

Excerpts from Chapter 5 (part 1)

**CHRIST AS THE WORD BECOMING THE SPIRIT  
TO BE ENJOYED BY US**

We need to have a full view of the Lord Jesus as the Word and as the Spirit. The four Gospels are a full record, picture, and revelation of the Lord Jesus as the expression of God, the Word of God for us to "read," see, and understand (John 1:1, 14, 18). In order to know who and what the Lord Jesus is, we have to spend time to study the four Gospels. In these four books the Lord Jesus is revealed to us in many aspects. In reading the four Gospels, we should pay attention not mainly to what He did but to go further to see what He is. By His doing, His being is revealed. Mainly, we need to learn what He is and who He is.

The four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—give us a full picture of this wonderful Christ as the Word, the expression and revelation of God. After the Gospels is the second part of the New Testament—the Acts and the Epistles. In this part the Lord Jesus is revealed not only as the Word but as the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17). As the Word, Christ is in the stage of revelation, expression, and explanation, and as the Spirit, He is in the stage of enjoyment and experience. Therefore, after we know Christ as the Word, we have to enjoy Him as the Spirit.

We need to be able to show people how Christ is revealed in the Gospels as the Word, not the Spirit, and how He is revealed in the Epistles not mainly as the Word but as the Spirit. To adequately study the New Testament with this in view may require one or two years. Too many Christians today have a weak point in that they know spiritual things only in a superficial way, merely repeating what others say but not knowing how to demonstrate what they say from the Scriptures. This is not right. Scientists today study things from their fundamentals. They become experts and can answer questions in detail. In the same way, and especially since we are taking the way of the Lord's recovery, we cannot simply repeat what others say. We have to thoroughly know the truth concerning Christ as the Word and the Spirit and be able to give adequate answers concerning it. The light, confirmation, and adequate, proper, and strong proofs of this truth should flow out of us like a waterfall.

In the Epistles no one asks who the Lord is. In the four Gospels, however, the Lord asked the disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt. 16:13). The disciples answered, "Some, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets," to which the Lord asked, "But you, who do you say that I am?" (vv. 14-15). This passage is a strong proof that in the four Gospels the Lord is the Word, the revelation of God, for people to know Him. At other times in the Gospels the disciples would ask, "What kind of man is this?" (8:27). In the Epistles, however, we cannot find this kind of question. Rather, there is another category of expressions concerning Christ, because in the Epistles Christ is revealed as the Spirit.

Today most Christians are in the stage of the four Gospels. Many know Christ as the Word in the four Gospels, but they do not know Christ in the stage of the Epistles. Because of this, many hold only the doctrine and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus. They can say, "Christ is God, and He is man" merely with their knowledge, but they have few experiences of Christ. On the other hand, some who have a certain experience of Christ do not have an adequate understanding. They claim that they have the experience of Christ by the "help of the Holy Spirit." It is as if they are saying, "I am here on this earth, and Christ is there in the heavens. We are too far apart. It is the Holy Spirit that helps me to contact Christ." In their understanding, Christ and the Holy Spirit are separate, the Holy Spirit being only a help and means. This is a wrong concept and understanding. Most Christians today do not see that Christ is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17; cf. 4:5). In order to experience Christ, we have to experience the Spirit, because Christ is the Spirit.

## THE GOSPELS BEING AN EXPLANATION AND REVELATION OF CHRIST

The Gospel of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Christ. A genealogy is an explanation of a person, telling us who he is. Therefore, on the first page of the New Testament is an explanation, a revelation, of the person of Christ, telling us who He is. According to the principle of first mention, this establishes that the subject of the Gospels is the person of Christ. Immediately after this is the record of the birth of this person. The first two things we need to know about a person are his genealogy and birth. When we fill out papers about our status, we have to tell people about our parents, nationality, and date and place of birth. This kind of example shows that the Gospels tell us who Christ is and what kind of person He is.

After His genealogy and birth, the Gospels present the recommendation of Christ by His forerunner, John the Baptist. A recommendation is a revelation, a certain kind of explanation telling us who a person is. In today's business and society we always need a reference. The Gospels give us a reference to prove and to recommend who Christ is. Following this is a test, a temptation, to prove what kind of person Christ is. In this way each page of the Gospels proves one thing: what kind of person this One is.

Although His testing proved who Christ is, we still need some practical illustrations and explanations, such as the accounts in Matthew 8, 15, and eventually 17, where Christ was suddenly transfigured on the mountain. We do not have this kind of record in the Epistles. When we come to the Epistles, the picture changes. The Gospels and the Epistles present two different kinds of pictures of Christ.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are all of one category. In these three Gospels, Christ is revealed as a man. In the first Gospel, He as a man is the King committed with all authority. In the second book, as a man He is a slave serving not only God but also us, with power, love, and even His own life. In the third book, as a perfect man He is the Savior, who went into death to redeem us. The last book of the Gospels is in another category. The Gospel of John tells us, "In the beginning was the Word" (1:1). This Gospel tells us that Christ was the Word, and the Word was God. Here Christ is revealed as God incarnate who came to impart life to us. In this way, the four Gospels present a picture and a record of all the aspects of Christ as the Word, showing us who this person is and what kind of person He is. All the records in chapter after chapter have only this one purpose. To read these four Gospels is simply to read an explanation and a definition of a person.

However, in the Gospels Christ is not yet the Spirit. He was among people to be seen, understood, and apprehended, but He could not come into people for them to enjoy. People could appreciate Him, admire Him, and praise Him, but they could not share of Him and partake of Him. People could understand Him as the Word, but until the Word became the Spirit, He could not come into them.