

## Complete In Jesus!

### *The Ongoing Work of Jesus Christ With His Church*

*J. Dan Gill, 18th Theological Conference*

The words "Complete in Him" were those of the always impassioned Apostle Paul to his fellow believers in Christ at Colossae, located near Laodicea in the Roman province of Asia. It appears that Paul had not actually visited Colossae nor met the people to whom he was writing (Col. 1:4; 2:1). Colossae was a "Gentile" city and these were primarily non-Jewish believers. Extraordinary writing that it is, Paul's letter to the Colossians gives wonderful insight into the mindset of the earliest believers regarding their faith in God and his ongoing work for them through Jesus Christ.

Sovereign of the universe, God is without equal. His love, wisdom and power are unparalleled. Marvel of marvels, these "distant" people in Colossae have come to a place of privilege with him. They are loved by him and are in his nurture and care. Paul's letter conveys to these believers great consolation regarding God's concern and provision for them. As we read his writing, however, there is a clear theme regarding *how* God provides for his people. It is accomplished through an intermediary. That intermediary is Jesus Christ. All that God has for his people is embodied in the person of his Messiah - the leader that God by his choice has appointed over them. Paul writes to the Colossians:

For it pleased the Father that in him [Christ] should all fullness dwell (Col. 1:19, AV).<sup>1</sup>

This is not an ontological statement about the "person" of Christ. Rather, it is a declaration regarding the heart and mind of God concerning his Messiah, and the unique station which he has given him. It is Christ who is chosen by God Almighty to lead in his work for humanity. All that God has for his people is dynamically manifested in and through his Messiah. As Paul further assures the Colossians:

To [his saints] God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, *which is Christ in you*, [perhaps "*among you*"<sup>2</sup>] the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

Paul carries forward this thought of hope being in Christ when he admonishes Christians at Colossae to *not* be drawn away to other avenues for seeking God or receiving from him. The apostle insists that it is in Christ alone that God has vested all that he has for humanity. It is important to remember that these were primarily Gentile brothers and sisters, living in a Gentile society typified by an environment of many "Gods" and varied philosophies. Paul cautions them:

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe [rudiments of the world - AV], and not according to Christ (Col. 2:8).

For in him [Christ] the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (Col. 2:9).

Again, Paul is not making an ontological statement about the “nature” of Christ. Rather, he is emphasizing to the Colossians that all God has for humanity is manifested in, and accessed through, this one: Jesus Christ. And note the present tense. It is not just that the fullness “dwelled” but rather that it “dwells” in Christ. It is upon those words that Paul then declares:

And you are complete [made full] in him [Christ] (Col. 2:10, AV).

There is a remarkable parallel in Paul's thought in verse 9 when compared with that in verse 10. God has placed his “fullness” in the person of Jesus so that through him his people may then also be “filled.” The New Revised Standard Version captures the sense of this quite well: “For in him, the whole *fullness* of God dwells bodily” and “you have come to *fullness* in him.”<sup>3</sup>

This then unfolds Paul's theme: his whole heart as an apostle is that the Colossians be made “perfect,” “complete,” “full” (Col. 1:28-29; 2:3, 6, 10; 3:3; 4:12). And, the Christian's fullness is accomplished only through relationship with Christ who himself has unparalleled, unique “fullness” from God (Col. 1:19; 2:8-10). And, we must ask, why has God placed all “fullness” in Christ, if Christ is not going to be actively working on behalf of the people?<sup>4</sup>

### **The Active Head of the Church**

We read in the gospels about the love and care Jesus Christ had for his disciples while he was with them in the flesh. That care included personal instruction, correction, consolation and intercession with God on their behalf. It has been thought by some, however, that after being resurrected and taken into heaven that he is no longer able to interact with his people. Being at a distance, he patiently waits for the day in which he and they will be reunited. In this view, Jesus is sometimes referred to as “the absent Christ.”<sup>5, 6</sup>

The concept of an absent Christ, however, misinterprets the role that Almighty God has determined that Jesus is to have relative to his church. Paul, is not presenting to the Colossians an “absent Christ,” but rather a very “active Christ” — a Christ who by the design of God is at work for the sake of his people.

Notice again that Paul sees the fullness of God “dwelling” - “living” in Christ now (Col. 1:19; 2:9). What is the point of Paul's consolation to the Colossians that “the fullness of God dwells in him” if there is no direct relationship between them and the one in whom God's fullness dwells?

In fact, Paul brings to them Christ who “**is**” head of “all principality and power” (Col. 2:10). He also indicates as head of his people, Jesus is a part of the body and that the balance of the body is to be “holding” (present tense) to him as the head. This cannot be understood simply as keeping Christ or his word in memory. Note in Colossians 2:19 that Christians are to be “...holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, *nourished*<sup>7</sup> and *held together* by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.” Thus, growth of the body is predicated by a

present connection to Jesus. It is by "him" that the body is "nourished." It is then on this basis: "Christ as head and active leader" that Paul is able to say in Col. 3:11 "... but Christ is all and in all!"

### **By What Power Does Jesus Lead Now?**

If Jesus Christ intervenes for his people now, how does he do it? He is in heaven. Paul makes clear that everything Christ does for his people is by the plan, authorization and power of God. He is God's active "agent" for his work with humanity. Yet, certainly it is God who is the source of all things and has ultimate primacy. Paul writes to the Corinthians:

whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God (1 Cor. 3:22, 23).

God's primacy is such that Christ belongs to him as does also all those who belong to Christ. This matter of God's primacy is further driven home in these words to the Corinthians:

Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God (1 Cor. 11:3).

In that statement, active leadership is pictured at each level Paul describes. Christ "is" the head of the man in the same sense that man "is" head of the woman and God "is" the head of Christ. For Christ to be a true head, he must lead his people in the same sense God leads him.

Though in heaven, Jesus Christ is able to continue in active leadership because God has empowered him to do so. Again, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Col. 1:19). God, who cannot be limited, has chosen to lead through his Messiah and has given authority and power to him by which Jesus can accomplish that leadership. Anything God can do, he can give authority and power to another to do - - if he so chooses.<sup>8</sup> Such is the case with Jesus:

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mat. 28:18).

While here in the flesh, Jesus could do "nothing" of himself (John 5:19, 30). All that he did was by the authority, power and presence of God with him (John 14:10). Peter makes this clear when he speaks to the people on the day of Pentecost:

"You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know" (Acts 2:22).

Now that Messiah has been taken up into heaven, his authority, power and ministry have not diminished as some have thought. Rather, they have been greatly multiplied (Luke 24:26; Acts

3:13). God has seated him at his own right hand - a place of authority second only to his own (Heb. 12:2). When Pharaoh set Joseph at his right hand, he spoke in this way: "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt" (Genesis 41:44). Jesus is now higher than the angels and above every other authority and power. Nothing has changed, however, with regard to the source of that power. That source is his God (Ephesians 1:3; 17-23).

### **Active - By the Spirit of God**

Before he was taken up into heaven, Jesus did all things by the spirit of God. He does all things by that same spirit now. The gospels give us a clear picture of the work of God for Christ while Jesus was here "in the flesh." That work was by God's spirit. We find that Jesus was "full" of the holy spirit and was led by it (Luke 4:1); that he was "filled with the power of the spirit" in taking up his ministry (Luke 4:14). Jesus declares that the spirit of the LORD was upon him to accomplish all the works which God had commissioned him to do (Luke 4:17-19). When he healed multitudes, it was because the power of the Lord (God<sup>9</sup>) was "with him" to heal them (Luke 5:17). He also cast out devils by the finger (spirit) of God (Luke 11:20 cp. Mat. 12:28).

Peter later relates to Cornelius that Jesus did all things because God had anointed him with holy spirit and power (Acts 10:38). And, beyond the amazing healings and miracles, Jesus did something greater still by the spirit of God: "through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without blemish to God so that our consciences might be purified from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14).

Now, God has given Jesus a relationship to the spirit that is astonishing: Jesus himself will baptize his people with holy spirit. John the baptizer introduces this amazing prophecy as he comes upon the scene as forerunner for the Messiah:

"I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mk. 1:8).

Here is something unparalleled in all of history: A man - Christ Jesus - will immerse his people in holy spirit. John's prophecy in regard to this is pivotal for the first Christians and is alluded to in each of the four gospels (Mat. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

Jesus himself then brings this same prophetic message to people during his ministry. For example, he is specific in telling the Samaritan woman at the well that it is "he" who will give people living water that they will never thirst again (John 4:10-16). In John 7, he is equally specific in telling the people: "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37, 38). John goes on to make clear that in those words, Jesus was referring to the holy spirit (John 7:39).

Note that in verse 39, John also clarifies another matter of great importance: Jesus would indeed give the spirit but not until after he was taken up and glorified at the right hand of God. Only

then would he be authorized and empowered to do that. This was according to the plan and will of God. The spirit will be given to the people of the Messiah by the Messiah himself. What an extraordinary honor that God would give his Christ the power and ability to convey holy spirit to his people.<sup>10</sup>

Jesus foretells his disciples of the coming of the spirit on this wise:

"I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:48).

Jesus Christ accomplishes all things that he does by the spirit of God. And, what more amazing example of his active work for his people than that it is he –by God's choice and authority – who gives that spirit to his people.

### **Jesus Works "With" Them**

The matter of bringing his fellows to peace with God was and "is" most primarily the mission of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who tells Thomas that "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). That principle is immutable and remains after he is taken up even to this very moment (Acts 4:12, Heb. 7:25).

The disciples of Jesus Christ are a people who are called to participate with him in what is essentially his work (Acts 5:31; 13:23). Jesus did not leave his disciples to carry on in this great effort without him. As we have been seeing, it is by the unfathomable power of God that Jesus is able to continue a personal relationship with his disciples after he is taken up into heaven. By the spirit of God, he continues to teach, comfort, correct and direct the activities of his people. This is according to the design of God and accomplished by the wonderful connection of holy spirit between Jesus and his disciples.

As he approached the time of his departure from them, Jesus spoke to comfort and encourage them for the days ahead. Notice his last words recorded as by Matthew:

"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mat. 28:20).

His promise in Matthew 28:20 is not that he will be with them "at" the end of the age. Rather it is that he will be with them "to" the end of the age. Until he returns "in body," he will continue to be with them *through* spirit. When rightly understood, we recognize that the giving of the spirit was not for the purpose that it would "replace" Christ or be a "stand in" for him during his absence.<sup>11</sup> Rather, the spirit was given by him to his disciples so that he could come present with them and lead in the work he had called them to do. Thus, it is by the spirit that Jesus is the active head of his church. Notice his earlier promise to them:

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mat. 18:20).

Jesus is here promising that when his people gather together for purposes of forwarding his cause (i.e. "in his name") - he will be there. What comfort would it be to say that he would be in their midst if he is to play no active role with them in the work?

This is seen quite directly in Mark's account of the last meeting of Jesus with his disciples prior to his being taken up into heaven. After they were instructed regarding the many things that they would do "in his name," Mark then writes:

So then after the Lord had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it (Mark 16:19, 20).

The Amplified Version captures well the sense of Mark's statement in verse 20:

And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord kept working with them and confirming the message by the attesting signs and miracles that closely accompanied it. Amen (so be it).

That Jesus would be personally engaged in the work of the gospel after his being taken up should not greatly surprise us. For example, his ability to heal although not physically present was already established by the case of the centurion's servant (Mat. 8:5-13). There, by his authority, Jesus spoke and the servant was healed. Yet, Jesus was not present with him. After his being taken up, the only difference is *more* distance. His authority to act from heaven is yet even greater than it was on earth.

This active work of Christ is so interwoven with the mission and activities of his disciples that they did all things "in his name." And Jesus himself is specifically recognized as being at work. Peter expresses this when Aeneas is healed:

Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed!" And immediately he got up (Acts 9:34).

Arguably, a most notable indication of the work of Christ with his people after he was taken up into heaven is found in the initial giving of the spirit on the day of Pentecost. Peter in explaining to the crowd what was occurring that day makes this statement about Jesus:

"Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he [Jesus] has poured out this that you both see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

It is Jesus who has "poured out."<sup>12</sup> And, there is a direct link between what people were "hearing" and Jesus Christ. This demonstrates something quite profound: unlike any other, God has given to Jesus the ability to communicate with his people by the spirit of God.

Paul picks up on this thought in his letter to the Galatians:

And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:6).

The spirit of God's son is manifest to his people by the spirit of God. This is extraordinary and utterly unique. Yet, this is the plan of God and the means for allowing Jesus Christ to continue in relationship with his people. Paul brings us another allusion to this in his letter to the Romans. After speaking of the spirit of Christ in Romans 8:9, Paul later writes:

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15).

Being as God's son can speak to his people by way of holy spirit, this also makes sense of Paul's observations in the same chapter of Romans regarding the intercession of God's spirit on behalf of his people:

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And he, who searches the hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26, 27).

This also corresponds well with Paul's words to the Philippians:

for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance (Phil. 1:19).

All that we have need of, God supplies for us through Jesus. This is according to the will of God and Jesus' own promise (John 14:13, 14). Again, "it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell."

The active leadership of Jesus for his disciples after being taken up into heaven is also seen quite remarkably in that he is the giver of "gifts" to his people, and sets in order the role that each person will play. Notice these words of Paul to the Ephesians about Jesus:

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men..." (Eph. 4:7, 8 - NIV).

In verse 11 Paul goes on to say:

It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Eph. 4:11, 12 - NIV).

## A Present Fellowship with Jesus

One of the most wonderful thoughts in the New Testament is found in these words:

God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9).

Fellowship (koinonia) to the people of the New Testament was active and involved inter-relationship; communion; intimacy.<sup>13, 14</sup> In the Scriptures, the present relationship of Christ to his people is compared to that between a loving husband and wife (Eph. 5:23-32). Again, our relationship with him is to be so personal that it is described by Paul as being like a "body" in connection to its "head" (Ephesians 4:15, 16). Because we are the people of Jesus Christ, and because God loves him and us, it has pleased God to call us "into the fellowship of his son."

How wonderful this is for both us and for our Lord. How sad it would be if Jesus was to be only a spectator – watching his own work being played out on earth, but having no direct role to play. How sad, if he were to be truly isolated from the people that he so greatly loved and for whom he gave his life. Almighty God has determined that such would not be so.

John also brings to us the wonder of ongoing fellowship with Christ. Amazingly, he parallels it with the fellowship that they had with God:<sup>15</sup>

We declare to you what we have seen and heard so you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship **is** with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

That is the relationship that Jesus promised his disciples he would share with them "by spirit" during the time that he will be in heaven. Jesus is speaking of the coming of the spirit when he tells his disciples:

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you" (John 14:18).

This also helps us to understand how he can say to them that it is "to your advantage that I go away" (John 16:7). Jesus Christ will be able to even more effectively administer his church through spirit - from heaven - than he was able to do while with them in the limitations of the flesh. And, while he will be separated from them, yet he will nonetheless remain "with them." The spirit he gives, will not "speak of itself" but rather take what is Jesus' and declare it to his disciples (John 16:14, 15). It is not the holy spirit that is head of the church - it is Christ! He is head by means of the spirit.

Thus, it is in the discourse of Jesus to his disciples about his going away and the coming of the spirit that we find his parable of the vine and the branches. In that teaching we see the relationship of Jesus to his people is so direct that he is the source of their constant and essential nourishment. His father is the vinedresser; Jesus is the vine; his people are the branches, and



without him they can do nothing (John 15:5). Surely this is instruction to them about the time now present in which Jesus is in heaven but nevertheless with his people by spirit.

In the discourse about his leaving and the coming of the spirit, Jesus expands this fellowship "in spirit" to include both him and his Father. Jesus tells them:

"Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our abode with them" (John 14:23).

Certainly the words of Jesus in John 14:23 must have been resonating in the mind of the writer when he declared in 1 John 1:3: "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ."

### Conclusion

What a surpassing privilege that people might personally know God and his son Jesus - our Lord! But conversely, what a sad shortfall if such fellowship is available to us and we should fail to grasp it. Is it even possible that we can really succeed without an active relationship with Christ? His words in John 15:5 are that "without him" his disciples would be able to do "nothing."

Can we expect to "win the day" if we are not in direct relationship with the head of the church? "Holding fast to the head" was essential for the success of the first Christians (Col. 2:19). Can we expect to find the fullness of the blessings of God if we do not recognize that it has pleased God that in Christ "all" fullness should dwell (Col. 1:19)? Can we expect to be really successful in the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom without the involvement of the one who's essential mission that proclamation is (Luke 4:43, Heb. 7:25)? How shall we bring light to the world, without relationship to the one whom God has made to be "the light of the world" (John 8:12)?

As we have seen, Jesus Christ as our intercessor is active not only in the presence of God, but also in the presence of his people. God has not "sidelined" the leader of his people, nor set him "out of the loop." Rather, in the last book of the Bible, when God wants his people to receive an important revelation, he gives the message to Christ to forward to them. John then refers to it as "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him..." (Rev. 1:1). That is how highly God honors the leadership of his son. If that is the heart of God, then ought it not also to be our hearts as well?

It is Jesus (not God) who in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 is seen walking among the churches. It is he who corrects and exhorts them. It is Jesus who "searches the minds and hearts" of his people (Rev. 2:23). It is he who warns them that "...I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent" (Rev. 2:5).

Jesus speaks to the church at Laodicea these amazing words:

"Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and sup with you, and you with me "(Rev. 3:20).

Would it not be a great tragedy if Jesus were standing at the door and knocking with the desire to "come in" and "sup" and we refused to answer the door? Might we chose "not" to open the door because we are persuaded that it just could not be him - that he is the "absent" Christ?

When we think to limit Jesus Christ, our problem is not just with him. Our essential problem is that we are limiting God. Peter tells the people on the day of Pentecost that God has "made Jesus both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). He later tells the household of Cornelius that "Jesus Christ is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). The writer of Hebrews then brings to the people this amazing word of consolation:

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

May that same word of consolation reach down to us this day. Let us hold to him and say with them of old: Thanks be to **God** who "gives" us (present tense) the victory **through** our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:57).

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<sup>1</sup> All underlining, bolding, italics or other emphatics in scriptural quotations are those of the author. Translations of scriptures quoted in this paper (other than those of the author) are from the NRSV or otherwise as indicated at the conclusion of the scriptural quotation. Please see translations' copyright information at the end of these notes.

<sup>2</sup> The preposition "en" can reference "within" (as within the heart, cp. Ephesians 3:17), or alternatively "among you" collectively (See Vincent). This latter ("among"), agrees well with the use of the same preposition earlier in the verse. There, Paul is clearly writing: "how great *among* the Gentiles." The Amplified Version slips by the ambiguity by suggesting that Paul intends both (Christ "within" and "among"). The KJV recognizes the possibility of "amongst" in a marginal note for Col. 1:27.

<sup>3</sup> The word for "fullness" (Col. 1:19 and 2:9) is "pleroma" which is used also in Ephesians 3:19: "that ye [Christians] might be filled (pleroo) with all the fullness (pleroma) of God." Note also the same word in Eph. 4:13 "the fullness of Christ." All of this corresponds to Col. 2:10 where the word "complete," in the AV (or "you have come to "fullness," NRSV) is a form of "pleroo" (Perf. Pass. Ptc. Nom. Pl. Masc.).

<sup>4</sup> Paul relates these same thoughts to the saints at Ephesus in his letter to them (Ephesians 3:17-21).

<sup>5</sup> The term "absent Christ" is not found in the Bible itself. The Scriptures bring to us a view of this matter that is entirely to the contrary. Likewise, our use of the phrase "earthly ministry of Christ" may at times misdirect our understanding of these matters. Christ presently has a ministry and it very much involves this earth.

<sup>6</sup> The concept of an "absent" Christ is found among two camps: (1.) Those who see the holy spirit as being a separate person from God and therefore having (deserving?) "his" own time and unique role with the church. (2.) Those who recognize that Jesus Christ is truly God's human son but think that he is still limited by that humanity while in heaven.

<sup>7</sup> Epichoregoumenon - Pres. Pass. Ptc. of epichoregeo. The sense is that of "being supplied or nourished" by the head (Christ) on a continuous (ongoing) basis. See A. T. Robertson's "Word Pictures in the New Testament" for a fuller treatment of the word as well as for the similar term sunbibazomenon - Pres. Pass. Ptc. of sunbibazo ("knit" or "held" together) which also indicates continuous action.

<sup>8</sup> The authority God gave to Jesus while here on earth even included authorization to forgive sins (Mat. 9:6-8).

<sup>9</sup> It would make no sense to say that the "power of Jesus" was "present with Jesus" to heal them. Here, the reference is to the power of the Lord God (Acts 2:22, 10:38). Lamsa captures this well with: "the power of God was present to heal them." *Holy Bible, From the Ancient Eastern Text, George M. Lamsa, Translation from the Aramaic of the Peshitta*, HarperCollins Publishers, Copyright: A. J. Holman Company, 1933, Renewed 1968.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus instructs his disciples to pray to the Father and the Father will give them holy spirit (Luke 11:13). It is further clear that the spirit will be given because Jesus will pray to the Father and he will send it (John 14:16). Yet, the relationship of Christ to this matter of the giving of the spirit is so direct that the Scriptures consistently indicate that Christ is the "baptizer" with the spirit (Mat. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Jn. 1:33); that he "gives" it (John 4:14); and that he personally "sends" it (Luke 24:49, John 15:26; 16:7).

<sup>11</sup> It is sometimes heard among Christians that *now* is "the day of the Holy Spirit." That is to say that the Holy Spirit has come in the absence of Christ and that it is the Spirit which leads the church. This is an unfortunate misunderstanding of the role that the spirit plays in relationship to God's people. Again, the spirit is given not to "substitute" for Christ but rather as a means for "Christ" to lead the church and continue with his people.

<sup>12</sup> It is amazing that Jesus himself "pours out the spirit." (Acts 2:33 cp. Acts 2:17 where the word "cheo" is used in both cases).

<sup>13</sup> *Bauer - Arndt - Gingrich* indicates that the sense of koinonia is "association, communion, fellowship, close relationship (hence [in early literature] a favorite expression for the marital relationship as the most intimate between human beings)." Thayer uses the terms "joint participation and [social] intercourse."

<sup>14</sup> This is seen "functionally" in Luke 5:10 where Luke speaks of James and John as "partners" (koinonos) with Simeon in their fishing enterprise. They actively worked "together" in their venture.

<sup>15</sup> Note in 1 John 1:3 the parallel between: h koinwnia meta tou patrov kai meta tou uiou autou ihsou cristou.

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