.

The Holy Spirit may have similar thoughts because the people He is trying to reach have free wills. He may have considerations similar to Eliezer, such as, "What if I make this journey, and I get down there among them, and in all the moving, wooing, sharing, and giving of words they think more of themselves than they do of the Son? What if they are more concerned with their lives than with His life? What if they are so enamored with the place of their dwelling and content with their life there and the certain amount of religion they have brought to that community that they believe that is what it is all about? What if the Bride will not come?"

Should I Bring Isaac Back to Them?

As Eliezer foresees the possibility that she will not want to return with him to Isaac, he speculates about other options. He asks Abraham, "Must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?" (Gen. 24:5). In these words we can hear the Holy Spirit asking the Father, "What should I do? Do you want me to come and get

the Son and take him back down there again?" Father Abraham responds, "Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again" (Gen. 24:6). Notice that Abraham used the word "again". God the Father gave His only Son, and the Son came to us and gave Himself for us on a cross (cf. Jn. 3:16). At the thought of bringing the Son back in this way a second time, the Father is saying, "No, He died once for sin, and He is not going to do it again." God knew what they would do to His Son if He went back again. Every time you put the Lamb in the earth, the inhabitants kill Him (cf. Isa. 52:12-53:7). Every time you put the Lamb in heaven, the inhabitants exalt Him (cf. Rev. 5:6-13). The Lamb in the earth will be slain, and He has already died once for sin (cf. Rom. 6:10). The Father is not going to send Him in that way again.

"GOD KNEW WHAT THEY WOULD DO TO HIS SON IF HE WENT BACK AGAIN... THE LAMB... HAS ALREADY DIED ONCE FOR SIN. THE FATHER IS NOT GOING TO SEND HIM IN THAT WAY AGAIN."

The Father hopes that the Bride will recognize what it cost the Son the first time He came and will be willing to go through a certain amount of suffering just to be with Him. Surely she will sense His heart and His love, and she will realize that He did not just give the best that He had, but He gave Himself that she might be with Him and that she might be One. God's hope is that she will sense His heart and His love, realizing that He gave Himself for her, not an angel or His second best, but Himself. Hopefully she will see that He has done more than just forgiven her of her sins, but made her a partaker of all that He is and all that He has (cf. II Pet. 1:4). Yet if she cannot recognize that and pursue Him with all her heart, then the Father will not send Him back to her.

The Lamb Who Came

We have previously noted that when the Lamb of God is seen in the earth, eventually He is persecuted and slain. But when we hear the Scriptures mention the Lamb above in the heavens, He is exalted and loved. The Father once sent His Lamb into the hostile environment of the earth. The Son came and died, giving His Life for whomsoever would receive Him. Yet if we looked more closely into His motivation for coming and dying, we would see His desire to bring forth a Bride that would be one with Him, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh (cf. Eph. 5:30). His purpose for coming to the earth speaks more of Him receiving one unto

Himself who would be with Him, rather than the Son leaving His Father to come and live in the earth with selfish people as a servant to their desires. He came to give us His Life that we may ever grow more and more into His image and take our place with Him (cf. Rom. 8:29).

Suffering's Reward, or a Bride by Love?

Some may look at the sacrifice of the Son when He came to earth and find themselves saying, "We cannot have Jesus dying in vain and not receiving the reward of His sufferings!" And yet, if Christ died and laid down His Life for the Church, and she never came into all that God had for her, we can know that the Father was pleased with His Son's spirit and nature. The Word of God says that the Father has seated that Lamb on a throne above every name that is named. It is the Father's delight to highly favor and exalt this Lamb, for He is well pleased with His self-giving nature, regardless of our response.

Although God does not have to have results, we are assured from the Bible that the Son is going to get the Bride of His heart. Even so, there is a difference between the Lord doing what He did to receive a reward for His suffering and laying down His Life regardless of receiving a reward for it. The Son delights to do the will of the Father, for His reward is the Father's pleasure. And the Bride comes to the Son not to reward Him for suffering but because She loves Him and desires that He be pleased. Therefore Eliezer need not worry about the response of the true Bride. The spirit of the Bride will come forth, for she is in love. Love is a much more powerful motivation than duty. She will go through many things because she loves Him (cf. Song 8:6-7). Her dedication is to His heart rather than being dedicated to reward His sufferings. The Book of Revelation never refers to her as the Bride of Christ, but calls her the Lamb's wife. There may be times that she does not remember what He suffered

as much as she ever holds Him and His heart before her eyes. She is in love with the Lamb and the beauty of His nature; she is in love with her Husband.

The Bride of Christ is married to the Lamb, and she is ever to be joined not to what He did but to who He is. What the Lamb did on the Cross was

"THE SON DELIGHTS
TO DO THE WILL OF
THE FATHER, FOR HIS
REWARD IS THE
FATHER'S PLEASURE."

a physical manifestation of who He is, and it accomplished much. Nevertheless, a physical manifestation of a spiritual truth is still only a manifestation of who He always is in the reality of His Person. Doing can never produce being, but because of who He is and what was in His Heart, He died for her.

Not Him Coming to Us, but Us Coming to Him

Now we return to father Abraham's answer to Eliezer. No, he is not going to send Isaac back to that place. This bride will go out to Isaac, for her love for him will bring her to him this time. Instead of the Son going in, the Bride is coming out, and the Spirit is bringing her.

A Covenant between Abrabam and Eliezer

Abraham and Eliezer decide to make a covenant concerning their decision to proceed in this very specific manner:

"...And thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath; only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter."

Genesis 24:7b-9

This is a beautiful picture of the Father and the Holy Spirit dedicating themselves to the Son. God is covenanting within Himself. They are committed together for the Son's good pleasure that He will have a Bride that is after His kind. To understand the magnitude of this transaction of the God who covenants is to know the surety of His oath, which far exceeds even the bond of the most noble of men (cf. Heb. 6:16-17).

When presented with the concept of a covenant, we tend to think of our own covenants with God, but in reality the New Covenant was one that the Son made with the Father and the Father made with the Son. That is what makes it sure. If the covenant had been made with us, it would be unsure. But there is a desire in the heart of God and an oath that He has made that speaks of the finality of His purposes to bring unto the Lamb a Bride that has joined to Him as One.

The Need for a Response from the Bride

For the fullness of God's purpose in receiving a Bride to be accomplished, it requires that the Bride herself come away into the oneness that is now hers in Christ. The Holy Spirit has been sent to help her do this and bring her along the journey until she is swallowed up in Isaac's tent (cf. Gen. 24:67). This is not referring to a journey to heaven but rather a journey into the fullness of Christ. As we continue we will see that this mission may prove to be a little more difficult than it may sound.

Coming Down to Seek a Bride

"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac... And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor."

Genesis 24:1-4, 10

Eliezer has been sent on a mission from Abraham to find a bride for Isaac and bring her back to him. "But thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (Gen. 24:4). These verses can help us see the real purpose for which the Holy Spirit was sent forth from the Father at Pentecost. We can begin to understand more clearly the heart from which the Holy Spirit ministers. He has been sent on a mission. That mission is more than just a dutiful call; He is one with the Father in it. The Father and Spirit have dedicated themselves and covenanted together to bring about this union of the Bride with the Son. In this passage Eliezer leaves the Land of Promise (Canaan), Abraham, and Isaac as he comes down into the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia. He travels to this place looking for a bride that will return with him and join to Isaac.

If we look into the heart of Eliezer and from there look out through his eyes, we will see that he perceives things differently than we do. Consider what he sees as he arrives and begins to scan the city of Nahor. We may look and see a city with walls and people, and then look closer and see people with needs and particular situations in their lives. Yet in the eyes of Eliezer all of these things are just side issues. He is looking for something that will become a Bride. Now, he knows that she is not the bride yet, but he will see her heart that is willing to come away and be with Isaac beyond him coming and blessing her life in this city. He will know her by her heart and spirit. She will have the spirit of the bride, though ignorant as yet to the full meaning of union.

The Holy Spirit is not looking for the top scholars in Babylon's Bible school or the most faithful among ministers. He is looking for those who will leave family, feelings, home, body and everything to come with the Spirit into union with the "HIS PLACE IS THE PLACE WHERE THE FATHER AND ISAAC DWELL. IT IS THE LAND OF PROMISE...

OUR PLACE CONSISTS OF OUR LIFE, OUR EARTH, OUR SITUATIONS, OUR KIN, OUR UNDERSTANDING, AND OUR NERVE ENDINGS THAT MAKE US FEEL THINGS IN RELATIONSHIP TO OUR BODIES DOWN HERE."

Lord's heart, view, and understanding. He is looking for a heart towards the Lord and not the wisest of the wise. He is looking for someone who will leave their own wisdom to join to Jesus. He is not looking for the most gifted, but for whosoever will leave themselves and "blend" into Christ. It is no different than the call that

originally came to Abraham. The bride will not know what the place looks like, but she will trust Eliezer to prepare her along the way. The main thing is that her heart is not on herself but towards the one unto whom she is coming away. Her heart is on Him, who He is, and who He is in His place. In like manner, when the Holy Spirit finds a heart like this, He will know that He has found her! She will give up all just to be with the Son. She may be the most unlearned in her class concerning doctrines, but her eyes are set on Jesus. Her identity is not all wrapped up in her religious status or personal abilities. She wants to disappear into Christ and be swallowed up in His tent. She will go HIS way and not her own. Even as the bride would come away with Eliezer to dwell in Isaac's place, so shall we come away with the Holy Spirit to dwell in oneness with the Lord in His reality found in Christ.

Our Place or His Place?

For the sake of clarity, note the two different places in view at this time. There is the place from whence Eliezer came, also understood as the place from whence the Holy Spirit comes. His place is the place where the Father and Isaac dwell (cf. Jn. 14:26). It is in the Land of Promise (Cannan). This is a picture of God in His place, above the earth. Of course, we are not talking about heaven but a place of oneness between the Father, Son, and Spirit. Then there is our place. Our place consists of our life, our earth, our situations, our kin, our understanding, and our nerve endings that make us feel things in relationship to our bodies down here. Yet the Holy Spirit has come to our place seeking for something very specific. His eyes are running to and fro over all the earth in His search (cf. II Chron. 16:9). As He searches He quickly passes over many things, for He is moving as swiftly as He can to find a Bride. He is not just looking for a Christian or a godly person, but for a heart that will leave its own place to come and live in the Son's place as one. In reality, the

Bride is not one person but many who are one corporate Bride. He is gathering all who will leave their place and come into His place as this Bride who dwells in union with the Son.

The Spirit of Our Gatherings

There are Christian groups everywhere who gather to many subjects and areas of truth, but the Spirit is looking for those who will gather to the Son to be one with Him. When the Spirit visits gatherings that are of another heart, they may misunderstand His purpose for being among them and relate to Him in a way that is not according to His eternal mission. They may become excited over the gifts and blessings that He brings with Him, not understanding the heart behind these things (cf. Gen. 24:22, 30, 47, 53). They may misunderstand the presence of the Spirit as a sign of their gathering being special, and that His gifts and blessings are proofs that they are more spiritual than other gatherings. Some promote themselves because of His presence among them. Nevertheless, the Spirit did not come to make their gathering happy and exciting but to show them the reality of another gathering into the Lord Himself (cf. Eph. 1:10). So often the people come to the Spirit looking for advice for their earth problems, or seeking power in "Babylon". And they are asking these things from the Messenger that was sent from God to bring them out of that mess and into the Son. They are crying out for power and gifts, unaware of His heart that is searching for a Bride who is seeking the Groom. To understand what the Holy Spirit has to deal with at times may cause us to have compassion and thankfulness towards His longsuffering and care among us. Yet the Holy Spirit will not declare Himself, seeking to lift up only Jesus and not Himself, and certainly not specific gatherings (cf. Jn. 16:13-14).

It Is Time to Go

"And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at least the ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master."

Genesis 24:55-56

The verses quoted above are the words of the family members who have spent their whole lives in "Babylon." Like many Christians, their main goal seems to get Eliezer to spend more time among them instead of grasping the greater purpose for

his presence there. There may be times when people rejoice because the Holy Spirit has come to their city, but in reality the Holy Spirit has only come to get the Bride and remove her from her dwelling in the city of Nahor (cf. Gen. 24:10). Because the Holy Spirit has a very dove-type heart, He is not pushy or forceful to make things go His way. We can see this in Eliezer when he was invited to Nahor's house as he tells them of his desire to be on his way in order to complete the task for which he was sent. He did not force the issue, but he does make the request. In essence he was saying, "Please do not hold me here. Please help to be on my way. Please help me to accomplish my task." Because the Holy Spirit is gentle and lays down His life, we do not always discern the fact that on the inside He is longing to complete His mission and bring the Bride back to the Son. If we are unaware of the heart of the Holy Spirit, we could be prone to keeping Him in our place rather than leaving with Him to come into the Lord's place. We saw this example concerning the dove that wanted to leave the ark of Noah's existence and lead the whole family out into the fresh air of the New Creation. In our insensitivity to His needs we would be unaware of what the third Person of the Trinity is being put through. God the Holy Spirit knows that Jesus longs for His Bride and that the Father has covenanted that His Son would have her. These are the burdens and longings of His heart, and yet He will graciously accept our invitations to stay and partake of our festivities. Such was the case with Rebekah's family when it came time for her to leave.

Sbow Him Kindness

"And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham... And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master."

Genesis 24:12, 54

When we do become aware of the heart of the Holy Spirit, we can begin to have clear vision, causing us to work with Him in His purpose. This will cause us to speed Him on His way, honoring the request to send Him good speed this day and show Him kindness. This will allow Him to do what He is here for. We must understand that He can be taken advantage of because of His dove nature that will keep bowing to and serving others. To not protect and relate to Him properly could put the Holy Spirit in the position of becoming our servant who does the bidding of our own desires. We should be giving Him the freedom to function as the Father's servant who does the bidding of the Father's desire for His Son. We previously

pointed out how some may assume that the purpose for which the Holy Spirit came was to bless them in their lives and in their land, to make them happy and comfortable. This would be the equivalent of Nahor insisting that Eliezer live with them forever. But our purpose should be to make the Holy Spirit happy and comfortable, giving Him the liberty to discover those with a heart set on the Son.

Without understanding the purpose of the Holy Spirit, we can delay Him on His mission and take advantage of His gentle nature. He could be forced to move from place to place, from gathering to gathering. He will always be courteous because He is the Dove who bows and joins with us despite the foolishness of some of our religious gatherings. He does this because He will not declare His own needs. We could assume that He is happy and that He loves it here with us in our place. But if we were to look inside His heart, we would see a longing that is saying, "I must get back to the Father and the Son. I must bring Him what is the desire of His heart so that I may show kindness to my Master." What a joy to give the Holy Spirit the freedom to bless the Father and the Son. This truly would be to show Him kindness. We must attune ourselves to the Person of the Holy Spirit.

At times some of us may catch a faint reverberation in the Spirit of a purpose beyond moving in our city or moving on us personally for our earthly needs. We can hear a call to come away from that relationship. Some may think this call is about a journey wherein God wants to take us to a better place called the Promised Land. But the spirit behind this call is not God desiring to bring self-centered Christians into a happy comfortable "Beulah Land" (cf. Isa. 62:4). There is no thought or concept of oneness with Jesus in that mentality. The complete portion of that Land was given to the Son, and it is only

"THIS NEW CREATION LAND IS NOT A PLACE FOR SELFISH PEOPLE... THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT WANT TO FILL THE LAND WITH 'BABYLONIANS' BUT WITH THE BRIDE OF HIS HEART."

This New Creation Land is not a place for selfish people but for those who have left their own lives to join to Christ in oneness. The Holy Spirit does not want to

ours through oneness.

fill the Land with "Babylonians" but with the Bride of His heart. The Bride has changed her identity, and by the time she arrives she is no longer someone who has a life apart from Christ. She will make a journey, and on that journey the Spirit will prepare her for what is settled in God's heart. Yet before that journey can take place, she must first leave the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia.

Gifts for the Grabbing

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things."

Genesis 24:53

When the Holy Spirit looks at the Church, He sees the Bride of Christ, and so He gives gifts. We might see those gifts as a means to enhance our religious gatherings in Babylon. We might respond to that gesture as proof that we are of God rather than comprehending that the gifts come from the reality that in His heart He sees us as being in oneness with Christ. The gifts were meant to represent the Groom's deepest love, but if we do not know we are a Bride, we will not understand what they represent. If we do not see how He sees us, we will begin to doubt that deepest love when things get bad. We will feel like we have been "shined on" for a moment in time when the Holy Spirit blessed us with a gift. Yet the reality of those gifts represents something so far beyond what we may have ever considered.

When Eliezer departed to get Isaac a bride, his camels were laden with gifts to give to the bride that he would find. All these things were meant to woo her heart unto oneness with Isaac. They were not meant to bless her in an existence and place that was separate from Isaac. Later on we will discover that God can use gold or camels, blessings or trials in order to get us to Isaac and conform us the image of His Son. All these things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose (cf. Rom. 8:28-29). To those who have the spirit of the Bride, all things will hasten the journey to Isaac.

These gifts that Eliezer gives us on the behalf of Isaac represent the permanency of the Groom's heart for His Bride. It could be easy to only see the gift given in the moment. When the feeling of security and freshness of that gift fades, we could seek after a new touch, a new gift, and a new proof of the Groom's love unless we look past the gift into the heart of the Groom. Eliezer's purpose in giving Rebekah these blessings was that she would catch a true view of the Groom's heart all wrapped up in these simple little gifts. It is the heart of Isaac, not the gift, that is truly being given. It is the heart of Jesus for His Bride that is given, and we rarely see that for what it is.

When the Holy Spirit continues to give gifts, we may decide that His purpose is found fully in gifts and ornamentation, which can lead us to understand His purpose to be Eliezer dwelling in my place to bless me. And so a culture in Babylon could be

formed around the gifts and us growing in relationship to the gifts, as well as who has the most gifts and can use them the best. A lifestyle surrounding receiving gifts would then develop in that foreign city. If Eliezer stopped giving gifts, the people having this mindset would assume that certainly something must be wrong. They could begin to measure spirituality by the most present move of the Holy Spirit instead of letting the Holy Spirit move us closer to union with Isaac in all things. The true reality of such a mindset is that they have left the heart of God. Having the Holy Ghost and His gifts is not proof of being in tune and flowing with His heart. Could we so deeply receive the heart of the Holy Spirit and the Lord that we no longer need to have proofs in order to remain in relationship? These "proofs" were meant to bring us to the permanency of the Son's heart. The relationship is to be established. We can have the proof of our hearts to His heart sealed by the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 1:13; Rom. 8:14-17). If we need a new gift every six months to feel that we are still of God, then this relationship has not yet been established. We must be sealed and settled in this relationship.

"A CULTURE IN BABYLON COULD BE FORMED AROUND THE GIFTS AND US GROWING IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE GIFTS, AS WELL AS WHO HAS THE MOST GIFTS AND CAN USE THEM THE BEST."

We must let the Holy Spirit move out of our realm and allow Him to go deeper than experiences in our body and soul. The Holy Spirit desires to bring us out of our realm and into the Lord's realm. His deep movements are meant to form the Son in us. He did not come to add deeper information or deeper experiences to our life in the city of our dwelling. True depth is the ability to move out of those realms and find the satisfaction of the Spirit, in His place and in His heart. As we give Him the assurances of our heart, the Spirit will have great joy. The more we know the heart of the Holy Spirit, the more we will also come to understand why He is giving gifts and the heart condition in which we are to receive those gifts. We will love and trust Him without requiring gifts. We will receive His heart and not just His hands. If we truly know Him, we can receive both His heart and His hands properly.

Holding Him Captive

When Eliezer first comes bearing gifts, some could choose to remain settled in their foreign land while enjoying His gifts and presence. This is not only a possible stumbling stone in Babylon but can take place anywhere along the journey. When we

finally choose to leave and make our journey to Isaac there is always the possibility of settling down along the way. Due to the harshness of the journey, some may decide to make the best of it and work with what they have to scrape out something of a life outside of dwelling with Isaac rather than pressing through it all until we are is swallowed up in Isaac's tent. However, this is not much of a danger because so many ministers are placing all the emphasis upon the Holy Spirit's work in the city of their habitation.

Because Eliezer will not depart until the bride willingly returns with him, he will consign himself to the prison of Mesopotamia (which includes the spirit of Babylon) until she chooses to come out from it with him unto Isaac. Again, this is similar to our previous example of Noah confining the dove in the ark rather than allowing it to be released into the New Creation. In this sense we can become the Spirit's jailer, and He will keep Himself in our jailhouse, for He will not depart without the Bride. In the same way that Abraham will not allow Isaac to go back to Mesopotamia (cf. Gen. 24:6), Eliezer does not want to go back to Abraham without her. In reality, we are already one with Jesus, for the work is finished; therefore the Holy Spirit is really waiting to awaken us to the reality of who we now are in Christ, and who He is in us. He remains in our realm until we awaken to His.

A Death Occurs

The Holy Spirit was sent from God to us after Christ rose from the dead and ascended to the Father (cf. Jn. 14:26; 16:7). He comes to us from the reality of a finished work and a settled union in the heart of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is caught up in the glorious work of the Cross and is bearing the good news to us so that we might come away and dwell in this union that has been brought forth. The Spirit has come to awaken us to our identity in the Son, and yet we glory in the fact that we have the Holy Spirit moving in our meetings. When our response is wrong concerning His purposes, a death begins to happen in the Holy Spirit's heart. This is a death that occurs even after the death and finished work of the Son. It is a death that speaks of the Holy Spirit's endurance and longsuffering to bring us in.

This "death" starts when the Spirit realizes that the people are not hearing His words, even though the work is finished. Bringing them from their understanding to knowing the risen Christ requires much patience and long-suffering on the Holy Spirit's part. Jesus bore our infirmities, but the Holy Spirit will have to "bear with" us until we awaken to our oneness with Christ. Jesus died to bring forth

the New Creation, and the Holy Spirit dies daily to bring her into it. Joyously, some will hear what the Spirit is saying and come away to know Christ in His place as one.

Time to Make a Journey

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

John 14:16-20

When Eliezer does find Rebekah and she expresses a willingness to come, then it is time to depart for Isaac. It is important that the Bride understand where she is going and what this journey is all about. This is not a spiritual journey of learning religious knowledge and becoming a deacon. That is the wrong journey! She is coming on this journey because, out of love, she is leaving everything to be with Isaac. During this journey from Babylon to Isaac, Rebekah will be in constant communion with Eliezer. He will not just be functioning as her travel guide, but as the one who shares Isaac's heart with her. It will not be just a time of travel but of preparation to see Isaac face to face. In like manner, the Spirit of truth has come to comfort us by bringing us into the knowledge that we are in the Son and He is in us.

Misrepresenting His Purpose

It may be difficult for Eliezer to fully communicate the spirit of this journey to the bride if, prior to his coming, others have been presenting false ideas to the residents of the city of Nahor concerning the place He seeks to take her. Imagine if there were teachers and preachers in Babylon who had never been to the Promised Land or met Isaac yet have been presenting their notions of what it all meant. Eliezer would then have to give the bride a true description of what this journey entailed as well as tear down every false concept she had been fed by these charlatans.

He would have to explain that reaching Isaac is not a mad race to stake your claim in the Promised Land, given to whoever gets there first. It is for those who

have joined to the true Heir in oneness. We have not come to lay hold of our inheritance, but to lay hold of the Heir. When Eliezer came to the land of Nahor seeking a bride, he did not advertise cheap claims to a fertile land in Canaan. If that were the case, he would have had a huge group of property-hungry followers joining in the journey without a thought of Isaac in their minds. But Eliezer came seeking a certain kind of heart that would leave self to love Isaac. This is the spirit of the journey, and it requires a heart that is departing from her place to receive a new identity and nature in Isaac.

Only in Oneness Is All-ness

The promises concerning the Land were not given to saved Babylonians, but to the Seed (cf. Gal.3:16). The Promised Land was not to be filled with "the saved" but those who have entered into oneness with the Heir. By the time the Bride arrives to where Isaac lives, she is no longer of a foreign land; she is one with Isaac. She has been making a journey, and on that journey she has been hearing not just the voice of Eliezer but that of Isaac, her husband. The Holy Spirit has been opening her ears not about the Promised Land but about the heart of Jesus. The Bride has not been hearing promises pertaining to her inheritance and her future; rather, she has been hearing of the oneness that makes her a "joined-heir" with Christ (cf. Rom. 8:17). In like manner, the Holy Spirit is awakening us to who we are as one with the Son. All the Land is ours only because we are one with the true Heir through union (cf. Heb. 1:2). If we allow the Holy Spirit to awaken us to who we are in Christ, we will not have to rush into the Promised Land "staking claims." We will comprehend that it is all ours by virtue of a union with Christ that is motivated by love. It is impossible to truly possess the inheritance apart from this relationship of oneness. Only in oneness is all-ness! If the relationship in which we move violates the spirit of the Truth, then our journey is in vain. We will lay hold of these things on a false premise. The Bride will not get to the Land and start staking claims; she will go all the way into the heart of it where Isaac (Christ) is, and there she will join with Him in oneness. Do we comprehend the greatness of this? We are the wife of the Lamb. We are joined forever. God did not bless us, He joined us to Himself. He did not promise us things, He married us. We become His wife, and He loves us. These are the issues that the Holy Spirit desires to speak into our hearts.

Another name for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (cf. Jn. 14:17). To move in any other relationship towards the Son is to be in violation to the Spirit of Truth. As we come to understand the Holy Spirit's mission and heart, we will also see how we can abuse His ministry of drawing us into the Son. He is not sharing His

message with us to motivate a response from our own selfishness and greed, but that by love we come away from ourselves and join to Christ in all things, even as the Cross has already accomplished it. There is a spirit in which the truth is to be received, for there is a heart within the Holy Spirit that shares the truth in a certain way.

Eliezer, the Treasure of the Journey

A long uncomfortable trip lies between Babylon and Canaan, where Isaac dwells. It is a six-hundred-mile journey by camel. Eliezer does more than simply find a bride for Isaac in a foreign land; he must also guide her on her journey to Isaac. We have been discussing all that the Holy Spirit must endure and go through to find someone who is willing to leave father and mother and come to know Christ in union. We would think His great mission was accomplished when He finally found hearts that would willingly come. But that is just the beginning, for they must also make a journey back. This next phase will test and prove the Bride's heart, causing her to determine if it is really worth it all to get to Isaac. We find from Ephesians 2:8 that salvation is free and without cost, but for those who are saved, to go on to really know the Lord will cost everything (cf. Phil. 3:7-10).

What great provision does God give us for such a journey as this? He gives us the Holy Spirit much like Abraham gave Rebekah his servant Eliezer. He is the treasure of the journey and our guide to Isaac. The Spirit of Truth carries in Him the words and spirit of the Son, sharing and preparing the Bride's heart for the revealed truth of her union with Christ in His place. Eliezer knew the kind of heart it was going to take for a woman to really depart on this journey and not turn back. To make sure such a departure was really in the heart of Rebekah, she was asked by her kin, "Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go" (Gen. 24:58).

Transport through the Wilderness: Camels!

"And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way."

Genesis 25:61

What was it that carried Rebekah from life in Babylon to the Land of Promise where Isaac was waiting? Camels! These camels can represent the troubles and trials on our journey to Isaac. During the journey these beasts of burden can do things

that really upset us. They will not move when we want them to move, they turn around and bite us, they have uncomfortable humps, and they spit at us! When these things happen, it can elicit responses from us that are not very Christ-like. That is what God intends. That is part of the journey toward knowing the Son in union (cf. II Cor. 4:17). At this point it is time for the Holy Spirit to work. In the midst of these tough situations with the "camels" when we find ourselves full of bitter responses, the Holy Spirit begins to share Isaac's spirit and mind with us so that we might begin to join to Him instead of to our old ways. It is part of the Bride's preparation to see Isaac (the Lord) face to face (II Cor. 3:18). In this way, the Bride is beginning to know Him and conform to Him. Going through troubles and trials is not the true preparation, but going through them with the Holy Spirit and receiving the Groom's heart and mind as our own new identity is God's intention. If our true purpose is to conform to Christ as one with Him, then all these things will work together for that purpose (cf. Rom. 8:28). In the heart condition of the Bride with the help of the Holy Spirit, these things will not be hindrances but helpers (cf. II Cor. 4:17). Instead of setting Her back in her pursuit of Jesus, they will propel her forward. These trials become bread for her, strengthening her heart in Christ as one with him (cf. Num. 14:9).

If the journey is only a race to get to a certain place, then these troubles and trials will drive her crazy. She will see them as obstacles and setbacks that are keeping her from reaching Isaac and her new life in the Promised Land. The camels will be too slow and clumsy. The problems will become hindrances rather than helpers that prepare her spiritually to be a Bride that functions by the nature of Christ. Because the heart of the Bride is set towards the Lord, she is determined to let the Cross work in her. She will never give up on the Cross working in her, taking her out from the old and bringing her forth into the New in practical ways. There will be His increase and her decrease from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (cp. John 3:30 with II Cor. 3:18). There will be a constant working and flowing together of the bride with the Spirit to ever bring her closer to the image of Christ. In that sense, she can kiss the camel that spit on her KNOWING that this too can help her heart to separate more fully unto Christ in nature, attitude and life.

By Bracelet or By Camel?

"And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor"

Genesis 24:10

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things."

Genesis 24:53

The verse above states the provisions taken by Eliezer at the onset of his expedition to find a bride for Isaac. Remember that when he arrived in Rebekah's home he passed out gifts to her and the family. Eliezer as the Holy Spirit can use

camels or gifts. He can use blessing or trials. The Bible tells us that all things work together for good (cf. Rom. 8:28-29). And He will use it all; it does not matter to Him. All that matters to Him is that we are conformed to the image of the Son, ever getting closer to "Isaac". Many may agree that God does more in our lives when we are in a crisis than

"ELIEZER AS THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN USE CAMELS OR GIFTS. HE CAN USE BLESSING OR TRIALS."

when we are in a time of blessing. Even though a time of crisis may have been a rough experience, it worked to bring us more into the image of Christ. The Bible does not say that all things are good, but that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose (cf. Rom. 8:28). When Eliezer departed for his journey to Mesopotamia, he had camels laden with gifts. Here we see both trials (camels) and blessings (gifts). God uses all things to work together towards His true purpose of conforming us to the image of His Son. We will see how Eliezer works with both of these to help bring the bride unto Isaac.

On her journey back to Isaac with Eliezer, Rebekah is riding on a camel but is clothed upon with the garments and jewelry from Isaac. The camels are bringing out the elements within Rebekah that are not yet conformed to Isaac, but the garments and jewelry speak of the identity she already has in Isaac's heart as one. If Rebekah only considers her reactions to the camels, she will get very discouraged and want to

"HE WILL USE IT ALL;
IT DOES NOT MATTER
TO HIM. ALL THAT
MATTERS TO HIM IS
THAT WE ARE
CONFORMED TO THE
IMAGE OF THE SON."

quit the journey and find an oasis somewhere where she might settle down. Every confrontation with a camel brings up something in her that makes her look and feel ugly. But if she listens to Eliezer, he will share with her that she is Isaac's bride and clothed upon with Him. Eliezer will ask her to look deeper than even the outward signs of Isaac's clothing into the heart of Isaac. Eliezer will lift up Isaac's view concerning her as one. He will ask her to look

at how much her Lord is for her. The Church has been clothed upon with Christ (cf. Rom. 13:14; Col. 3:10), and the Spirit is here with us on the journey to bring forth His nature inside of us. The garments speak of the Lord's acceptance and love that

The Dove As Eliezer

does not change when we respond to the camels. She is His Bride, and He loves her. She may be riding on a camel, but she is not John the Baptist wearing camel's skin. She is the Bride of the Lamb and she is clothed in Christ, accepted in the Beloved and being conformed to His image by the Spirit.

The camels are meant to work with the Holy Spirit in a complete process together. If you separate the Holy Spirit and the garment He has put upon you from your experiences in the camel-walk, then you will often grow discouraged. You will become distraught and begin to evaluate yourself based only on the outward appearance and declare of yourself something that, in God's reality, you are not. These things that come up because of the camels are simply areas that must be brought to the Cross and consumed with the Lord's appearing. When we see Jesus by revelation through the Holy Spirit, then we will begin to see who we really are in Him. His appearing will cast out all darkness and consume these areas.

Rebekah is being conformed to something that she already is in Isaac's heart, and we are being conformed to something we already are through the Cross of Christ. The bracelets and garments represent the way Christ sees the Church: as that which is one with Him and loved as His own body. The camels represent the inworking of that oneness in all areas of our hearts. The Spirit of Truth is sent to help us through this entire process until we mature through partaking of that union in identity and image.

Isaac's Tent - Rebekab's Wedding

"And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Genesis 24:64-67

There is no big wedding ceremony mentioned here. There is no special focus on a bride in a big white dress. The beauty of this Bride is that she has come, and she is here with Isaac. Isaac saw her get off her camel to be with him. He knows that she stayed with Eliezer on this journey right up to the very end. He took her, and she became His wife. This is glorious! She did not become his handmaiden, first mate, or part of the top group in heaven that is above the angels. She became

his wife. And we are the wife of the Lamb, Jesus Christ is our Husband. We are joined forever. And so Isaac pulls her in to himself. Rebekah had a veil on, so Isaac had no idea what her face looked like. But Isaac knew what she looked like on the inside because she was there with him in his place, and she had gotten off her camel. Isaac knows that Eliezer is faithful, and that every step of the way he had been talking to her. Isaac knows that she has kept on the journey, right up until the very end. So Isaac knows a lot about her. He knows that she left her father and mother, her place, and her thoughts, and the thoughts of the people around her – even her own life - to come and be joined to him. The consummation of all that, the marriage ceremony, is this: Isaac took Rebekah into his tent and loved her. She became his wife. Greater than any ceremony or title, Isaac made Rebekah one with himself. Her disappearance into his tent is a picture of us being hidden in Christ and swallowed up of His Life (cf. Col. 3:3). We are more than walking with Jesus and agreeing with Him about doctrinal issues. We have left all things to be found in Him. He is our Life, and we are the vessel that contains Him. He is the one that now fills all in all (cf. Eph. 1:23). The Holy Spirit has led us into our abode in Christ, and the reality of Him as our Life begins to form and fill all things within us.

> "HER DISAPPEARANCE INTO HIS TENT IS A PICTURE OF US BEING HIDDEN IN CHRIST AND SWALLOWED UP OF HIS LIFE."

The Spirit's Joy

In these final verses we have seen the great joy of the Groom and the beauty and blessing of the Bride, but what of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit's joy is to be able to come to the Son, presenting a prepared Bride. His satisfaction does not first come from the reward of a job well done but of seeing the Son finally receive a Bride unto Himself. The Spirit's mission from the start was not concerning Himself but rather the Father's will and the Son's fulfillment. He has faithfully labored and poured His care over her that she would know Isaac and be found separated unto Him in oneness all her days. Now that the Bridegroom has the Bride, this ministry will decrease (cf. Jn. 3:29-30). We will always need the Holy Spirit to continually reveal Christ in us and our oneness in Christ. Yet in this view of Eliezer there is a handing over of the Bride to Isaac. In reality we are in a process of continually knowing the Lord and the Holy Spirit will ever be leading us to know Christ in the fullness of His glory.

In Conclusion

Although we have viewed many aspects of Rebekah's journey to Isaac in this chapter, we have tried to focus on the heart and purpose of the Holy Spirit as seen in the person of Eliezer. To understand His heart and mission can help us to properly relate with Him on the journey, and to turn our hearts towards Jesus. As we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us by sharing Christ with us, we will find ourselves entering into a knowing of the Lord that surpasses knowledge but fills us with all the fullness of God (cf. Eph. 3:19). His goal is not to illuminate our understanding concerning a far away Jesus but to reveal the Christ with whom we are now one. May we not hinder the Holy Spirit in His journey, but rather respond from our hearts by saying, "I will go."

Closing Prayer

Father, we thank you for the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity that You sent. We are sorry for the way we have treated Him when we have pulled on Him to be involved with our earthly existence above that of working with Him in His assigned mission. Lord, we ask you to continue to open our eyes and hearts to flow more with His intent and purpose. Lord, we hear His voice asking us not to hinder Him but to let Him be on His way bringing us to Jesus. Father, we long to relate to the Holy Spirit according to His heart. Help us to change in our relationship with Him. May we hear His eternal heart and respond. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Chapter Three The Dove And The Bride

Introduction

Much of what we have been discussing in previous chapters is consummated in a Bride that has been prepared and conformed to the image of her Groom, the Lamb. In many ways this is the end goal of the Holy Spirit's ministry. Like John the Baptist, the Spirit has come to bring the Bride and Groom together, finding His joy in their increase and His own decrease (cf. Jn. 3:30). Throughout this chapter we will touch upon the things we have discussed in previous chapters, and hopefully this will help to bring all these elements together in one.

The Bride Has Doves' Eyes

Thus far, we have referred to the Holy Spirit many times thus far as the Dove. In the Song of Songs the Bride is described by her Beloved as having doves' eyes (cf. Song 1:15). There is a relationship that the Bride of Christ has with the Holy Spirit that is beautiful to Jesus. At one point in the Song of Solomon, the Bridegroom declares, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes" (Song 4:9). This feature of the Bride deeply stirs the heart of the Lord. One of the Bride's defining features to her Groom comes from her relationship with the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was identified as the Son of God for the first time in the earth, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove (cf. Matt. 3:16). With Noah and the ark, it was the dove that discovered the New Creation before anybody else. He is the only one who took to the air, flew into it, and returned with proof. Through these and many other scriptures we have come to see the ministry of the Holy Spirit as He is known "like a dove."

Some may want to further examine exactly what the Lord meant by telling His Bride that she has doves' eyes. We can look at a dove and see that most of these birds have brown eyes and therefore assume that the Bride of Christ has brown eyes! Or we can observe the shape of a dove's eye and conclude that it is the almond shape of the Bride's eyes that make her beautiful. But it is not the shape, neither is it the color that attracts the Lord's attention. It is that the Bride of Christ has eyes of the Holy Spirit, and that makes her beautiful to Him. The way she sees is intimately related to the Holy Spirit. She may be one among five thousand sitting in the middle of a crowd, and yet He will spot those doves' eyes. It is not our dress or the outward things that we do to get His attention that draw His eyes. The church has been putting on outward things to get God's attention, but He is looking for doves' eyes. We cannot just put these on like applying false eyelashes. Doves' eyes come from an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit that has affected the way we see.

Have you ever noticed somebody's eyes? The Bible says that if your eye is healthy, then the whole body is full of light (cf. Matt. 6:22). You may have seen people who seemed sincere, yet you could detect something else working in their motivation. You may have looked into their eyes to discern what was really going on. Jesus has doves' eyes (cf. Song 5:12). When the Spirit of God moves and we are not right with God, we want to hide our eyes. Look at Jesus instead! As you do, the Bible says you will be changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord (cf. II Cor. 3:18). It is the work of the Spirit, the Dove, to bring about change into the image of Christ. Remember that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (cf. Gen. 6:8). We need to look at Him face to face and allow the Spirit of God to begin to change our viewpoint.

"WHEN THE SPIRIT OF GOD MOVES AND WE ARE NOT RIGHT WITH GOD, WE WANT TO HIDE OUR EYES. LOOK AT JESUS INSTEAD! AS YOU DO, THE BIBLE SAYS YOU WILL BE CHANGED FROM GLORY TO GLORY BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD."

Doves' eyes come from a dove's heart. Have you ever held a dove? It just trembles and quivers. It is so tender and delicate. Think about when the Spirit of God begins to move on a person and reveal Christ in the Word. All of a sudden the Bible is not just facts and history. This person realizes that the Word of God is opening up, and they are seeing Jesus. They may start trembling with anticipation: "The Spirit of God is here, and He is moving on me. I am going to see the Lord!" They are in an intimate communion with the Holy Spirit as they allow Him to reveal Christ.

The Bride's View Is from Above

In understanding the Bride's relationship to the Holy Spirit and how that affects her eyes, there are two factors to distinguish. One is that her eyes have been opened by the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 1:18). The other factor is that she literally has eyes of the Holy Spirit, defined as doves' eyes. Let us look at the first factor concerning having our eyes opened by the Holy Spirit. King David wrote in Psalm 119:18,

"THESE KINDS OF EYES ARE NOT SATISFIED TO ONLY READ THE DOS AND DON'TS OF THE LETTER." "Open thou my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." Back then it was not normal for them to pray to have their eyes opened. God gave the law, and they just read it the way it was. But David knew there was something deeper and more significant there. He wanted his eyes opened. God said that David was a man after His heart (cf. Acts 13:22). So every time David went to the Scriptures, he did not

just have his daily scripture reading. Instead, he understood that he could not see the Lord except the Spirit open his eyes.

Again, the Song of Songs refers to her eyes. The Groom says, "Thou hast doves" eyes" (Song 1:15). These are eyes that want to see beyond the ink and white paper and behold the Lord as He is. These kinds of eyes are not satisfied to only read the dos and don'ts of the letter. Paul had doves' eyes, and he saw Jesus. The apostle Paul saw Him who is eternal. He began to raise up churches, and he saw churches come alive. Then the apostle wrote in Ephesians to the church that he raised up saying, "I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints" (Eph. 1:15). He knew that they had faith for healing and to do mighty things for God. He knew that they understood the scriptures in a deeper way than many others. But he had a specific request he was praying for this church in a specific way. He did not say they were a bad church. He just said that there was something more they needed. Notice that it was needed by church people and not sinners. Not only that, but this prayer was not something he prayed just once. He said that he ceased not to give thanks for them, making mention of them in his prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened (cf. Eph. 1:17). Paul was praying that this church would have doves' eyes – eyes that were opened by the Holy Spirit to see Jesus.

Paul lived around the same time that Jesus did, but he did not write about Jesus walking the shores of Galilee or feeding the five thousand. He did not identify Jesus as healing the lepers and raising the dead. The Jesus Paul describes is out of

"THE LORD'S EYES ARE SCANNING. HE SEES EVERY ONE OF US AS SAINTS, BUT HE IS LOOKING AMONG THE SAINTS FOR THOSE WHO ARE OPEN HIM HIM IN A CERTAIN WAY."

Abraham's life, pictures of Israel, and the Psalms. The apostle Paul dug into the Old Testament and said that he wanted his eyes opened. And he began to see not Abraham but Jesus. He began to see not David's writings but Jesus in those writings. His eyes began to be opened, and he beheld wondrous things. John the apostle does not write in his first epistle of Jesus of Nazareth as the healer, blesser, or teacher sitting on the Temple stairs. He does

not say, "That which was just here two months ago or a year ago." No, he says, "That which was from the beginning... we have seen" (I Jn. 1:1). Someone could not say that unless their eyes had been opened. They would not refer to Him as the eternal God. They would simply tell people that the Lord was here and that He did a lot of wonderful things. The life was manifested. Many people want to talk about manifestations but not the Life that was manifested. We see the healing, the salvation, and the blessings of God, and we glory in the need being met instead of perceiving the beauty of the manifestation of Life. We see manifestations of Christ, which causes us to think we know Him, but we only know what He does. Yet John the apostle says that they had seen Jesus. Their hands had handled Him, the Word of Life, and the LIFE was manifested (cf. I Jn. 1:2). Greater than the manifestation is the Life that brought salvation, healing, and all these things. So much greater than anything He has ever done is who He is. In order of us to see beyond manifestation of life and behold Him who is Life and be changed, we must first have our eyes opened by the Holy Spirit.

You may have heard preachers during church services and could not find fault with their message. But there was something inside of you that hungered for more of God and did not get it. The message was as true as it could be. What was shared was not bad, but you went away still hungering for Jesus. There are endless lessons to be learned and scriptures to be searched, yet our hearts are crying out to see Jesus. You need to have doves' eyes, not preacher eyes. The Bible says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." (II Chron. 16:9). The Lord's eyes are scanning. He sees every one of us as saints, but He is looking among the saints for those who are open to Him in a certain way. Jesus indicated that those who would worship Him would do so in spirit and truth (cf. Jn. 4:23). What does that mean? It means that to worship Him in truth we must also have eyes opened by the Spirit of God. It did not only say Spirit, but also truth. Thank God for preachers of truth, but we need the Truth, and we need doves' eyes to be able to see and receive Him. "For the Father seeketh such..." (Jn. 4:23). God is seeking a Bride who will know Christ in a way that surpasses knowledge and fills her with all His fullness (cf. Eph. 3:19).

The Dove And The Bride

Let us move on to the second point. This next factor is that the Bride literally has eyes of the Holy Spirit – doves' eyes. This means that the way she sees and how she perceives things comes from the Holy Spirit. To have such a viewpoint speaks of her union with Christ from above, for the Holy Spirit has been preparing her for her Groom. To have eyes from the earth is uncomely to the Lord. He is saddened by eyes that see the earth view of things in relation to self and their own existence. These eyes can question the Lord based on what they see. The Lord's care could be questioned with thoughts such as, "Why did the Lord not do something for me in this situation?" The Bible puts it another way: "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" (Mk. 4:38). Such accusations come from a viewpoint that is separate from the Lord. Such eyes are earthbound. But the Bride is not that way. The Bride has joined to the Lord's view, and she has entered into Him. She is seeing into the Land, the promises, and the dwelling place. She sees the fullness of provision that is always hers because of her union into Christ. The Holy Spirit has faithfully guided and filled her eyes with this spiritual viewpoint. She is living in the place of God's choosing, of His Word and His understanding. She has followed the Dove, leaving the ark and going to the place of His dwelling in Christ. She is not trapped in her circumstances by only seeing what the earth holds. She has been liberated by the Holy Spirit to dwell above the earth in heavenly places in Christ.

You can begin to see a tremendous correlation in the Scriptures pertaining to the Dove and the ark and how the Bride relates to the Holy Spirit. Like Rebekah, the Bride has listened to Eliezer and allowed the camels to bring her closer to Isaac. Her eyes do not see the problems but the potential for them to help conform her to the image of the Son (cf. Rom. 8:28). She has left her own identity and now views things from the position of oneness with Christ. We will come to see that the Bride is so much in oneness of accord with the Holy Spirit that she actually gets filled with the Holy Spirit, and that pleases the Lord. It is important to note here that the filling of the Holy Spirit is not simply the act of speaking in tongues, for it is literally being filled with the Person of the Holy Spirit. Please consider for a moment what it truly means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, as we may need to seek a fuller understanding of what it is. As we observe the way the Bride of Christ functions, we also see the way that the Spirit has filled her and how that relationship affects her.

The Bride's Relationship with Her Lord

There is a heart condition that the Bride has toward the Lord Jesus Christ. It is akin to the tenor of heart found in Sarah when she was not ashamed to call her husband Abraham, "lord" (cf. I Pet. 3:6). It is a relationship of union that has reached

beyond salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ is in her heart, but He has become more than just a Savior to her. She has acknowledged the Lordship of Christ in a relationship of oneness. Her dedication is not that of a servant who must obediently give homage to the Sovereign ruler, but is that of a Bride who has joined to her Lord with passion and sacrificial love. Many Christians comprehend the Lordship of Christ only within the parameters of a church service, where they invoke His presence and power. In contrast, we are speaking of a view that is not religious yet deeply honors Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. This view and relationship can draw us into greater fullness of what our union with Christ is meant to be. If we are just a little peon in the kingdom of God and He is the big distant King, then there will not be much of a relationship. If we are only individuals in a great big crowd shouting "Glory," then there is no true relationship of union to partake of. As His Bride, we desire for His name to be exalted because His increase brings our decrease and a greater expression of His life through us (cf. Jn. 3:30).

It has been said that the Lord will not share His glory with anyone (cf. Isa. 42:8), and yet the scriptures in the Gospel of John show us that He has desired to share His glory with those with whom He is one: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (Jn. 17:22). As the Bride of His heart, we become one with Him in that. His nature would never want to selfishly receive all the glory, yet that is how this verse is perceived by those who are of the opinion that He will not share His glory. Nevertheless, we must consider that He wants a Bride after His heart that loves Him like the Holy Spirit does and with whom He can share His glory and all His fullness. She is with Him in a relationship that exalts Him as Lord in a union wherewith He shares all that He is with her in oneness. His heart can safely trust in her because she has entered into a relationship with Him that is filled with the Spirit's preparations, which have brought her into the same love that the Spirit has for Him.

The Extent of the Spirit's Dedication

We can see the extent of the Spirit's dedication and sacrificial love for the Bridegroom because He commits to be sent to us. We have that in the example of Abraham sending Eliezer to the city of Nahor. In doing this, the Spirit determined to go through something that could be considered worse than hell: going to earth and dwelling with and in the carnal Church. He will be inside of us, and not only that, He will remain and bear with us until the Son receives the Bride of His heart. Consider that the Father has never been down to the earth in this way. Jesus was down here for thirty-three years, and the world crucified Him, but the Holy Spirit has

The Dove And The Bride

been down here for thousands of years. He committed to go for Them (the Father and Son), and to dwell among us. He left His abode above, which is the realm of His own "Kind" in the sense that it is where He had primarily functioned, ministered, and was at home. He committed His Being to work in the realm of men. This kind of love requires a lot more commitment than we may be able to comprehend. We can consider Jesus, who never sinned, who never had an evil thought, and came down here for thirty-three years. But we may not have considered that the Holy Spirit never sinned or had an impure thought either, and He has been down here for thousands of years. Have you ever considered that Jesus only had to put up with humanity for only three and a half years because He was hidden for thirty years? We have been alive for a certain number of years and putting up with the difficulties that the flesh brings, but the Holy Spirit has been putting up with it for thousands of years. Does that make anybody appreciate and respect the Holy Spirit a little bit more? This should deeply affect our hearts towards the Holy Spirit, for He is a Person. He is the third Person of the Trinity.

The Focus of the Holy Spirit

The job and primary focus of the Holy Spirit's "Eliezer-ship" is to get that Bride to Jesus. We can get a little glimpse of this with John the Baptist, who identified himself as a friend of the Bridegroom (cf. Jn. 3:29). His goal was to bring the Bride and the Bridegroom together. He declared himself to be a forerunner. His focus was joining the Bride to the Groom rather than on himself. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit's heart and determination related to joining us to Jesus. And so there is this relationship that is more clearly comprehended as "Bride" than in what many understand within a church-going relationship. There is a comprehension of being filled with the Holy Spirit in a church service that, for some, only results in physical shaking and emotional response. What eternal value does that have? Once again, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit's focus that will press us on until Christ is formed within. Such a filling will not get sidetracked with anything that is not Jesus Christ Himself. We will be joined with the One who is the love of our heart.

The third Person of the Trinity has set Himself in a certain order to glorify the Son and not speak of Himself, just like a Bride. An example of this attitude in the Bride can be found in Proverbs 31, where her husband sits in the gate (cf. Pr. 31:23). She is loving him and preparing clothes for Him. Sitting in the gate was a governmental position, for that is where one sits among the elders. To the heart of his wife, she is honored that he is seen in the gate and that she is found taking care of him. Her

heart does not desire to be seen. She does not demand a partnership that requires her to be the center and focus of attention. The virtuous woman, representing the church, is the one who takes on this tenor of attitude and begins to have doves' eyes that view her husband in the way the Holy Spirit relates to the Godhead.

Consider glimpsing into an eternal moment where the Holy Spirit is talking to the Father. They are discussing Jesus and His heart for a Bride. The Father says, "Would you go for me?" The Holy Spirit then asks the Father, "How long?" The Father answers, "It may be thousands of years." The heart of the Holy Spirit immediately arises to the Father's request, for He understands oneness and is not caught up in the amount of years. He says, "I will go. I will go for Him, and I will go for You, Father. I will go and carry out the ministry that You have given me. I will give all time and effort, and I will never lose focus. I will keep doves' eyes every moment, and I will never let them grow dim. I will never let them turn into tiger eyes or something else that will benefit me personally. I have one purpose, and that is that Jesus get His Bride out of this. My whole joy is to join these two and bring this union together." This is the same spirit in which John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (In. 3:30). His desire is for the Bridegroom to increase and receive the Bride of His heart. This same heart and spirit can permeate our ministry and gatherings. Our focus is not on our ministry and gifts being used to gather people unto ourselves. Most certainly the Holy Spirit has come and gathered us together, bringing gifts and preparing us to know the Lord. But in His heart, in the depth of who He is, the Holy Spirit, the most noble of all spirits, has determined that his goal is that Christ increases and that He decreases. Therefore we must comprehend that all the ministry, preparation, gathering, and moving of the Spirit cannot be the focus and central issue of our Christian walk; that must decrease so that we can join in His heart: that Christ would increase as our Life, the Life of the Bride.

The Bride Is Filled with the Holy Spirit

We have already explored the Bride's relationship with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament account of Abraham sending his servant Eliezer to get a Bride for His son Isaac. Through this account, we have seen the relationship and oneness of heart between the Father and the Spirit for the Son to have a Bride. We can clearly see that the Holy Spirit has dedicated Himself to bring the Bride to Christ. The Person of the Holy Spirit carries within His being this desire for Christ to have His Bride in a very intimate oneness. Therefore the Bride becoming filled with the Holy Spirit would affect how she relates to the Lord. In other words, the Holy Spirit did not come to speak of Himself, He speaks of Christ. This is very similar to a

The Dove And The Bride

Bride who has lost her total identity in her husband. I am not saying that the Holy Spirit is the Bride but that the Holy Spirit has aligned Himself in such a way to Jesus that should the Bride be filled with the Holy Spirit, she would have a certain tenor of heart towards the Lord that she would not have without the Holy Spirit. In the Book of Revelation, the Spirit and the Bride together say, "Come" (Rev. 22:17).

"THE HOLY SPIRIT IS STILL FOCUSED ON JESUS TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY, BUT NOW HE HAS A PARTNER IN HIS WORK: THE BRIDE. SHE IS THE FEMALE COUNTERPART OF THE LORD, FOR SHE IS OF HIS KIND."

The Holy Spirit filling the Bride would be a tremendous thing for her in relationship to the Lord, her Bridegroom. Can you see how that would be? Living in the Spirit would fill us with all that fills the Spirit. Therefore we would begin to be in accord with the Spirit as to how He is toward the Lord. In other words, the way the Spirit is towards the Lord would begin to fill us. There would be a oneness of desire, for she would be filled with the Spirit's desire to unite the Bride with her Groom. The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." This speaks of more than just an agreement; it shows the oneness of the Spirit and the Bride. This oneness manifests in their common purpose and fixed focal point. As the Spirit sought the Bride for Jesus, so those of the Bride say "Come" to believers who are saved but have yet to find Jesus as the Bridegroom.

We should desire to know the Person of the Holy Spirit until we are filled with Him, and the end goal is that the Spirit and the Bride will function as one, in one spirit (cf. Rev. 22:17). Another way of saying this would be that the Spirit and the Bride function in one manner and in one accord. The Bride is not found in a relationship with the Holy Spirit based on Him working on her behalf. The Holy Spirit is still focused on Jesus totally and completely, but now He has a partner in His work: the Bride. She is the female counterpart of the Lord, for she is of His kind. She is in love with Jesus and desires above everything that He sit on the throne and in the gates. She is not using Him for her own glory; rather, her view is that her glory is when He gets the glory! This is the same heart we hear in Jesus when He said, "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (In. 17:1). In essence, Christ was declaring that His glory is when His Father gets the glory. And so she is being filled with something that is not of the earth. She is being filled with divine life. She is being filled with divine spirit, and it just happens to be the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. He will guide her to be filled with the Spirit of Christ, who will likewise seek only to glorify the Father. This filling of the Holy Spirit has guided

her heart to leave her country, kindred, and land to come to the place of His heart and His understanding. She has come away to Him and she has dove's eyes, for she sees the way the Holy Spirit sees.

Reflect on Jesus and the Holy Spirit flowing together in eternity. We may imagine that they would be meeting together and having discussions, but really it would be just a communion of three in one. The Bride is full of the Holy Spirit who is also called the Spirit of Truth. The Scriptures declare that when the Spirit of Truth is come He will talk about the Son (cf. Jn. 15:26). Some may think this applies to showing us where Jesus is located in heaven rather than revealing and awakening us to the union that now is. Others may seek to be taught all things, making omnipotence the goal rather than Christ. Yet our objective should be to be filled with the Spirit of Truth, who knows how to defer and how to take the lead; how to abase and to abound. He knows how to keep us aligned with the Son until He is revealed in us as Life. The Spirit knows that there is a day when God will be all in all (cf. I Cor. 15:28), and through oneness with the Son we will flow in their communion. But right now we are kept and lead through the Holy Spirit, Who becomes the bridge for us to get there.

His Way Becomes Her Way

The Spirit can fill us in such a manner that we are no longer of this creation but abiding and flowing with the eternal communion that the Trinity has always known. We can look at the contrast of planet earth which is filled with millions of people, and then consider the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are One. When we became saved, we heard about this God. We might then see Him in the Scriptures, which causes us to get excited and blessed. At times it may feel like He lets a few of His mercy drops fall on us, causing some people to respond with different physical manifestations such as shaking or crying. Now reflect on a Bride that is filled with the Spirit and conforming to Christ. She has entered a completely New Creation, the New Creation that is not of this world but is found in Christ. Once again, this reference as to being filled with the Spirit is pertaining to the way He is towards the Lord and the way the Lord is towards the Father. This kind of relation becomes her way and defines who she is. She is no longer of this earth. When you embrace what God has purposed for us to become in the New Creation, certain religious phraseologies which are actually passages of Scripture begin to take on new reality and life, for they were only phraseologies outside of the context of life. She is a new creation, and therefore she is in the world but not of it. This illustration is meant to draw a contrast in relationship to where we live and from what place we function. Much of

The Dove And The Bride

the time in our actions and attitude we are in the world and functioning as a part of it. We think like it, are motivated like it, live by it, and pull the Holy Spirit into it by only relating to Him according to how He makes us feel. But the Bride is being found in Him, living, moving, and having her being (cf. Acts 17:28). She has been brought up into something, filled with it, and is beginning to change not just who she is but the way she is.

The Holy Spirit Does Not Declare Himself

"So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women... Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her."

Esther 2:8-9, 15

In the book of Esther, the search was on to find a wife for the king. It went forth through all the land to find the right woman, and many virgins were gathered (cf. Est. 2:2-3). Yet the emphasis of this gathering was to find a woman suited for the king and not to glorify the prettiest girl so that she could get all caught up in herself. This woman would have to change identities, willingly giving up all she had formerly been in order to be fully given to the King, her new husband.

Also in the book of Esther there was a man named Hegai who was the keeper of the women (cf. Est. 2:8). He was over all these women who were seeking to become the bride of the king. Hegai is a type of the Holy Spirit in the way that he prepared the Bride for the King. He worked very diligently on her preparations and was constant in his care. His emphasis was completely on her, for his desire was to please the king. The emphasis and thought was not at all upon himself or his ministry. He had dedicated himself to give the king the bride of his heart. Part of the preparation was a period of saturation in oils and sweet perfumes (cf. Est. 2:9). Hegai did not anoint Esther with these oils so she could simply be anointed, but to soften her for the king. However, sometimes people harden when they pursue the anointing with

motivations such as gaining power in their ministry to build their own reputation. Yet she was anointed to soften her, prepare her, and bring her to a certain place that was for the king's pleasure.

If we take this relationship of union with Christ out of Christianity, we will pervert everything. We will become just Christians instead of being joined to Christ as one. All these things are meant as the means to fulfill the Lord's heart. This man worked and prepared Esther for many months until finally the time came to present her to the king (cf. Est. 2:12). When the King beheld her, he found exactly what he wanted, for Hegai knew the heart of the king and what would please him most (cf.

Est. 2:15). By the time the Bride is presented to the King, she would have spent so much time with the Holy Spirit that she would be filled with the manner in which He knew the King. She would have become caught up in the King in the same manner the servant was, bearing His name, reflecting His glory, and becoming the extension of His nature. The Bride becomes like the Holy Spirit, who will not speak of himself but speaks and ministers on the behalf of the Lord.

Now imagine a gathering of saints filled with the Holy Spirit in this manner. What name would you hear the most in a

"WE CONTINUALLY FOCUS
ON THE HOLY SPIRIT... HE
DOES NOT WANT TO
DECLARE HIMSELF,
FOR THE ENTIRE FOCUS OF
HIS HEART IS TO DECLARE
ANOTHER. BECAUSE HE IS
THIS WAY, IT WOULD BE
POSSIBLE FOR US TO
UNKNOWLINGLY ABUSE HIS
MINISTRY AND
MISUNDERSTAND HIS
PURPOSE."

Church such as this? You would hear the name of Jesus! What name would you hear the least if they were filled with the Holy Spirit in this way? It would be the name of the Holy Spirit. Many would agree that it is the Holy Spirit who is the one down here that is unifying, flowing, and moving to bring our focus into union with Christ. If we really believe that, then how come so much is being said about the Holy Spirit? That would be equivalent to a minister coming to a gathering and speaking about himself all the time. If this were to happen, the people would immediately notice that, and they would not stand for it. Yet try to understand how this principle can be forgotten when we continually focus on the Holy Spirit rather than working with Him in His mission to lift up Jesus. He does not want to declare Himself, for the entire focus of His heart is to declare Another. Because He is this way, it would be possible for us to unknowingly abuse His ministry and misunderstand His purpose. For this very reason we are taking the time through this book to share about the Holy Spirit and the way He is so that we can relate to Him in the way that would bless Him the most.

A Progressive Conformity

Throughout Paul's Epistles we can observe that the apostle was truly filled with the Holy Spirit. The evidence and result of Paul's condition is that He was constantly traveling, preaching, raising up churches, and writing letters trying to prepare them to be exactly what Jesus wanted. Why was he fervently doing all of this? It is because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. With this example, we come full circle back to the Song of Songs where the Bridegroom says, "Behold thou art fair my love, thou hast doves' eyes." There is a progression in the development of doves' eyes within the Bride throughout the Song of Solomon. In three different places in the course of that Song the Groom refers to her eyes to being like a dove. Therefore we can see that the Bride is continually growing and developing in her relationship with the Holy Spirit, and as she does it overwhelms the Groom's heart. In the Song of Songs, the Groom finds the relationship His Bride has with the Dove to be advantageous. He knows that she has leaned upon the Dove to bring her into oneness with Himself. She has cultivated her heart to be sensitive to the Dove so she would not miss knowing her Groom as deeply as possible. By the way she views things, the Groom can tell that she has given herself to the Dove's instructions and guidance, and is being prepared for Him in a way that truly ravishes His heart. Her eyes have become so focused upon the Holy Spirit and her oneness with Christ that towards the end of the Song the Groom cries out, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me" (Song 6:5). The Hebrew translation reads, "I am afraid to look at your eyes for what it does to me."

This response came from the Groom after the third progression of development in her eyes (cf. Song 6:3). At this point it has gotten so powerful that now she sees that she is no longer of the earth but completely of Him. She no longer identifies herself as a minister or a Christian, but finds her true identity as one with the Lord, one spirit with Him. She is found in Him not having her own, and she is content to be found in Him. She is satisfied to hear the whispers of the Holy Spirit bringing her more out of the earth and into the Spirit of Truth. This is causing her to allow the anointing to soften her to His words that melt her instead of condemn her. She hears His voice calling her and drawing her instead of making her ashamed and wanting to hide. Because she is in tune with the spirit of the thing through her relationship with the Holy Spirit, her union embrace has a tremendous and powerful effect upon the King. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, the commander of all armies – the one that rules on high in majesty – calls her into His very chambers, and instead of being made ashamed of who she is based upon her old identity as separate from the King, she is able to hear that call and respond properly.

Conclusion

There is something to be said for the true work for the Holy Spirit in our lives, for how shall we have doves' eyes without the Dove? And how shall we make it from our place to His place without Eliezer? And how shall the King look upon us with pleasure if not for the servant in the book of Esther working on us to bring us into that which pleases the King's heart? With all our hearts we should be grateful to the Holy Spirit.

Prayer

Father, we thank You for Your Word and that You are drawing us closer into a relationship with the Holy Spirit so that we can come closer into relationship with our Beloved. Father, we ask you to melt our hearts, for Jesus the King will never be melted until we are melted. Lord, melt our hearts and soften us. May we be attentive on those camels, to hear every word that You say instead of getting all caught up in the troubles and discomfort. May our eyes be changed by the way we relate with the Holy Spirit. May we see the way that You have always seen. May we realize that the cocoon of Noah's ark is only the prelude; though we have been saved from death, we have not yet fully entered into life. May we stay the course until the Dove brings back that which is new and alive, beckoning us onward until we come into the fullness of what the New Creation truly means. Father, help us not to grieve the precious Holy Spirit but be with Him in the ways that would bless Him the most. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen

Chapter Four Relationship With The Dove

Our Relationship with the Holy Spirit

Throughout this book we have explored many areas that hopefully have helped us better appreciate the Holy Spirit. In this final chapter, we want to address our personal walk with Him and how we might best relate to Him on a daily basis. Having read through the previous chapters, some may wonder how it is possible to gain such a relationship with the heavenly Dove. While the primary emphasis of this book has pertained to the Holy Spirit's work in bringing the believer to a revelation of Christ, I would like to end by presenting a more practical reality. We have chosen to end here because how we relate to the Holy Spirit in small things will determine the outcome of how much He is able to accomplish His task of revealing Christ in us. In a sense, this last chapter brings us full circle and sets forth the practical beginning stages whereby we might learn to better flow with the Spirit's purposes. Some may feel we are backtracking, and in a way we are, but the previous chapters have tenderized our hearts and put us in a place where we may now be more open to making practical changes in our approach to Him.

The Holy Spirit will eventually be the chief figure in opening our eyes to the mysteries of the Cross and Christ in you, but long before that unveiling takes place, it is wise to establish a relationship with the Holy Spirit. To do so, we must begin by putting Him into the context of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We may be familiar with and regularly encouraged in our relationship with the Father and with the Son, but the Holy Spirit is also God. Some may picture the Father as a saintly, elderly gentleman. In that view it is easy to say, "I have a Father." Likewise, some may picture Jesus with a robe and sandals, still wearing the crown of

thorns, and His beautiful compassionate eyes looking at us. And whatever He is doing, it is warming our hearts. We can maintain a romantic vision where we see

"GOD WANTS TO HAVE MORE THAN A SERVICE-TYPE JOINING; HE WANTS TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP." ourselves coming up and seeing His nail-scarred feet and weeping over them. But what does the Holy Spirit look like? We cannot even begin to imagine what He looks like. Even though He is in the earth and among us, He is invisible, and the only thing we can equate with Him is that we are sitting in a service and chills come over us. The thought behind this would be something like, "The Holy Spirit is here because I just got Holy Ghost goose

bumps." But that is not a relationship; that is a movement in a service. There are people within the gathering that you attend on Sunday with whom you do not have a relationship, but you can join together with them in a service. God wants to have more than a service-type joining; He wants to have a relationship.

We often think of the Father and relating to Him. We also think of the Son and relating to Him. Yet many do not think of the Holy Spirit except in relationship to gifts and ministry. But, aside from the reality of Christ, one of the most glorious relationships that we can have with the Holy Spirit is an interplay of His touching and moving to put away all bitterness, wrath, all anger, and clamor, and all evil-speaking, with all malice (cf. Eph. 4:30, 31). That is not something that is common to the fallen nature of man, for we would not put away all of that. Even if we were nice enough to put away some bitterness, we would not put away ALL bitterness. In themselves, nobody would, but the Holy Spirit would woo you and deal with you even if it was temporary in preparation for Christ to be formed in you governmentally.

"GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT ALONG WITH DEMONSTRATING ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS TOWARD OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE UNIQUELY TIED TOGETHER."

A foundational relationship with the Holy Spirit should be built around the word "sensitivity". This not only involves careful attention to Him as to His movements in a Church service or to Him giving you direction for your life and ministry, but also a sensitivity to His nature and purpose. This is best displayed as to the manner with which we treat one another. We find from the book of Ephesians that grieving the Holy Spirit along with demonstrating attitudes and actions toward our brothers and sisters are uniquely tied together.

Relationship With The Dove

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30). From this passage we can see that the important thing is not what we do or do not do, but how we relate to the Dove, much like how we relate to the Lamb and the Father. Nor is the emphasis on what we know or do not know or what we do for God or do not do for Him. The reality of this verse is centered on our relationship with the <u>living</u> God and how we therefore treat others.

Grieving the Holy Spirit

In the Bible we are given very few things in relationship to the Holy Spirit regarding how to relate with Him and what that relationship involves. As we have seen, one of the few verses that addresses this very topic says not to grieve Him. Our immediate interpretation of that verse may be to assume that the Holy Spirit gets hurt easily and may even be somewhat temperamental. Yet the grief here is not what we might think. It is not referring to blaspheming the Holy Spirit or slapping Jesus in the face. The Holy Spirit's grief is not proceeding from a self-awareness of His own hurts and needs, for His nature does not tend to that direction. On the contrary, His whole desire and purpose relates to God and others. We will continue in this passage of Scripture to see that grieving the Holy Spirit is more closely related to how to we treat others and carry ourselves in relation to the attitudes of Christ.

Let us begin by examining Ephesians 4:25-26, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with His neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath." Let us look at this from a practical point of view for a moment. Consider that this simply meant that we should not go to bed angry. What if a husband and wife were having a big argument and they went to bed angry in unforgiveness? They would be grieving the Holy Spirit if they did not try to work it out before going to bed. It may not always be the result of Christ being formed in us to do that, but we can always have a passion and a heart that would rather try to follow the Word of God even if it is not yet the result of Christ's life within. How easy it can be to harden up and decide to just skip that verse because nothing applies to you until Jesus is revealed in you. At these times our hearts can harden up and not give place to the Dove, who is constantly preparing us for the increase of the Lord within.

Another example of this principle can be seen in the parable of the man who owed a large debt to the king, who threatened the debtor with slavery for him and his family if he did not pay what he owed (cf. Matt. 18:23-34). The man fell down and begged for mercy and to have patience with him, and he would pay all that was due.

The king was moved with compassion and forgave the man's debt. Afterwards, this same man found somebody who owed him a very small debt. He grabbed him and demanded the money that was owed him. This second man asked for mercy until he could pay it all back. But the first man would not show him mercy and threw him into prison. The king heard about it and called the first man back in and reminded him of his large debt and that he had forgiven this man everything because he asked for mercy. Then that same man would not forgive someone else who owed him a small debt, but instead took away everything and threw this individual into prison even though he owed you very little compared to what the first man's debt was to the King. Then the king put him in prison and threw away the key.

"THERE IS A
DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN BEING AN
UNREGENERATE
SINNER WHO HOLDS
OFFENSE AGAINST THE
ATTITUDES OF CHRIST
AND SOMEONE WHO
CLAIMS THEY ARE IN
GOD'S FAMILY BUT HAS
NO MEASURE OF
CONSIDERATION FOR
OTHERS."

Like many Christians today, the man in this parable could have justified himself before the king by saying that Christ had not been formed in him yet. The point of this parable and the focus of our discussion is not about us bearing the fruit of the Spirit, but simply being close enough to the Holy Spirit to be sensitive to His leading. There is a difference between being an unregenerate sinner who holds offense against the attitudes of Christ and someone who claims they are in God's family but has no measure of consideration for others. Even in the face of our lack of Christ being formed within, we can be mindful of how much forgiveness, grace, love, and care we have personally received from God. It has been an incredible amount, and even if Christ is not formed in us, we ought to consider these things and show the same kindness to others.

Ephesians 4:32b does not tell us to forgive one another because Christ is fully formed in that area. Rather it says, "Forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." This appeal is not made to Christ your life, but to a heart that honors and responds to the grace it has received. Most certainly there are places that exhort us to respond from the life of Christ. Colossians 3:9-10 says that we have "put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Clearly in this passage the answer is to put on Christ. However, the passage in Ephesians 4:32 that refers to grieving the Holy Spirit is telling us that not because Christ is our life should we act that way, but that as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us we should forgive one another.

Relationship With The Dove

Ephesians 4:32 talks about being kind and tenderhearted. Being tenderhearted is the work of the Holy Spirit, and if we grieve Him we are not going to be kind or tender. In our hearts and prayers we may be declaring that we really want Jesus. We may cry out for the Holy Spirit to open our eyes and help us see Him. But consider this example: After such a prayer we get up and walk out of the room. We then walk past somebody in the hall and they bump us. We respond by pushing them back or muttering an unkind remark. The Holy Spirit says, "Be ye kind and tenderhearted." And our actions respond to Him by saying, "That is not relevant now. I am dealing with something here, and this is not about revealing Christ. Go away Holy Spirit. I will call you when I need you." The Dove then leaves, for He is easily grieved.

Remember, the context of the treatment of others is in relationship to grieving the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:27-28 says, "Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." This passage does not say that we should work with our hands so that we will be self-sufficient and have all that we need for ministry. Rather the Word exhorts us to work with our hands so that we might give to people who have need.

Ephesians 4:29 states, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying that it might minister grace unto the hearers." This verse occurs right before the verse concerning grieving the Holy Spirit. Now here are the verses that occur immediately after. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil-speaking be put away from you with all malice and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you." The context and emphasis of these verses shows us the heart of the issue in relationship to grieving the Holy Spirit deals with our attitudes in small things and that we are to abide in tender communion with the Holy Spirit beyond just the doctrinal teachings of Christ. If we are truly born again, we do not want to grieve Him and we would certainly never want to grieve Him by such things as giving place to the devil, stealing when we should not, being angry and carrying on, and letting corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth (cf. Eph. 4:27-32).

The Holy Spirit Keeps Us One until We Enter into Oneness

The Holy Spirit is meant to be able to work in our lives not just to reveal Christ, but to tenderize our hearts to the Word of Christ and to His movements within. There truly is a difference. It is possible to start becoming hardened in our hearts and coming to a place where nothing matters anymore. It is at this point that we

begin grieving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants to reveal Christ and gather us into His fellowship where we can be ministered to from His viewpoint. He may do so by bringing to us the Word of God, which speaks of forgiving one another for Christ's sake, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. Once again, this may not yet be the fruit of Christ formed within, but it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to tenderize and prepare us for His coming. Surely we have experienced times where it was not yet in our hearts to forgive, but somehow the Holy Spirit was able to help us lift our eyes away from the circumstance for a moment and consider the love and grace of God that has been given to us through Christ. Yes, the goal is to form Christ in us, but until Christ is formed in us, the Holy Spirit is keeping us in close proximity to His heart and way with the intent that we may ever turn our hearts towards Jesus. In this way, the veil may be rent and our image changed into His likeness.

Remaining Tender to the Holy Spirit until Christ Is Formed

God can use all things, including crisis, to bring us to a place of tenderness. Even though God can bring us to a crisis, such as an enemy rising above us, which pushes us toward being a little more tender, that is not necessarily true brokenness, and it is certainly not bringing us past brokenness into the life of Christ. The good news is that there is a place of brokenness that does not require circumstantial bad things to happen. That "place" is a walk of constant relationship with the Holy Spirit. You may not have the tenderness and brokenness in you, but you have the Holy Spirit, and you know that He is the closest thing to God, for He is God. You are aware that

"THE HOLY SPIRIT
WILL TAKE... THE
SLIGHTEST WRONG
MOTIVATION AND
IMPRESS OUR
HEARTS THAT IT IS
NOT COMING FROM
JESUS."

He is eventually going to reveal Christ in you in such a manner that it will come spontaneously by nature, but before that happens you trust in the present dealing of the Holy Spirit, and you are not going to grieve Him.

A minister once shared that while he was preaching he would stop at times when the Holy Spirit would want to share something. At that point the minister would say, "The Holy Spirit just told

me..." and simply share what the Spirit was interjecting. Many times this preacher would not notice babies crying and noisiness going on in a service because he was trying to listen to the Holy Spirit every step of the way. We must endeavor to do that because the Holy Spirit is usually very soft and gentle, speaking with a still, small voice.

The Holy Spirit will take even the slightest thing, not just anger and malice, but even the slightest wrong motivation and impress in our hearts that this is not coming from Jesus. We may be surprised that the Holy Spirit noticed such a small motive, and we would not have heard His voice if we had not been carefully aware of Him. He may tell us that this motive is not coming from Jesus or from a desire for Jesus, but because we want to be seen of men. If our hearts are not tender towards His care for us, we might respond toward the Holy Spirit with, "Well, what do you expect? If Christ is not yet formed within me, then that is your fault! You are supposed to reveal Him in me. Personally, I blame You." What a strong example of grieving the Holy Spirit!

This person is not tender to the Holy Spirit. How could He reveal Christ in someone with a heart like that? Such a selfish and insensitive attitude would eventually pervert the knowledge of the Lord and use it for self. This person is not desirous enough to be in relationship with the Holy Spirit. If a relationship with the Holy Spirit is not that important yet, how is such a person going to have the relationship with Christ that they claim to long for? Our relationship with the Holy Spirit is a bridge into knowing Christ as our Life.

Developing a Relationship with the Dove

Jesus is called the Lamb of God, and the Holy Spirit is described as a Dove. The Lamb of God knew what was in all men, and that at the end they were going to crucify Him. Jesus did not commit Himself unto them because He knew what was in all men (cf. Jn. 2:24). The Dove also sees into our deepest motives, yet He has committed Himself to the Church. He dwells with us and in us in hope of Christ coming forth in His Body. He has a close relationship with those who are yet in the process of conforming to Christ. We must be encouraged to develop a relationship with the Holy Spirit that He may freely relate to us on the basis of His heart and desire for an increase of Christ.

Staying Close to the Dove

The Holy Spirit is with us all the time whether we are carnal or spiritual. He cares for us and He is dealing with us, drawing us, and convicting us of things. His constant care is good for those who want a moment-by-moment relationship with Him. Our relationship with the Holy Spirit is meant to be ongoing. A person does

not come to a revelation of Christ and immediately become like spiritual superhero. The revelation of Christ is just the beginning, for it is an ongoing process of revelation. There are so many areas of Jesus that we have not yet seen, and so in the meantime we must remain as close to the Dove as we possibly can.

The expression "close to the Dove" is like referring to Him as your best friend, for lack of a better term. The Holy Spirit knows Jesus like nobody else on the earth. There is no preacher or great man of God that more intimately knows the Son than the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit is one with Him and knows Him inside out. The Holy Spirit would rather explain the inward parts of Jesus to us than teach us a new doctrine. If we love the Lord and desire Him, then we do not want to grieve the Holy Spirit. We want to move when He moves and when He whispers we want to respond immediately. Have you ever been in a loud room and someone you really wanted to hear begins talking to you? In your desire to listen and hear them, your ear will begin to "focus" on that person and not become distracted by the loud surroundings. Because you want to hear what they have to say, you will deeply focus your attention on them, and we can be that way with the Holy Spirit.

Now the goal is not that all these examples we have looked at from the Scriptures become a law unto us or another burden of outward obedience. These things are meant to cultivate a heart of closeness to the Holy Spirit that will not grieve Him from the process of revealing Christ in us. As we remain sensitive to the Dove with our hearts turned towards the Lord, the time will come where Christ Himself will come forth as life. Yet remaining tender to the movements of the Dove will keep us in a keen awareness of His desire to always bring us deeper into Christ's nature and likeness.

Not Grieving the Holy Spirit as His Temple

We have been describing the Holy Spirit in terms of a relationship. In that sense we have been describing Him as right here beside us, but the greater reality is that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (cf. I Cor. 3:16). Let us consider a practical example to help make this point more clear. There was a man who had been born again for several years. Before he came to the Lord he was a habitual smoker and really enjoyed smoking. After several years in the Lord of not touching a cigarette, a day came when he decided to attempt to smoke one. This man was expecting to really enjoy that cigarette, but as soon as the smoke hit his lungs his body rejected it and immediately he felt like the Holy Spirit said, "Do not put that into my temple!" Although this may seem like a simple example, it is meant to illustrate to us the reality that the Person of the Holy Spirit dwells in us. We are His temple, and He is

Relationship With The Dove

living in us. We can become sensitive to His inner movements and come to know His way, view, and spirit, relating to Him as a Person who is in us. That is not meant to make us legalistic concerning these things, but sensitive to honor His Person and acknowledge with care the fact that He dwells in us. We can cultivate our hearts to have a more genuine sensitivity. We can value our relationship with the Holy Spirit and be kept from distractions until Christ is formed in us.

Developing This Relationship

There is so much to say about the Holy Spirit in relationship to revealing Christ, and much of this book deals with that area. But there is a walk, a relationship, and a developing of communion that must come first before the revelation of Christ. There must be a development of like-mindedness and openness to Him. For example, when we come to a crossroads, we do not automatically go our way. When we do go our own way, the Spirit will call us back, and we can tell Him that we are sorry for being insensitive to Him. From our hearts we can let Him know that we deeply desire His companionship and that we want to stick with Him as much as we can. We can thank Him that He is faithfully there for us when our reactions and attitudes are not yet Christ. There is a certain amount of glory to the nature of Christ and the ability of Jesus to live in a human being. But we must never forget how much comes from the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin out from ourselves and righteousness out from Christ. What would we do without this One who is so faithful to lift up Jesus and to point out what is lacking of Him in us?

"EVEN THOUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT IS IN US, IN OUR SPIRIT WE CAN TURN TO HIM AND SAY, 'YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MORE THAN I COULD EVER IMAGINE IN MY WHOLE LIFE. YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME INTO RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND THE FATHER."

Our gratitude continues as we remember the times we open the pages of the Bible and the Spirit of God began peeling the scales off our eyes to see the living Jesus. Even though the Holy Spirit is in us, in our spirit we can turn to Him and say, "You have given me more than I could ever imagine in my whole life. You have brought me into relationship with Jesus and the Father and I cannot even put into words my thankfulness to You, Holy Spirit, for doing this." And, for lack of putting it a better way, the Dove gets a little closer and says, "I really see that you do want Jesus, that you do have a passion for Jesus." And the Holy Spirit would say this, "I

love Jesus, and I love the Father. I love Jesus, and I love to see somebody who is meant to be His Bride love Him the way that your heart is going after Him." This is how the Spirit wants to woo us. The Scriptures tell us that God is love, but they never say that of Jesus individually. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Love is ever self-giving within Themselves. And because of this relationship of love in God, the Holy Spirit longs to bring us into our union with Christ whereby we will glorify the Father through the Son.

Treasuring Our Relationship with the Holy Spirit

Because we deeply treasure Jesus, we will value and protect the Holy Spirit and our relationship with Him. The way we protect our relationship with the Holy Spirit is not by walking around acting holy and faking something. The Scriptures do not say, "Fake Jesus and please the Holy Spirit." The Word of God exhorts us to let the Holy Spirit have influence in us to put off clamor, to not meditate on certain things, and to forgive immediately even as God for Christ's sake forgave us. Our response to the Holy Spirit should not come from a legalistic obedience to do the right thing. Our heart should be moved because of our relationship with a Person, and not doctrinal adherence. Our proximity to the Holy Spirit can make us act, think, and move almost as if it already was Christ formed within. There is a great advantage to having Him inside of us. If someone outside of us said, "You ought to forgive," we would respond with, "I know I should, but I cannot." But with the Holy Spirit there is an influence, like an enveloping where all of the sudden we can keep our hearts and minds set on the Lord even when His nature has not yet been fully formed in us. The Holy Spirit will keep us until the day of Christ. He will keep us until the day dawns and the Day Star arises in our hearts (cf. II Pet. 1:19).

It is imperative that we understand that we are not talking about putting on a fake Jesus; rather, we are talking about having a genuine moment-by-moment relationship with the Holy Spirit until Christ be formed. In our desire to avoid religious fakeness, we can develop an attitude that will grieve the Holy Spirit. If we resist the Dove's influence in an attempt to not be "religious," we could grieve the Dove. It is important to not become religious and fakey, but it is also important that we continue in the Lord, in the Word, and in the Spirit. There is Christ our peace who comes after revelation, and there is the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace that is a work that can keep us right now. They are two different things. One is above, settled in Christ, and one is an ongoing working until we are above, settled in Christ. May we embrace each relationship and learn to flow with God in every sphere of His influence.

HOW TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL AND GET FED EVERY MONTH

The booklet you just read was first published in the March of the Message Newsletter published every month by Life In The Spirit Ministries. It gives you a little taste of what Life In The Spirit Conferences are like and what the monthly newsletter feeds to those who receive it. This newsletter is mailed out monthly to those who support R. T. Nusbaum in the ministry of carrying the message of Christ and Him crucified unto the world.

Those who support Life In The Spirit on a monthly basis come from many denominations, creeds and backgrounds. The one bond they have between them is that they desire to know Jesus Christ in a deeper way and want the message of Christ and Him crucified to spread all over the world.

In modern times the preaching of the Cross does not draw a great following or great support from the traditional church. Therefore, the only way it will be spread is by the backing of those who can only be satisfied with Christ as the central message. If you have any desire to be fed every month and support this ministry, contact us at:

Life In The Spirit Ministries P.O. Box 2696 Denton, Texas 76202 (940) 565-0099

Books Available By R.T. Nusbaum

ON THE WEB



www.christaslife.com

Many of the books written by R. T. Nusbaum are located on the world wide web at the above address and can be downloaded free. Other literature is available on the website also. There you will find audio teachings and literature from many other ministers who preach Christ and Him crucified. In addition, there are Christ-centered worship CDs that are free for downloading. The website is being updated from time to time so please visit often.