

The Coming of the Lord Part 1

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Recently, I undertook to present a study that would approach the subject of the Lord's coming in a fresh, seminal and penetrating way; in a way that would provide readers with a foundational grasp of its essential meaning and nature. Planning to offer the study in a series of articles, I ended up rejecting the first two installments, realizing that they lacked clarity and the writing was poorly constructed.

Much to my embarrassment, I had impulsively e-mailed those to a few correspondents and now hope that they have been forgotten and discarded. With my reader's indulgence, I wish to undertake the task again, having spent considerable time in meditation, which produced a renewed sense in my heart that the Lord still wanted me to tackle the subject, in spite of the fact that there is an abundance of excellent material available today from godly men and women and, in spite of my initial, sloppy attempt. So, here we go again:

My renewed contemplation led me to conclude that, for me, the only satisfying approach to the coming of the Lord must begin with an understanding of His eternal nature and Personhood which would, of necessity, be expressed in His coming/appearing/unveiling and manifestation. This directly tied into something the Holy Spirit had powerfully impressed upon me concerning the nature and Personhood of the Godhead, which has escaped the attention of those who keep God in a conceptual box of conventional Trinitarian reasoning.

Am I suggesting that God is not triune? No, that is not where I am going in this. But, I do want to take a very fresh look at the profound simplicity and wonderful complexity of Him, Who has birthed, created and redeemed us. Up front, let me say that if we do not understand the principle that God does what He is, we will misunderstand what is involved in the coming of the Lord. I must confess that as that realization was more clearly impressed upon me, I remembered how many laughs a certain TV comedian would get many years ago with the line, "What you sees is what you gets." Well, when it comes to the

Lord, what He is, is what He does; He does what He is.

When the Godhead is revealed in our time-space-matter dimension, His eternal nature and Personhood is unveiled and we witness the living out on earth of what He is eternally in heaven, because the nature and activity of God are a perfect unity. This being so, it is crucial that we understand that the "He" of God includes the "She" of God and, although that concept may be very disturbing to one who has been intimidated by so-called orthodoxy, to think of God only as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we can show clearly from scripture that there is a dimension of gender completeness in the Majesty on high.

Just in the way of warming up to the subject, let me point out this simple fact; that as "man" or "men" is often used generically in the Bible inclusive of male and female, so also, "Fatherhood," in scripture includes Motherhood as well. The feminine aspect of the Godhead is first presented in Gen.1:27 where we read, "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (NAS). Thus we see that, since the male and the female were created in the image of God and since an image expresses what it is a replication of, then God must include in Himself, a Herself, a union which is the origin of the Family of God, the Family which God is.

In verse 26 God speaks of making man in "Our image, according to Our likeness," and this is not, as some theologians say, God, simply referring to His Majesty in plural terms. Nor is it adequate, in the context, to say that "Our" refers simply to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To repeat; the image of the One who refers to Himself using "Our" and "Us" has an image in which is both male and female. Though we certainly affirm God, our Father, and the Son of God, the eternal, living Word, and the Deity of the Holy Spirit, this is not what confronts us in the text we are considering.

What confronts us in these verses is Mom and Dad and Son, For the image that the male and female are created in is Christ. (See II Cor. 4:4 and Col. 1:15). In Christ, male and female do not exist as contradistinctive opposites, but in perfect union, which is Paul's thought in Gal. 3:28. This brings us to the eternal origin of the Son. Be sure that you note that I said eternal origin for, the Son shares

equally in the eternality of the Father, but the Son has His eternal origin in the One who calls Himself "I AM," the self-existing One.

But, "I AM" refers not only to self-existence, but also to self-identification and self-knowing; i.e., knowing in the biblical sense, God, in effect says, "I know Myself as a husband knows his wife and a wife knows her husband. In this divine intercourse I-We conceive, and beget Our Son, the radiance of My-Our glory." Recorded in Jn. 5:26, Jesus testified of His origin saying, "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son to have life in Himself."

Now, dear reader, just how does God give His Son to have life in Himself, except as we have shown above? I would hope, at this point, the astute reader would be asking, "Just where does the Holy Spirit fit into all this?" The answer lies in this: the holy intercourse within God; the communion which occurs in the love and loving in God cannot be someTHING coursing within Him-Her-Them, for, the Lord, being the pure essence of Being and the very "Ground of Being" can only commune by the flow of Being; this/He/She is the Holy Spirit.

HE/She is the intercourse, the love, the communion which begets the Son, and Who, in the Son is the communion between the Bridegroom and the Bride. But, in saying that I do not want to leap too far ahead in our study. Having, hopefully, laid a foundation, let us see how the coming of the Lord must be consistent with what has been shown thus far.

When the fulness of time came for the Word to become flesh, that is, for Christ to come, God did not, pardon the expression, zap the Son into a body. There was to be no incarnation short cut. To become our Kinsman-Redeemer, He must become a man by undergoing the whole human experience and we will not elaborate on that since it is a study in itself. But beyond the need for Christ to be born of a woman and thereby initiate the union of God and man in Him, His coming had to be a living out on earth of the eternal Family's relationship.

The Family-Kingdom of God must come to earth as it is in heaven and Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Son of the Living God was and is the representation, reality and embodiment of that kingdom. He

would come on earth as He did in heaven. There had to be a communal participation on earth, in flesh, of what was in heaven. Thus, "In the fulness of time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman...." So, we read in Luke 1:35, that the angel said to a virgin named Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God."

The Most High shares mothering with a Hebrew maiden, catching her up into divine fertility awaiting the impregnation of the divine Seed, and Jesus is conceived, grows in the womb and is born. This conception, gestation and birth IS the coming of the Lord. He did not come as some heavenly superman, streaking through space with light-year speed from some infinitely distant, celestial planet. His birthing was His coming and His growth "in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and men;" His perfect life and His ministry were a continuation and development of His coming.

Herein is the nature and meaning and principle of the coming of Christ. It was not the arrival following a cosmic journey, it was, to repeat, a matter of conception, gestation, birth, presence, growth, and living as a man among men. (Keep in mind that the Greek word, "parousia," translated "coming," means also "presence," according to Strong's Concordance).

The following is so very important for this hour, as the saints are inundated with immature prophetic teaching leading to excited expectation of a coming in the sky that is virtually unrelated to Christ being conceived and being born of a woman. For be sure, the Lord's coming is a continuing event and cannot be understood simplistically as a first and second coming without a common principle.

Once again a woman appears in God's economy, this time a corporate mother. Gal. 4: 26 reveals to us the Church, as the New Jerusalem, the embodiment of the covenant of promise, which shall bring forth the Son of promise, again, by grace; "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you" Luke 1:28 NAS). She is described as our mother for she is pregnant with the corporate Christ and she is giving birth and shall give birth to the Son in many sons.

Do not be quick to scream "heresy!" Have you never heard of the Christ, who is one yet many? You heard what I said, the sons are not just his followers; they are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; they are His Body. Here the testimony of the scripture that cannot be broken. "...even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body SO ALSO IS CHRIST" (1 Cor. 12:12 NAS).

Give heed to the bold apostolic word, ".....the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22 and 23 NAS). This is just the beginning of the story of our multi-dimensional relationship to Christ. We are pregnant with Him within, and as He comes, by being birthed from us, we become His coming, as His very body: He, in us, the incorporation of Him as the New Man, a new quality of humanity, joining God and man in perfect unity.

The glorious story continues, as a corporate Bride comes forth from the corporate Bridegroom, as Eve came forth from the side of Adam; all this is unerringly true to the eternal principle of a God who is in conjugal union within Himself in order to give birth to the Son, who in turn has within him one who is to be His bride.

Believers are in different levels of maturity as touching these things and it is not easy to grasp sequentially how this unfolds, but it appears that different levels are being virtually experienced by each of us until the final consummation of this great and passionate romance. For now, until later lessons, we will only look at the transition from the single-person body of Mary and the single-person body of Jesus, to the corporate many-person body of each.

Immediately we are faced with the beloved 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel and the conventional teaching and understanding prevalent in, particularly, the evangelical church. Let me say boldly that there is only a tiny minority among Christians today who understand the real subject and meaning of that chapter and many of them may only know it at an intellectual level without a personal revelation by the Spirit of Truth.

The study Bible that I have in front of me as I write divides this chapter into three parts under these three headings; "Concerning

heaven," "Concerning the Holy Spirit," and "Concerning peace." I dare say I can improve upon that. The subject of John 14 is the transition of Christ from being visibly and physically with them, to being in them through the Spirit of Truth. That name of the Holy Spirit is central to the theme of this chapter and the greater context of chapters 14 through 16, for in the 6th verse Jesus told them that He was the Truth.

The Lord is warming up to the subject that those disciples needed to know Him inwardly as Truth/Reality as opposed to merely knowing Him objectively. He was introducing them to the fact, that in the Father's economy, they must now advance to the subjective experience of Christ. The third verse begins to unlock this understanding for it literally reads this way, "And if I should go and should prepare for you a place, again I am coming, and will receive you to myself...."

He had to leave them in terms of a physically oriented relationship in order to advance to the deeper relationship, whereby the Spirit would reveal Christ to them in and from their very spirits. That would even include the physical, for the Lord Jesus' glorification included His body, so that they would now know Him within in the entirety of His exalted Personhood.

His going in terms of the former was His coming as to the latter. The "many mansions" in verse one should be translated as "many rooms, abodes or dwelling places" as any Bible scholar knows. Now just what is this house with many rooms that Jesus is talking about? Is it some far off palatial residence that Jesus departed to so that with divine tools, material and paint, He would, as the ultimate construction worker, build a house for them so that they might be properly sheltered for all eternity.

PLEEEEESE, dear ones, let's go on to maturity. The house He went to prepare was Himself! He went to be glorified so that they/we would share in that glory as members of His body. His incarnated and then glorified Person is now where the Father lives and we participate in that abode of God by being rooms in Him, prepared by Him for us. He was perfected as our Great High Priest and we, in Him, were perfected by Him, so as to be the temple of God and the habitation of

God in the Spirit, as Stephen testified (Acts 7:48-49) and Peter and Paul taught (I Pet. 2:5; I Cor. 3:16; II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22).

As we abide in the place prepared for us, that room, paradoxically becomes part of the abode of God. It is only in Him that we are worthy of His abiding presence. There is a room for each of us to dwell in Christ and by abiding in Him the Father abides in us. John continues this thought in Chapter 15, saying that as we abide in the vine, Christ, we branches bear fruit. Read for yourself and see that the 16th Chapter continues the same theme of Christ coming again in the Spirit to transmit all that is His to us.

To sum up what He meant by "He shall glorify me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you," (Jn. 16:14. NAS) we simply need to look to the 17th Chapter to read that what Jesus prayed for as He approached His passion was that He might regain what He left, and be restored to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was and that He shared that glory with those who had believed in Him. So, we should extend the context to Chapter 17. (See 16: 13-15; 17:5,22.) John Chapter 14 is not talking about our going to heaven, but about heaven coming and being present on the earth in us (parousia, coming, presence).

If you are a follower of the Lord, who has been swallowing hook, line and sinker the shallow approach to the Lord's coming, that is so prevalent in the professing church today, be prepared to have your mind renewed and to leave childish things behind. The Lord's purpose is to make you a part of His coming instead of you "gazing up into heaven" (Acts 1:11) waiting for an event that is totally out of sync with the nature and meaning of the coming of the Lord.

We will be looking into the outworking of this in future installments of the subject, and in greater detail. I will not be teaching only, but learning with you as we go.

Stay tuned for future serious, seminal samplings.

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