

## **BAPTIZED INTO THE TRIUNE GOD**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 28:19, 20b; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 3:17a, 18; Eph. 6:17-18; John 6:63; Rev. 3:1; 21:6; 22:17

The book of Matthew begins with a wonderful person. He is the issue of many human generations mingled with the Triune God. Such a wonderful person was proclaimed to people as the kingdom. He Himself was preached as the kingdom. This wonderful person was preached as the seed of the kingdom and was sown into the earth of humanity. Out of this seed the kingdom will grow until it reaches maturity, the full manifestation of the kingdom.

Both Matthew 13 and 25 are very crucial and strategic chapters. Matthew 13 tells us that this wonderful person has sown Himself into us as the seed of the kingdom and that this seed grows and produces transformed material—a treasure and pearls. The following chapters reveal that these transformed items are for the building up of the church, which is the reality of the kingdom. Chapter 25 tells us that everyone who is in the kingdom is likened to a virgin. We are neither robbers nor gentlemen; we are virgins. Whether we are males or females, we are all virgins holding a burning lamp and going forth out of this world to meet our Bridegroom. However, we need to gain an extra portion of the Triune God to fill our vessel, our soul. Our need today is an extra portion of the all-inclusive Spirit as the oil. This means that all the inward parts of our being must be filled, occupied, and saturated by the Lord. This will bring us to maturity and will make us ready for His coming. We will be prepared for the full manifestation of the kingdom.

This must be a controlling vision to all the churches today. It should not be taken as mere knowledge or doctrine. This must be a vision that governs the church life. Every aspect of the church life should be continually governed by this vision. Under His grace and by His mercy I can testify that I am under this vision. This vision has become not merely a doctrine but a governing principle to me.

## **BAPTIZED INTO THE TRIUNE GOD**

**Now we come to the end of the book of Matthew.** This book ends with the command to baptize people into the Triune God and with the Lord's promise that He will be with us all the days until the consummation of this age (28:19-20). These verses are profound and all-inclusive. We all must realize that we have been baptized into the Triune God. **To be baptized into the Triune God simply means to be put into the**

**Triune God.** In Matthew 28:19 the Triune God is likened to the water of baptism. When we baptize people into water, this signifies **that we put them into the Triune God.**

In Matthew 28:19 the King James Version uses the phrase *in the name*. Under the influence of this translation, many Christian teachers think that to baptize people into the Triune God is simply a ritual or a form. Some even argue about the proper name in which to baptize people, whether in the name of the Triune God, in the name of the Lord Jesus, or in the name of Christ Jesus. The arguments over this point have even caused some divisions. Several years ago, while I was in the Philippines, a dear brother who loved the Lord and was seeking the Lord came to me with a good intention, saying, "Brother Lee, I know that you people practice immersion. I would like to know in what name you immerse people. Do you baptize them in the name of the Lord Jesus, in the name of Jesus Christ, or in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?" I asked the brother what he meant. He answered, "There is a big difference in which name you baptize people." I asked him, "In what name do you baptize people?" He replied, "We baptize people in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is wrong to baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is also wrong to baptize people in the name of Christ Jesus. You must baptize people in the name of the Lord Jesus." I said, "Brother, you are altogether too much. I beg you to forget about all these things. Whether you baptize people in the name of Jesus Christ or in the name of Christ Jesus or in the name of the Lord Jesus or in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, does not really matter. As long as you are putting people into God, it is wonderful." He said, "No brother. It is not a small thing. You must realize that here in the Philippines some churches practice baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We practice baptizing people in the name of the Lord Jesus." I replied, "Brother, there is no doubt that you are just a strange, peculiar sect. I must speak the truth." We must see that it is not a matter of baptizing people in a certain name.

Once when I was in Houston, I spoke on this subject and even demonstrated how a pastor might baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Afterward, a Southern Baptist pastor who was in the meeting came up to me and said, "Brother, the message was wonderful, but you were mocking me." I answered, "Brother, I have no intention of mocking you or anyone else. I am simply telling the truth to the Lord's people that baptism should not be a ritual or a form. It must be a fact."

What should we do with a person who has recently believed in the Lord Jesus? **We must put him into the Triune God. We must baptize him into the Triune God. Then he will be a person in the Triune God.** Whenever we baptize people, we must exercise faith based upon the Lord's clear and faithful word. The Lord said, "Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name..." The Greek preposition here should not be translated "in" but "into." The Lord told us to baptize people into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Since the Lord has given us such a faithful word, we must stand upon this word with full faith and authority. Whenever we baptize people, we must do it in **a living way. We stand on the word of the Lord to baptize people into the Triune God.**

### **BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Galatians 3:27 says, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." This is a wonderful verse. It does not say, "baptized *in* Christ," but, **"baptized into Christ."** There is a great difference! We have not been baptized *in* Christ but *into* Christ. As many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. If you were baptized into Christ, you surely have put on Christ.

The same concept is expressed in Romans 6:3: "Or are you ignorant that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been **baptized into His death?**" We have been baptized into Christ Jesus, and now we have Christ Jesus covering us. We have put on Christ. Is this a form or a ritual conducted according to a vain word? Absolutely not! This is a reality accomplished by the faithful word of the Lord.

However, we still have a problem. You have been baptized into Christ, and now you have Christ upon you, but when were you baptized into Christ? At what time and in what place were you placed into Christ? Actually, it is very difficult to say. **One thing is clear: we have the full assurance that we have been baptized into Christ.** We may not know when it happened or where it happened, but we do know that it has happened. After we believed in the Lord Jesus, we were baptized into Christ. We simply do not know when or where, but we can testify that we have been baptized into Christ.

**Some may reply that they are clear about the exact time and place they were baptized into Christ. While they were praying, something suddenly happened to them, and they were baptized. Although I do not criticize this kind of realization, I beg you never to make your experience a standard for others. If you read the New**

Testament, you will find many different occasions of the baptism of the Spirit, with no two occasions being exactly the same. Every occasion was unique. Many of us have the assurance that we have been put into the Triune God. Many times I have experienced that I am really in the Triune God. This is not simply knowledge; it is real, and I have experienced it.

In 1935, before I ever spoke in tongues, I had an experience of being in the Triune God. While I was ministering on a Lord's Day afternoon, something similar to a cloud descended upon me and overshadowed me. I felt it and could almost see it with my eyes. Suddenly my speaking changed. It was not changed into tongue-speaking, for I continued to speak Chinese, but the whole congregation knew that something had happened. I have no words to describe that occurrence. There was no speaking in tongues and nothing miraculous happened, yet all the people had the deep conviction that the Lord was there. That was a genuine experience of being in the Triune God.

I had another such experience in the early days of January 1943. During the meeting I was standing on the platform. A song had been called, and the whole congregation, numbering more than five hundred people, was singing. Suddenly, the entire congregation began to sob. No one cried or wept loudly, but everyone sobbed with tears. My own tears came, and I simply could not sing. Everyone in the congregation experienced this. While we were singing, we were sobbing. With both the young and the old, the sobbing was mingled with singing. We did not know how to describe this. Some testified that they simply came into the meeting place and were caught by the Lord. There was no need for them to listen to a message.

Moreover, I can never forget another Lord's Day afternoon meeting in 1943. After we had sung a hymn and before I gave the message, I began to pray. That prayer lasted more than half an hour. I prayed with just one word—*Shake! Shake! Shake!* I spoke in regular Chinese, not in tongues, but all the words came forth like the waters of Niagara Falls. "Shake our families! Shake our homes! Shake our country!" I was standing as I prayed, but I did not ask the people to stand. However, after a time all the people stood up, and one of the brothers came from his seat and held up my arms because I had raised them up as I prayed. This was a real experience of being in the Triune God.

Many Pentecostal friends say that according to 1 Corinthians 12, there are nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. But actually there are many more, because among the nine manifestations listed in 1 Corinthians 12, there is no mention of dreams. Dreams are mentioned in Acts 2, where it says that in the last days God will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh, and men shall dream things in dreams (v. 17). I have had real experiences of dreams in the Holy Spirit. Within a period of two months in 1943, I had a series of four dreams. Before I was imprisoned by the Japanese military police, who had invaded China during the war, I had a dream. On the very day that I was imprisoned, the dream came to me again, and after three weeks another dream came. All these dreams were completely fulfilled. The Lord comforted me by the dreams. Even before the Japanese military police came to arrest me, I knew through the dreams what was going to happen. The night I was arrested and imprisoned, another dream came. In the dream the Lord told me, "Be at peace. You will not be hurt." It happened exactly according to the dream. Praise the Lord!

These experiences are signs proving that God has put us into Himself. As believers in Christ, we have all been put into the Triune God. But do not try to systematize this experience. To argue about which name to use when baptizing people is to systematize. To insist upon speaking in tongues is also to systematize. I am not against baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus, and I am not against speaking in tongues, but I am strongly against systematizing. We must forget about every kind of systematizing.

Do not be so bold to tell people that you know when you were put into the Triune God. You may feel a certain way, but probably the real experience does not actually correspond to your feeling. You may feel that it happened in San Francisco in 1971, but it might have happened a few weeks earlier. We cannot trust our sensations; they simply are not accurate. For example, I may feel cold when the temperature is over 90 degrees. This is my sensation, but it is not the fact. Forget about your sensations, and take the fact according to the clear, definite, and faithful word of the Lord: "Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).

In the churches we need to have faith in the faithful word of the Lord Jesus when we baptize people. According to His word, we baptize people, putting them into the Triune God. Do not think that the Triune God means that we have three Gods—one called God the Father, the second called God the Son, and the third called God the

Holy Spirit. This is a wrong impression received from the traditional teachings concerning the Trinity. We do not have three Gods; we have one God, one all-inclusive God. We have one God who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**We can never fully understand the Triune God. In fact, we cannot even fully understand ourselves.** Although we have a spirit, a heart, a mind, an emotion, and a will, we do not understand them very well. If we cannot even understand ourselves, how can we understand the Triune God? Our God is one God who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We cannot understand Him, but we have Him, and we are in Him.

In an earlier chapter I referred to a portion in Andrew Murray's book *The Spirit of Christ*. Let us consider that paragraph once again: *"In the Father we have the unseen God, the Author of all. In the Son God revealed, made manifest, and brought nigh; He is the Form of God. In the Spirit of God we have the indwelling God: the Power of God dwelling in human body and working in it what the Father and Son have for us...what the Father has purposed and the Son has procured, can be appropriated and take effect in the members of Christ who are still here in the flesh, only through the continual intervention and active operation of the Holy Spirit."* I do agree with this word. This is the Triune God. To be baptized into the Triune God simply means to be put into such a wonderful and all-inclusive God. Then the Lord Jesus—Jehovah-plus and God-plus—will be with us all the days until the consummation of the age (Matt. 28:20). Hallelujah!

This is the kingdom. We have been put into the Triune God, and we have put on the Triune God. The Lord Jesus who is Jehovah-plus and God-plus is with us all the days until the consummation of this age. This is the conclusion of the book of Matthew. Matthew ends by putting us into the Triune God, who will be with us all the days. We need such a vision to govern and control us.

### **BAPTIZED INTO THE BODY**

In Matthew 28 there is the seed of baptism into the Triune God, and in the Epistles there is the growth of the seed. We have already referred to Romans 6:3, which says that we have been baptized into Christ Jesus. **First Corinthians 12:13 tells us two things: "In one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body."** It is not simply a matter of being put into the Triune God. **Once we have been put into the Triune God, we become the Body.** The charismatic movement stresses speaking in tongues but



neglects the point that the genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit is to produce the Body. If you have had a genuine experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you will be for the Body. You will not be content with individuality; you will care for the Body. Not every experience of speaking in tongues is genuine. If the experience is genuine, the person will care for the Body. The real baptism in the Spirit is for the producing of the Body. **The Body is a strong test as to whether or not the baptism we have experienced is genuine.**

According to Matthew 13, the seed grows and brings in transformation, and transformation issues in the building. What is the building? The building is the Body. Although I have no intention of criticizing anyone, I must speak the truth to say that many tongue-speaking people do not have the transformation in life. I saw many who were the same in China. Three times we practiced Pentecostalism in our churches, and each time it was a debit to our spiritual accounting. We did have some credit, but eventually our spiritual accounting was “in the red,” showing more debit than credit. We suffered a loss. Eventually, all the co-workers spontaneously made the decision to drop the practice. We did not continue that “business” because it gave a poor return. I should not say that there is no profit in the Pentecostal things, but the loss is greater than the gain. Both in China and in this country I have seen the damage caused by the “Pentecostal” things.

### **TESTS OF THE GENUINE BAPTISM**

The genuine baptism in the Holy Spirit must be checked by several points: **the growth in life, the transformation in life, the building up in life, and the practical Body life.** Satan is very subtle. No one will attempt to cheat you with counterfeit money that is obviously false, but they will use a counterfeit currency so similar to real currency that only experts can discern the difference. Therefore, the best protection is not to accept currency at all but to accept only gold. Do not think that you are smart enough to discern the counterfeit from the true. Few of us are that smart. Therefore, in the long run and for the safety of the church, it is better not to take any “currency.” **Just take the gold.** Some may occasionally take the “currency.” But you must warn them not to use “currency” too much or they will be cheated. This is true not only for tongue-speaking but also for all the other gifts. The gift of knowledge must also be proved by the growth in life, the transformation in life, the building in life, and the practical Body life.

This is not only the situation today; it was also the situation when the Lord Jesus was on the earth. John 2 tells us that the Lord did many miracles in Jerusalem and, as a result of these signs, many people believed in Him. **However, He did not commit Himself to those who were drawn by the miracles.** In John 3 Nicodemus came, and the Lord turned him to the matter of life, saying that he needed to be born again. It is not a matter of miracles but of being born again. When Nicodemus came to the Lord Jesus, his concept was that of knowledge, and he called the Lord “Rabbi.” “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher” (v. 2). But the Lord Jesus told him, “You must be born anew” (v. 7). It is not a matter of miracles or of knowledge; it is a matter of receiving a new life by rebirth. The local churches need one thing: life with its growth, transformation, and building. Eventually, this life will produce the Body.

### **BAPTISM AND DRINKING**

“In one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body...and were all given to drink one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). Here we have another aspect: **drinking of the Spirit.** To be baptized in the Spirit means that you are **put into the Spirit**; to drink of the Spirit means **that the Spirit is put into you.** These are two aspects. On the one hand, we have to be put into the Spirit. On that day when I was speaking and something descended and overshadowed me, I was put into the Spirit. However, I still need to take the Spirit into me, to drink of the Spirit daily and hourly. Even as we must drink water every day, we need to drink of the Spirit again and again. To have the churches as the kingdom of God is not a matter of doctrine, knowledge, gifts, or miracles. It is altogether a matter of drinking of the Holy Spirit. When you pray, you should drink of the Spirit. When you read the Bible, you should also drink of the Spirit.

Ephesians 6:17 reads: “Receive...the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God.” The relative pronoun *which* refers to the Spirit. Receive the sword of the Spirit, which (Spirit) is the word of God, by means of all prayer (v. 18). **We should not consider the word of God in the Bible merely as letters in black and white.** We must take it as the Spirit. In John 6:63 the Lord Jesus said, “*The words which I have spoken to you are spirit.*” Since His words are spirit, we should not just read them as black and white letters. We must take the Word of God by means of all prayer. This is why we need to pray-read the Bible. Ephesians 6:17-18 is a base, a ground, in the Bible for pray-reading the Word. It tells us to take the word of God, the living word which is the Spirit, by means of all prayer. We need to pray every word. By praying we will make every word of the Bible something of the Spirit. This is what it means



to drink of the Spirit. To call, *“O Lord Jesus!”* is to drink of the Spirit. To pray the Word is also to drink of the Spirit.

We must realize that the Triune God is the Spirit. Do not think that the Father is the Father, the Son is the Son, and the Spirit is the Spirit as separate persons. **These three are the all-inclusive Spirit.** Second Corinthians 3:17 declares, *“The Lord is the Spirit.”* Second Corinthians 1:21-22 says that we have been firmly attached unto the anointed One. The anointed One is Christ, and He is the all-inclusive Spirit. We have been anointed and sealed and have been given the Spirit as the pledge, the guarantee. The anointing gives us the taste of God. By being anointed we receive the essence, the element, of God. By being sealed we have the image of God. **By having the pledge, we have the taste of God. We have the element of God, the image of God, and the taste of God.** Hallelujah! All this is related to the all-inclusive Spirit, who is the Lord Himself. By the all-inclusive Spirit we are filled, saturated, and mingled with God.

The result is that we are transformed. For this to be fully accomplished, we need to have our face unveiled (2 Cor. 3:18). To be unveiled means to be without a cover. If you read 2 Corinthians 3, you will realize that the veil mentioned there is the Scriptures in black and white letters. I am concerned that many Christians are still veiled by the Bible. Others are veiled by their charismatic experiences or by some other experiences. We need the Lord’s mercy to remove all the veils and to give us an unveiled face, without concepts, ideas, and preoccupations. We need to be unveiled and to gaze upon Him as the all-inclusive Spirit. Then we will be transformed into His image.

## THE CONSUMMATION

**Now we come to the harvest in the book of Revelation. We have seen the seed in Matthew and the growth in the Epistles. The harvest of the Spirit in the book of Revelation is the seven Spirits and the sevenfold intensified Spirit.** Every local church needs the sevenfold intensified Spirit for the seven stars. All the leading ones in the local churches must realize the need for this intensified Spirit. In Revelation 21:6 the Lord said, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give to him who thirsts from the spring of the water of life freely.”* The Spirit and the bride are one, and they say come to drink the water of life freely (22:17). This is our need today. Forget the forms, the rituals, the doctrines, the gifts, and the miracles.

Forget everything, and come and drink of the water of life. This is the consummation of being baptized into the Triune God and of drinking the Spirit.