
Church in Campbell Weekly News

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The Church in the Triune God (1)

Both 1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1 tell us that the church is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I would ask you to carefully consider the expression “the church in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Suppose Paul had written in a brief way and had simply said “the church in God and Christ.” It may seem to us that it is adequate to speak of the church in God and Christ instead of the church in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The longer description of the church contains three names not found in the shorter: the Father, the Lord, and Jesus.

The Father, the Lord, and Jesus

By reading the New Testament we realize that the first basic matter concerning the divine titles is the revelation of the name of the Father. When the Lord Jesus came and lived on earth in the flesh, what He mainly did was reveal the name of the Father to His disciples. For example, in His prayer to the Father recorded in John 17, the Lord Jesus said, “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world” (v. 6). The Lord also said to the Father, “And I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known” (John 17:26). It is a matter of great significance to know the Father. It is a great thing to know God, but it is an even greater thing to know the Father.

It is also important that we pay adequate attention to the title Lord. In the Old Testament this was used as a divine title. It was not a simple matter for the man Jesus to become the Lord. According to Acts 2, after His resurrection and ascension, Christ was made Lord of all. This means that a man, even a Nazarene, has become Lord of all. As applied to the Lord Jesus, the title Lord implies incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. It was through such a process that the man Jesus was made Lord of all.

Before the incarnation, Christ as God was already the Lord. However, He was the Lord, the Creator. But today, after a process going from incarnation to ascension, the man Jesus has been made Lord. As applied to Christ in the New Testament, this title is rich in meaning. Christ is not only the Creator, but the One who was incarnate, who lived on earth for thirty-three and a half years, who was crucified, who was resurrected, and who has ascended to the heavens. By His crucifixion Christ accomplished redemption, terminated the

old creation, destroyed Satan and death, and abolished every separation between God and man and also all the separations between men. Hallelujah for what the crucifixion of Christ has accomplished! Like the crucifixion, Christ’s resurrection is profound. In the words of the song entitled, “God Is Processed,” crucifixion terminates, and resurrection germinates. After His crucifixion terminated the old creation, Christ’s resurrection germinated the new creation. Now, as the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended One, Jesus Christ has been made the Lord of all. All this process and everything related to it is implied in the title Lord.

The name Jesus also is significant and meaningful. Jesus means Jehovah the Savior, or Jehovah our salvation. In order for Jehovah to become our Savior and our salvation, it was necessary for Him to pass through a long process.

Christ means the anointed One. As the Christ, the anointed One, the Lord Jesus is the One appointed by God to accomplish His eternal purpose. Christ has been anointed, commissioned, and appointed to fulfill God’s purpose. Through the steps of His process, He, as the Christ, has fulfilled this commission and has accomplished God’s purpose. Now in resurrection and ascension He is our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is not only our Creator; He is also our Father. For God to be our Father involves much more than His merely being our Creator. How was it possible for God the Creator to become our Father? In other words, how could we, creatures of God, become children of God the Father? God has no intention to become our Father by adoption, our stepfather, or our father-in-law. On the contrary, He is our Father-in-life. This means that we have received God’s life. This took place when we were born of God.

It should be more than mere doctrine for us to declare that we have been born of God. Hallelujah, we are sons of God in life! Having been born of God, we are now God’s sons in life, and He is truly our Father. What a great matter this is!

We need to be very careful in reading the Bible. If we read carefully, we shall realize that 1 Thessalonians 1:1 and 2 Thessalonians 1:1 are very similar, but are not exactly the same. First Thessalonians 1:1 says, “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.” Second

Thessalonians 1:1 says, “Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” The former speaks of “the Father”; the latter, of “our Father.” Furthermore, in 2 Thessalonians the blessing, “Grace to you and peace,” is found in verse 2 instead of verse 1. This indicates that Paul’s opening word in 2 Thessalonians is a little stronger than the one in 1 Thessalonians. Certainly Paul was not careless in writing his Epistles. Everything he wrote was with a definite purpose.

The Spirit implied

Both Epistles tell us that the church is composed of human beings, in this case, of Thessalonians. Thessalonica was an evil city, and for the most part those in that city were immoral people. Nevertheless, some who were once immoral were saved and regenerated and composed the church in their locality in the Triune God. For this reason, Paul speaks of the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. By this expression Paul denotes the Triune God.

When some read concerning the church of the Thessalonians in the Triune God, they may say, “You claim that 1:1 indicates that the church is in the Triune God. Yes, this verse mentions the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, but nothing is said concerning the Spirit. If this verse speaks of the Triune God, where is the Spirit?” Here we have one of the many instances where what the Bible does not say is just as important as what it does say, if not more so. Often in our contact with the saints, we may refrain from saying something to them. This may be more important than what we do say to them. Why did Paul not say “the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit”? Eventually we shall see that there is a good reason for Paul to mention the Father and Christ the Son, but not the Spirit.

Be assured that the very God spoken of in 1:1 is the Triune God. We know this by the fact that Paul first mentions the Father, the first of the Trinity. Whenever we have the first, we also have the second, the Son, and also the third, the Spirit. The very fact that Paul speaks of the Father is a strong indication that he is thinking of the Triune God. Moreover, the expression “the Lord Jesus Christ” implies the Spirit. The expressions “God the Father” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” both imply the Spirit. Therefore, in 1:1 the Spirit is implied and understood.

We must believe that the God referred to in 1:1 is the Triune God. To be in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ implies that we are also in the Spirit. Hence, in 1:1 we have the Triune God implied. This verse indicates that the church is in the Triune God.

In the Triune God organically and in life

It is a rather simple matter to say that the church is of God or of Christ. But it is deeper and more profound to declare that the church is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, it is one thing to say that we are of a particular person. However, it is altogether another matter to claim to be in that person. Humanly speaking, it is possible to be of someone, but it is not possible to be literally in that one. Only in a way that is organic and of life can the church be in the Triune God. We do not adequately understand the way of life, but God does understand it in full. Furthermore, only God can do something in the way of life. In a way that is organic and of life, God has made it possible for the church to be in the Triune God.

(Excerpts from Life study of 1 Thessalonians messages 7)

Burdens for Church Prayer

- Upcoming Thanksgiving Gospel meeting.
- Raising more shepherds for shepherding the new ones.
- Establish a prayer life individually and corporately to seek God’s desire for all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.
- Building up a healthy life practices and opening our homes to raise up our next generation.
- Pray for the campus work and the remaining fruit at WV College.
- Pray for our reaching out to Campbell community.
- Pray for the financial needs of FSCC.

Announcements

- Life-study of 1 Thessalonians MSG 7 & 8
- HWMR: Experiencing, Enjoying, and Expressing Christ, Week 5
- 11/12 (Tue.) 7:45pm Prayer meeting, Campbell meeting hall.
- 11/27 (Wed.) 6:00pm Thanksgiving Love Feast, Campbell meeting hall.
- 11/28-12/1 International Thanksgiving Conference, Atlanta, GA
- Lessons on Shepherding, Br. Minoru Chen. 11/16 · 12/7 Meeting ID: 893 2677 4993 Passcode: 794410
- NorCal conference with Br. James Lee, at FSCC, register is at norcalchurches.org 5 meetings. 11/10 (Sun.) 7:30pm.
- 12/23-28 Winter Training in Anaheim. registration fee: in-person: \$200+\$5/outline, video: \$125+\$5/outline. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FoB16NctLbvWhJ5b-5AGCkfh32d3Z4kPuSwoWXhmp44/edit?gid=0#gid=0>
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