

HWMR: ONE ACCORD AND CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
(Week 8)

Scripture Reading: Gen. 1:26; 2:7-10, 18-25; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9-11

The Building of the Bride

- Gen 1:26 And God said, **Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness**; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
- Gen 2:7 Jehovah God **formed man from the dust of the ground** and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**, and man became a living soul.
- Gen 2:8 And Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there He put the man whom He had formed.
- Gen 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- Gen 2:10 And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four branches.
- Gen 2:18 And Jehovah God said, It is **not good** for the man to be **alone**; I will make him a **helper** as his **counterpart**.
- Gen 2:19 Now Jehovah God had formed from the ground every animal of the field and every bird of heaven. And He brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called any living animal, that was its name.
- Gen 2:20 And the man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of heaven and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was **not found a helper as his counterpart**.
- Gen 2:21 And Jehovah God caused a **deep sleep** to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took **one of his ribs** and closed up the flesh in its place.
- Gen 2:22 And Jehovah God **built the rib**, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.
- Gen 2:23 And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones / And flesh of my flesh; / This one shall be called **Woman** / Because **out of Man this one was taken**.
- Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become **one flesh**.
- Gen 2:25 And both the man and his wife were naked and were not ashamed before each other.
- Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the **marriage of the Lamb** has come, and **His wife has made herself ready**.
- Rev 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be **clothed in fine linen, bright and clean**; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
- Rev 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the **marriage dinner of the Lamb**. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.
- Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; **I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb**.
- Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
- Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.

Day 1

Genesis 2:22 - And Jehovah God **built the rib**, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man.

Revelation 21:2 - And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared as a bride** adorned for her husband.

I. The building of God is the central matter in the entire Bible; the bride of Christ is the building of the Triune God—“Jehovah God built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man”—Gen. 2:22:

- A. The entire **Bible** may be likened to a **building manual**; the revelation concerning the garden of Eden, as the beginning of the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures, and the revelation concerning the New Jerusalem, as the ending of the divine revelation in the Holy Scriptures, reflect each other.
- B. What is revealed in these two parts of the Scriptures is the **central thought of God**, the central line of the divine revelation, and a controlling principle of the interpreting and understanding of the Holy Scriptures:
 - 1. **Genesis 1 and 2** are the **blueprint** of God’s organic architectural plan to have His divine building (Heb. 11:10); God’s desire is to **build Christ into our intrinsic constitution** so that our entire being will be reconstituted with Christ; in this way God may gain a corporate man to express Him in His image and to represent Him with His authority (Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 3:9; Matt. 16:18; 2 Sam. 7:12-14a).
 - 2. **Revelation 21 and 22** are the **photograph** of the **finished building**, the **corporate expression of the Triune God**; the New Jerusalem is the reflection and fulfillment of the divine revelation concerning the garden of Eden.
 - 3. Christ will come back as the **Bridegroom to marry His bride**, who will be the totality of the overcomers; this **building up by the overcomers** in this age is for the initial consummation of the New Jerusalem in the kingdom age (19:7-9) and eventually for the full consummation of the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth (21:2).

God caused Adam to sleep, opened his side, **took one of his ribs** out of him, and **built it** into a woman who was fully qualified to be Adam’s counterpart. This indicates that **God put Christ to death and from His pierced side** flowed blood for redemption and water for the dispensing of life to produce the church to match Christ as His **counterpart**. This is a very crucial point and a great type. Adam did not find anyone to match him to be his counterpart, so God caused Adam to sleep, opened up his side, took out one of his ribs, and built this rib into a woman. Genesis 2:22 in the Hebrew does not say that God made a woman from this rib but that He built this rib into a woman. This woman is fully described in the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem will be Christ’s wife, Christ’s counterpart.

Not many Christians today know how **to exercise their spirit to take Christ as food**. Even grade-school children can understand the teachings concerning the spirit in one lesson. But this is a matter to be practiced, not merely comprehended mentally as a doctrine. Do you exercise your spirit day by day to take Christ as your food, feeding on Him all day long? This is the central problem today. Adam was put before the tree of life, but he did not partake of it. Are you in the same condition? Every Christian has Christ within, but how many are exercising their spirit to enjoy Christ, feeding on Him as the reality of the tree of life? Why is the church in such a poor condition today? Simply because most of us do not know how to exercise our spirit to feed on Christ as our daily food, foreshadowed in Genesis 2. Neither can we exhaust the full message of this chapter. (*The Vision of God’s Building, Chapter 2*)

God created man with a spirit to **receive something**. And man, as an empty vessel, was placed before the tree of life. Now we are clear that God's intention in placing man before this tree was that he might **receive life in the form of food**. Being a Christian, as far as our relationship with God is concerned, is not a matter of working for God but a matter of eating. We must forget about trying to do things for God and give our full attention to eating properly. Adam's entire future depended on what he ate. If he ate properly, he would live properly, but if he ate wrongly, he would die. We can never exhaust the subject of learning how to partake of Christ—that which was portrayed and foreshadowed in Genesis 2. Neither can we exhaust the full message of this chapter. (*The Vision of God's Building, Chapter 2*)

Day 2

*Revelation 19:7-8 - Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the **marriage of the Lamb** has come, and **His wife has made herself ready**. And it was given to her that she should be clothed in **fine linen, bright and clean**; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.*

4. By the **continual working of the Holy Spirit** through all the centuries, this goal will be attained at the end of this age; then the **bride**, the **overcoming believers**, will be ready, and the kingdom of God will come—Matt. 26:29; 13:43.
5. The **corporate bride**, the **New Jerusalem**, will fulfill the two aspects of the purpose of God (Gen. 1:26); first, the New Jerusalem will be the **full expression** of God in God's full image for His glory (Rev. 21:11; cf. 4:3); second, this New Jerusalem will **subdue the enemy, conquer the earth, and exercise God's authority** with His dominion over the entire universe (Gen. 1:26; Rev. 22:5; cf. 20:10, 14-15).
- C. When we as God's people enter into a **love relationship with God**, we receive His life, just as Eve received the life of Adam; it is this life that enables us to become one with God and makes Him one with us—Gen. 2:21-22.

The **church** is the **bride**, the **wife**, of **Christ**, who is the **Bridegroom**, the **Husband**. The word of John the Baptist in John 3:29 indicates that Christ is the Bridegroom. "He who has the bride is the bridegroom." The bridegroom is a most pleasant person, who comes for the bride. The church should be a corporate bride prepared for Christ. To us He should be the attraction, the pleasure, and the satisfaction. As those who constitute the counterpart of Christ, we should enjoy Him as such a pleasant Bridegroom.

In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul speaks concerning Christ as the Husband. "*I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one Husband, to present a pure virgin to Christ.*" Here we see that **Christ is the believers' Husband**, the unique Husband for us to love. We should belong only to Him, and we should appreciate Him and love Him. As our Husband, Christ has attracted us, and we have been presented as a pure virgin to Him. Now we should care only for Him, allowing nothing to replace Him in our hearts. Our **love for Him should be pure, and our whole being should be focused on Him**.

As **Eve** was **Adam's increase**, so the **church** as the bride, the wife, of Christ as the Bridegroom, the Husband, is **Christ's increase**. After John the Baptist referred to Christ as the Bridegroom, he went on to say, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). The increase in verse 30 is the bride in verse 29. For the Lord to increase means that He must have the bride. All the following must go to Him. All those who believe in Him should follow Him to be His bride as His increase. (*Conclusion of the New Testament, Message 213*)

Day 3

- 1 John 4:21* - And this commandment we have from Him, that **he who loves God love his brother also**.
- 2 Corinthians 5:14* - For the **love of Christ constrains us** because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

II. For God and His people to be one, there must be a **mutual love** between them; the love between God and His people unfolded in the Bible is primarily like the affectionate love between a man and a woman—John 14:21, 23; Jer. 2:2; 31:3:

- A. As God's people **love God** and **spend time to fellowship** with Him in His word, **God infuses them with His divine element**, making them one with Him as His spouse, the same as He is in life, nature, and expression—Psa. 119:140, 15-16.
- B. **God first loved us** in that He **infused us with His love** and generated within us the **love with which we love Him** and the brothers—1 John 4:19-21.
- C. The life which we have received from God is a **life of love**; Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life so that **we may live the same life of love** in this world and be the same as He is—3:14; 5:1; 2:5-6; 4:17.
- D. Our **natural love must be put on the cross**; one difference between God's love and our natural love is that it is very easy for our natural love to be **offended**.
- E. We must be persons who are flooded with and carried away by the **love of Christ**; the **divine love** should be like the rushing tide of great waters toward us, impelling us to live to Him beyond our own control—2 Cor. 5:14.
- F. The commandment regarding **brotherly love** is both old and new: old, because the believers have had it from the beginning of their Christian life; new, because in their Christian walk it dawns with new light and shines with new enlightenment and fresh power again and again—1 John 2:7-8; 3:11, 23; cf. John 13:34.
- G. The Body **builds itself up in love** to become Christ's bride (Eph. 4:16); our God-given, regenerated spirit is a **spirit of love**; we need a burning spirit of love to conquer the degradation of today's church (2 Tim. 1:7).
- H. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1b; cf. 2 Cor. 3:6); **loving one another is a sign that we belong to Christ** (John 13:34-35); loving to be first in the church is versus loving all the brothers (3 John 9).
- I. Just as the Lord Jesus laid down His soul-life so that we might have the divine life, we need to lose our soul-life and deny the self to love the brothers and minister life to them in the practice of the Body life for the preparation of Christ's bride—1 John 3:16; 4:17 and footnote 5; John 10:11, 17-18; 15:13; Eph. 4:29—5:2; 2 Cor. 12:15; Rom. 12:9-13.
- J. **Love is the most excellent way** for us to be anything or do anything for the building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:31b—13:8a.

Love is not jealous, is not provoked, does not take account of evil, covers all things, endures all things, never falls away, and is the greatest. Jealousy is in our nature. When a new child is born in a family, the other child may become jealous. Jealousy is also present in the church life. One sister may be jealous of another sister because she receives many Amens from the saints when she prays or prophesies. Some brothers may be jealous when they see that another brother has been appointed into the eldership. After being in the church life for over sixty years, I can testify that one of the hardest things is to appoint the elders. We realize that if we appoint a certain brother, another brother whom we do not feel to appoint may be stumbled because of jealousy. If a certain sister is asked to take the lead in a sisters' house, the others may become jealous, but love is not jealous.

Also, love is not provoked. People are easily provoked because of the shortage of love. Regardless of how much we are rebuked, we will not be provoked if we are filled with the divine love. Love does not take account of evil. We have to confess that we have taken account of other people's evil. Some wives have a record, an account, of their husband's failures and defects. This record may not be written, but it is in their mind. They are taking account of their husband's evil.

The elders need to realize that in their shepherding, they have to cover others' sins, to not take account of others' evils. Love covers all things, not only the good things but also the bad things. Whoever uncovers the defects, shortcomings, and sins of the members of the church is disqualified from the eldership. Our uncovering of the members under our eldership, our shepherding, annuls our qualification. Love also endures all things and never falls away. First Corinthians 13 concludes by saying, "Now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (v. 13).

Love is the conclusion of all spiritual virtues and the factor of fruit-bearing that supplies us bountifully with the rich entrance into the kingdom of Christ.

The Body of Christ builds itself up in love. The phrase in love is used repeatedly in the book of Ephesians. God predestinated us unto sonship before the foundation of the world in love, and the Body of Christ builds itself up in love. The growth in life is in love. In the last few years we have appreciated the Lord's showing us the high peak of the divine revelation. My concern is that although we may talk about the truths of the high peak, love is absent among us. If this is the case, we are puffed up, not built up. The Body of Christ builds itself up in love. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," chapter 8)

Day 4

Genesis 2:18 - And Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart.

Genesis 2:20 - And the man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of heaven and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper as his counterpart.

III. We need to see what God did in order to produce a counterpart for Himself; Genesis 2 reveals a picture of Christ and His bride in the types of Adam and Eve:

- A. Adam typifies God in Christ as the real, universal Husband, who is seeking a wife for Himself—Rom. 5:14; cf. John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9-11.

- B. “Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart”—Gen. 2:18:
1. Adam’s need for a wife typifies and portrays **God’s need**, in His economy, to have a wife as His counterpart, His complement (lit., His parallel); although God, Christ, is absolutely and eternally perfect, He is **not complete without** the church as His wife.
 2. God desires to have both Adam, typifying Christ, and Eve, typifying the church; His purpose is to “let them have dominion” (1:26); it is to have a victorious Christ plus a victorious church, a Christ who has overcome the work of the devil plus a church which has overthrown the work of the devil; **God wants Christ and the church to have dominion** (Rom. 5:17; 16:20; Eph. 1:22-23).
- C. From the ground God formed every animal of the field and every bird of heaven and brought them to Adam, “and the man gave names to all cattle and to the birds of heaven and to every animal of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper as his counterpart”—Gen. 2:19-20.
- D. The **wife must be the same as the husband in life, nature, and expression**; among the cattle, the birds, and the animals Adam did not find a complement for himself, one that could match him—v. 23.
- E. In order to produce a complement for Himself, **God first became a man**, as typified by God’s creation of Adam—John 1:14; Rom. 5:14.

The first couple in the Bible, **Adam and Eve**, is a picture of Christ and the church. In His creation, God did not create a man and woman at the same time. He first created a man, and then from the man He created a counterpart to help him. When the fowl, the beasts, and the cattle were brought before Adam, Adam named them one by one. But for Adam “there was not found a help meet for him” (Gen. 2:20). Adam desired to have a counterpart, to have someone to match him. However, among the fowl, the beasts, and the cattle, he could not find his counterpart. In order to produce such a **counterpart**, God caused a **deep sleep** to fall upon Adam, and He took a rib out of Adam and built a woman with the rib. The name of the woman was Eve. **Eve was the same as Adam in life, nature, and form**. Therefore, she could be his counterpart. When God brought Eve to Adam, Adam exclaimed, “This time it is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (Gen. 2:23, Heb.). At last, Adam had found one who could be his counterpart.

Genesis 2:24 indicates that a man and his wife are one flesh. The husband and the wife are two halves of a whole person. This is a marvelous picture of Christ and the church. Eve had the same life and nature that Adam had. This signifies that the **church has the same life and nature that Christ has**. Furthermore, Eve had virtually the same image and nearly the same stature as Adam. This indicates that the church bears the same image and has the same stature as Christ.

The church as the counterpart of Christ implies satisfaction and rest in love. Every husband needs satisfaction and rest, which are found in **love**. The brothers who are husbands can testify that our satisfaction and rest can only be in our wives. If we say that we are the church, then we must ask if **Christ has His rest among us**. This is a serious matter. A group of Christians should not be so quick to claim that they are the church. To be the church is to render to Christ the adequate satisfaction and rest in love. Christ needs such a counterpart. The church is not merely a gathering of God’s called ones. The church, as Christ’s counterpart, is a satisfaction and rest to Christ in love.] (*Lesson Book, Level 5: The Church—The Vision and Building Up of the Church*, Chapter 5)

Day 5

Genesis 2:21 - And Jehovah God caused a **deep sleep** to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took **one of his ribs** and closed up the flesh in its place.

John 12:24 - Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it **bears much fruit**.

- F. “Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place”—Gen. 2:21:
1. **Adam’s deep sleep** for the producing of Eve as his wife typifies **Christ’s death on the cross** for the producing of the church as His counterpart—Eph. 5:25-27.
 2. In the Bible, **sleep means death**—1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thes. 4:13-16; John 11:11-14.
 3. Christ’s death is the **life-releasing, life-imparting, life-propagating, life-multiplying, and life-reproducing death**, which is signified by the grain of wheat falling into the ground to die and to grow up in order to produce many grains (12:24) for the making of the loaf which is the Body, the church (1 Cor. 10:17).
 4. Through **Christ’s death** the divine life within Him was **released**, and through **His resurrection** His released divine life was **imparted** into His believers for the constituting of the church—Luke 12:49-50; cf. Rom. 12:11; Rev. 4:5.
 5. Through such a process God in Christ has been **wrought** into man with His life and nature so that man can be the **same as God in life and nature** in order to match Him as His counterpart.

Day 6

Genesis 2:23 - And the man said, This time this is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called **Woman because out of Man this one was taken**.

Ephesians 5:32 - This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to **Christ and the church**.

- G. “And Jehovah God **built the rib**, which He had taken from the man, into a woman and brought her to the man”—Gen. 2:22:
1. The rib taken from Adam’s opened side typifies the **unbreakable, indestructible eternal life of Christ** (Heb. 7:16; John 19:32-33, 36; Exo. 12:46; Psa. 34:20), which flowed out of His pierced side (John 19:34) to impart life to His believers for the producing and building up of the church as His counterpart:
 - a. Out of **Christ’s side** came **blood and water**, but all that came out of **Adam’s side** was the **rib without the blood**.
 - b. This is because at **Adam’s time** there was **no need of redemption** through the blood, because **there was no sin**; by the time that **Christ** was “sleeping” on the cross, **there was the problem of sin**; thus, the blood that came out of Christ’s side was for our judicial redemption.
 - c. Following the blood, the **water came out**, which is the **flowing life of God** for our organic salvation (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; Num. 20:8); this divine, flowing, uncreated life is typified by the rib taken out of Adam’s side (Rom. 5:10).

2. **Genesis 2:22** does not say that Eve was created but that **she was built**; the building of Eve with the rib taken from Adam's side typifies the **building of the church** with the resurrection life released from Christ through His death on the cross and imparted into His believers in His resurrection—John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3.
 3. The **church as the real Eve** is the **totality of Christ** in all His believers; the church is the reproduction of Christ; other than Christ's element, there **should be no other element in the church**—Gen. 5:2.
- H. **Only** that which **comes out of Christ** with His resurrection life can be His complement as His bride (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:6; 5:28-30); the **church is a pure product out of Christ**; the church is “Christly,” “resurrectiononly,” and heavenly.
- I. Adam and Eve, being one, lived a married life together as husband and wife (Gen. 2:24-25); this portrays that in the New Jerusalem the processed and consummated **Triune God as the universal Husband** will live a married life with the **redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and glorified humanity as the wife**, forever (Rev. 22:17a).
 - J. In the eternity that is without end, by the divine, eternal, and surpassingly glorious life, they will live a life that is the **mingling of God and man** as one spirit, a life that is superexcellent and that overflows with blessings and joy.