

# *Lessons on the Normal Christian Life*

## *Lesson 1*

### **God's Eternal Purpose and Economy & Regeneration**

*Scripture reading:* Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7-9; Eph. 3:8-11; 1:5, 9-11; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; 2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12; John 3:15-16; 1 Pet. 1:23; John 3:3-8; 1:12-13; Jer. 13:23; Rom. 10:9-10, 13

#### **I. God's eternal purpose and economy:**

- A. God's eternal purpose is to make man in His image, so that man can express Him, and give man His dominion, to represent Him in order to deal with His enemy – Gen. 1:26-27:
  - 1. Image—to express God—this is a matter of life inwardly – John 1:18; 2 Pet. 1:3-4.
  - 2. Dominion—to represent God, exercising His authority—this is also a matter of life inwardly – 1 John 4:4.
- B. God's eternal purpose can only be accomplished by His economy, His plan, His household arrangement, which is to dispense Himself into His believers as life and everything so that they can be built up to be the Body of Christ – Gen. 2:9; Eph. 3:8-11; John 10:10b.
- C. God created man as a three-part vessel for His purpose and economy, that is, that man may be able to receive His dispensing, contain Him and express Him – Gen. 2:7; Rom. 9:23; 2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12:
  - 1. The body—our physical part to contact the material world.
  - 2. The soul—our psychological part (which includes mind, emotion and will) to contact the psychological world.
  - 3. The spirit—our inmost part to contact God – Zech. 12:1; Job 32:8; John 4:24.

#### **II. Regeneration:**

- A. Regeneration is the center of God's complete salvation, the beginning of God's salvation in its organic aspect, and our first experience of God's dispensing in His economy – 1 Pet. 1:23:
  - 1. The goal of God's love toward us is to give us the eternal life which is God Himself – John 3:16.
  - 2. God's good pleasure is to be one with man and make man the same as He is in life and nature, but not in His Godhead – Eph. 1:5, 9; Rev. 22:17.
- B. The meaning of regeneration is:
  - 1. That in addition to man's natural life, he receives a new life, the life of God, which is God Himself – John 3:15.
  - 2. Being born anew – John 3:3.
  - 3. Being born of God to become children of God—God-men – John 1:12-13.
  - 4. Being born of the Spirit – John 3:3-8.
- C. The need for regeneration is due to the fact that:
  - 1. Man cannot change himself – Jer. 13:23.
  - 2. Man cannot see the kingdom of God – John 3:3; 1 Cor. 2:14.
  - 3. Man cannot enter into the kingdom of God – John 3:5.
  - 4. Human life is only a created life and is, therefore, weak and incapable of overcoming sin and death, and cannot fulfill God's eternal purpose.
- D. The way to be regenerated:
  - 1. Through Christ's death and resurrection – John 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:3.
  - 2. Through the Word of life – 1 Pet. 1:23.
  - 3. Through the Spirit's working – John 16:8.
  - 4. Through man's repentance and believing into (receiving) the Lord Jesus Christ – John 1:12-13; Rom. 10:9-10, 13.

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- E. The riches gained through regeneration are:
1. The life of God (John 3:36), which includes:
    - a) The nature of God – 2 Pet. 1:3-4.
    - b) The power of resurrection – Eph. 1:19-20.
    - c) The expression of God – Eph. 4:32; 5:8-9.
    - d) The fullness of God – Col. 2:9-10.
  2. The law of life – Rom. 8:2; Heb. 7:16; 8:10.
  3. The Triune God with His attributes:
    - a) The Father is in us – Eph. 4:6; 1 John 4:15.
    - b) The Son is in us – 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27.
    - c) The Spirit is in us – Rom. 8:9-11; John 14:16-17.
  4. A new heart – Ezek. 36:26.
  5. A new spirit – Ezek. 36:26.