

Message Eight

**The Intrinsic Building Up
of the Organic Body of Christ**

Scripture Reading: Eph. 4:7-16

I. The intrinsic building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the giving, the dispensing, of the divine grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ—Eph. 4:7:

- A. Every member of the Body of Christ is an indispensable gift to the Body—1 Cor. 12:14-22; Rom. 12:4-5.
- B. The gift of Christ is a person constituted with Christ's life and element dispensed into him by the Divine Trinity—cf. 2 Cor. 1:15.
- C. Each gifted person has a measure, and the divine grace is given, dispensed, into him according to that measure—Eph. 4:16; cf. Rom. 12:3.

II. The intrinsic building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the giving of the gifted persons, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers, who are constituted in the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, by Christ as the Head in His ascension (including His resurrection), to the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:8-12; Acts 2:24, 27; 1:9:

- A. Ephesians 4:8 says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men":
 - 1. "Height" in the quotation from Psalm 68:18 refers to Mount Zion (vv. 15-16), symbolizing the third heaven, where God dwells (1 Kings 8:30).
 - 2. Psalm 68 implies that it was in the ark that God ascended to Mount Zion after the ark had won the victory (Num. 10:35); this portrays how Christ has won the victory and ascended triumphantly to the heavens.
 - 3. Through His universal traffic and in His ascension, Christ led as captives those who had been taken captive by Satan and made them gifts to His Body—Eph. 4:8-11:

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- a. The redeemed saints had been taken captive by Satan before they were saved by Christ's death and resurrection—cf. Luke 4:18.
 - b. In His ascension Christ led them captive; that is, He rescued them from Satan's captivity and took them to Himself—Psa. 68:18.
 - c. In His ascension Christ led them to the heavens as His captives in His train of vanquished foes and made them gifts to His Body.
 - d. Now Christ is celebrating His triumph over them, His vanquished foes, and leading them as His captives in a triumphal procession in His move for His ministry to build up His Body—2 Cor. 2:14.
- B. The more Christ ascends and descends within us, capturing and vanquishing us, the more He fills us with Himself to constitute us as gifts to His Body—cf. Eph. 4:8-10.

III. The intrinsic building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the gifted persons' perfecting of the saints in the divine dispensing, that all the saints may be able to do the work of the New Testament ministry, that is, to build up the Body of Christ—vv. 11-12:

- A. The gifted persons perfect the saints by nourishing them according to the tree of life with the life supply for their growth in life—Gen. 2:9; 1 Cor. 3:2, 6.
- B. The gifted persons perfect the saints to do what they do for the direct building up of the Body of Christ—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:11-12; cf. 1 Tim. 1:16; 4:12:
 1. The apostles perfect the saints by visiting the churches (Acts 15:36, 40-41; 20:20, 31), by writing epistles to the churches (Col. 4:16; 1 Cor. 1:2), and by assigning their co-workers to stay in certain places to perfect the saints (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:15; Titus 1:5).
 2. The prophets perfect the saints by teaching them to speak the Lord into people, by speaking in the

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meetings to set up a model, and by helping the saints to live a prophesying life by being revived every morning and overcoming every day—Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 14:31; Prov. 4:18.

3. The evangelists perfect the saints by stirring them up to be burning in the gospel-preaching spirit, by teaching them with the gospel truths, by training them to preach the gospel, by helping the saints to be equipped with the power of the economical Spirit, and by setting an example of loving the sinners and praying for them—2 Tim. 4:5.
 4. The shepherd-teachers perfect the saints by shepherding—feeding and nourishing the young saints and teaching the growing saints—Acts 11:25-26; 13:1.
- C. The result of this perfecting is that we will all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, and at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—Eph. 4:13; cf. John 17:23.
- D. This perfecting will cause us to be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a satanic system of error—Eph. 4:14.

IV. The intrinsic building up of the organic Body of Christ is by the direct building by all the members—into the Head and out from the Head—vv. 15-16:

- A. In order to be built up, we must hold to truth in love, growing up into the Head, Christ, in all things—v. 15:
1. We must “truth it” by holding to the divine truth of God’s eternal economy, of the all-inclusive Christ, and of the church as the Body of Christ.
 2. We must be subject to the Head, Christ (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23; 1:22, 10), and allow His divine life to expand and increase into all our inward parts (Rom. 8:10, 6, 11; 2 Cor. 5:4).
- B. Out from the Head, in the divine dispensing, all the Body is joined closely together through every joint

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of the rich supply and knit together, interwoven, through the operation in measure of each one part—Eph. 4:16.

- C. The joints supplying and the parts functioning cause the growth of the Body, in the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, unto the building up of the Body itself in the divine love—v. 16:
 - 1. All the Body causes the growth of the Body—cf. 1 Cor. 14:4b, 31.
 - 2. The Body builds itself up in the divine love, with which God and Christ love us and by which we love Christ and the fellow members of His Body—John 17:23, 26; 13:34; 15:12-17; 1 John 3:14; 4:8, 19; 1 Cor. 8:1.