

Message Four

The Coordination of the Four Living Creatures

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:9, 11-14; Rom. 12:4-5

- I. The central point in Ezekiel 1 is the revelation that God needs a group of living creatures who can coordinate together as one corporate entity, the corporate Christ, for His expression, move, and administration; coordination is the key to understanding the vision in Ezekiel 1—vv. 5, 10, 12, 20, 26.**
- II. The coordination of the four living creatures is not in themselves but in God and by the divine power, the divine strength, and the divine grace, because the eagle's wings are the means by which they are coordinated and move as one—vv. 9, 11; Exo. 19:4; Isa. 40:31; 2 Cor. 12:9; 1 Cor. 15:10:**
 - A. God Himself is the coordinating factor that enables all the parts of the divine building to be one—Exo. 26:29-30; cf. 1 John 4:8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 1 Cor. 12:31; 13:5, 7.
 - B. Whatever we are in ourselves, have in ourselves, and do in ourselves results not in coordination but in division and separation—cf. Phil. 3:3; Rom. 8:16.
 - C. The wings of an eagle are not only for moving but also for protection; whatever we do and whatever we are must be by the grace of the Lord and the power of the Lord—1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:7.
 - D. At the same time, we are under the overshadowing, the covering, of the Lord's grace and the Lord's power—Psa. 17:8; 57:1; 63:7; 91:4; 2 Cor. 12:9b.
 - E. The living creatures look like a man (Ezek. 1:5), but they move like an eagle:
 1. This indicates that we must always express ourselves like a normal man.
 2. However, the moving and overshadowing wings should give others an impression of the Divine Being, an impression that we have God with us as our power and protection.
- III. Ezekiel 1:9 and 11b-12 present a beautiful picture of the coordination that we need in the church life:**
 - A. Each of the living creatures faces one direction (respectively facing north, south, east, and west), and two of their wings spread out and touch the adjacent creatures' wings, forming a square.
 - B. No matter in which direction the living creatures are moving, there is no need for any of them to turn; one simply goes straight forward; one returns, moving backward; and the other sides move sideways—v. 9.
 - C. This is a beautiful picture of the coordination in the church as the Body of Christ, in which each member has his particular position and function, or ministry—Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:14-30; Eph. 4:7-16; 2 Tim. 4:5; Col. 4:17.
 - D. When one member functions, he moves "straight forward" to fulfill his function, and the other members accommodate him by moving in the same direction, some moving "backward" and others moving "sideways," doing everything through the cross and by the Spirit to dispense Christ into others for the sake of His Body—Ezek. 1:9, 11b-12; 1 Cor. 12:14-30.
 - E. In the church service we all need to learn not only how to walk straight forward but also how to walk backward and sideways:
 1. In coordination there is no freedom or convenience; coordination keeps us from making turns—cf. Eph. 3:18.

2. Before doing anything, we need to stop to fellowship and coordinate with those who serve with us.
 3. Fellowship blends us, mingles us, adjusts us, tempers us, harmonizes us, limits us, protects us, supplies us, and blesses us; the Body is in the fellowship—cf. 4:4; 2 Cor. 13:14.
- F. If brothers with different functions do not know to coordinate, they will compete and even strive against each other, which could result in division—cf. Phil. 1:17; 2:2; Gal. 5:25-26:
1. When a brother who is burdened for the gospel is functioning, moving straight forward, the brother who is burdened for shepherding should learn to walk backward; the other saints should follow these two, walking sideways.
 2. To walk backward and sideways is to say Amen to another's ministry, function, and burden—Rom. 12:4; cf. 1 Cor. 14:29-31.
 3. If we care only for our particular service and do not have these four kinds of walk, eventually we will become a problem in the church—cf. 3 John 9.
 4. The one who is walking straight forward has the responsibility of following the Spirit—Ezek. 1:12; cf. Acts 2:14; 16:6-10.
- G. We should apply this matter of coordination not only in a particular local church but also among the churches; this means that we are followers of the churches—1 Thes. 2:14.

IV. The result of the coordination of the living creatures is that they become burning coals and burning torches; the more we coordinate together, the more we burn one another—Ezek. 1:13:

- A. The burning of the coals does at least three things:
1. Anything that does not correspond to God and to the nature of God will be burned out by the sanctifying and purifying fire of the burning coals, and only what is of God will remain.
 2. The burning in the coordination makes us fervent, intensely hot—Rev. 4:5; Rom. 12:11; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; Rev. 3:15-16.
 3. The burning in the coordination produces the power and impact of the church—Acts 1:14.
- B. The coals are for burning, and the torches are for enlightening—Ezek. 1:13:
1. The sanctifying fire becomes the sanctifying light:
 - a. The areas in which we have been burned by the sanctifying fire spontaneously become the areas in which we are enlightened and can enlighten others—cf. Isa. 6:1, 5-8.
 - b. In the proper church life there should be nothing of darkness among the brothers and sisters; all should be thoroughly enlightened.
 2. The fire is not static but always moving—Heb. 12:29:
 - a. There is fire with the living creatures, because in their fellowship they allow God to move freely among them.
 - b. The appearance of the living creatures being like burning fire indicates that they have the appearance of the sanctifying God—Ezek. 1:26-27.
 3. The fire being bright indicates that in their coordination the living creatures manifest a glorious and majestic condition—v. 13.
 4. Whereas the brightness is usual, the flashing of lightning is special, indicating that at special times there may be a special light that flashes suddenly and causes others to be astonished—cf. Matt. 24:27.
 5. The living creatures run because they have the power and the impact—Ezek. 1:14.

V. In order to coordinate with others, we need to deny our self, experiencing the dealing of the cross, and live and act by God's grace and God's power, signified by the eagle's wings—vv. 9, 11; Isa. 40:31:

- A. We must not act or do anything to express our self; rather, we must do things in the Father's life with the Father's nature to express the Father; this is glory, and it is in this glory that we all are one—John 17:22-24.
- B. In order to coordinate with others, we need to take the forgiving Lord as our forgiving life to forgive others and seek to be forgiven, letting the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts—Col. 3:12-15.
- C. In order to coordinate with others, we need to deal with the idols in our heart, counting all things as loss on account of Christ and counting them as refuse that we may gain Christ—Ezek. 14:3-5; Phil. 3:7-8, 12-14.
- D. If we abide in God, rely on God, dwell in God, and express God, we can coordinate together in God—John 15:5, 7; 8:31; Psa. 90:1; 26:1; 31:20; 91:1, 9, 14; Phil. 1:20; 1 Cor. 10:31.

VI. The living creatures follow the Spirit, indicating that in order to coordinate with others in the Body of Christ, we need to walk by the Spirit and according to the spirit—Ezek. 1:12; Gal. 5:16, 25; Rom. 8:4:

- A. Our spirit is universally spacious; God dwells in our spirit, and our spirit is today's Jerusalem—Eph. 2:22; Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:9:
 - 1. When the Bible speaks of "your spirit," it includes the spirits of all the saints—Gal. 6:18; Phil. 4:23; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 - 2. "The words 'our spirit' [in Romans 8:16] include Paul's spirit, Martin Luther's spirit, John Wesley's spirit, Brother Nee's spirit, your spirit, and my spirit"—*Life-study of Ephesians*, p. 213.
- B. The book of Ephesians reveals that we need to be in the mingled spirit to be in the blending for the reality of the Body of Christ—1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18; cf. Lev. 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:24.

VII. In order to coordinate with others, we need to be one with the coordinating Triune God:

- A. The move of the Divine Trinity with the divine coordination in Matthew 12:28 is an excellent and beautiful example for us to follow; this is a good pattern that our Head has set up for our coordination as members of His Body:
 - 1. The way the Lord cast out demons, by another One and for another One, shows that He did not act individualistically but with humility and selflessness.
 - 2. The Son as the center of the Divine Trinity was altogether not by Himself, for Himself, or to Himself; whatever He did was by the Spirit of God and for the kingdom of God the Father.
 - 3. This shows us the harmony, beauty, and excellency in the Divine Trinity.
 - 4. Today in the church life the Body of Christ has not been built up adequately because of the shortage of the proper coordination.
 - 5. We may do something according to the will of God, but what we do should not be by ourselves but by some others; furthermore, what we do should not be for ourselves but for the interest, the right, of God on this earth.
- B. Every day we need to move out of ourselves and into the coinhering and coordinating Triune God—2 Thes. 3:5; Jude 19-21; John 17:17.