

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

ETERNITY PAST,
ETERNITY FUTURE,
AND THE
BRIDGE OF TIME

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Living Stream Ministry
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[John chapter one](#) reveals the two sections of eternity. [John 1:1](#) refers to eternity in the past, for “the beginning” denotes eternity in the past. [Verse 51](#) refers to eternity in the future, for when the Lord told Nathanael that he would see the heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man, He was not speaking about the present, but about eternity in the future. If we put together these two sections of eternity, we have the whole of eternity.

In eternity past, Christ, as the Word, was with God and was God. In eternity past He was only God and only had divinity. Since the Word had not yet been incarnated, He was not a man and had no humanity.

In eternity future, Christ will not only be God, but also man. He will not only be the Son of God, but also the Son of Man. Since the Word has been incarnated in the flesh ([v. 14](#)), He is also a man, the Son of Man with humanity forever.

After the incarnation, He is still God, but God and man. He is still the Son of God, but the Son of God and the Son of Man. In addition to being the Son of God, for eternity in the future He will be the Son of Man. In eternity past He was God, solely and merely divine, having no humanity. However, in eternity future He will be God and man, the Son of God and the Son of Man, both divine and human, having divinity as well as humanity. He will have two natures, two essences, and two substances—divinity and humanity.

When Nathanael said to the Lord, “You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel” (v. 49), Jesus told him that he would see “the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” Who is greater—the Son of God or the Son of Man? Logically speaking, everyone would say that the Son of God is much greater than the Son of Man. Let me ask you, do you prefer to be the sons of man or the sons of God? Surely you would answer that you prefer to be the sons of God. Everyone desires to be a son of God. It certainly was wonderful for Nathanael to realize that Jesus, a little man from Nazareth, was the Son of God. Nevertheless, Jesus immediately replied that He was the Son of Man. Although men attempt to make Him great, He likes to remain small.

Which is more important—for Jesus to be the son of God or to be the Son of Man? If you are not careful in giving an answer, you may be involved in heresy. How difficult it is to answer such a question! The Lord is both the Son of God and the Son of Man. If He were not the Son of God, He could never be our life. If He were not the Son of Man, He could never be the essence of the building of God. The Son of God is for life, and the Son of Man is for building. The Bible never requires that we believe that Jesus is the Son of Man before we can have life. In order to have life, we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. We all must believe that Jesus, the little Nazarene, is the Son of God. If we believe this, we have eternal life. After we have received eternal life, we must further realize that this Jesus who is the Son of God is also the Son of Man. His divinity is life to us, but His humanity is for the building of God. God's building needs His humanity. We need Jesus as the Son of God, but God needs Him as the Son of Man.

To us, Jesus is the Son of God, but to God and to the Devil, Satan, Jesus is the Son of Man. The Devil is not afraid of Jesus being the Son of God. He is afraid of Jesus being the Son of Man. A number of times when Jesus was casting demons

out of people and the demons addressed Him as the Son of God, Jesus silenced them ([Matt. 8:29](#); [Mark 3:11-12](#)), for, in front of them, He was acting as the Son of Man. When the Devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness by saying, “If You are the Son of God, speak that these stones may become loaves of bread” ([Matt. 4:3](#)), Jesus, resisting the temptation to forsake His position as the Son of Man, said, “*Man* shall not live on bread alone” ([Matt. 4:4](#)). Jesus maintained His standing as a man. Satan is not afraid of the Son of God; he is afraid of man. Why is Satan afraid of man? Because God, in His economy, has decided that Satan must be defeated by man.

God has no intention of dwelling in Himself. Divinity cannot be God’s dwelling. God’s intention in His economy is to dwell in humanity. God’s intention is to defeat His enemy, Satan, by man and to make humanity His dwelling place. Thus, both for the defeat of Satan and for the dwelling place of God, there is the need of humanity. If the Lord Jesus were only the Son of God, He would only be qualified to impart life into man. He would have no substance by which to defeat the enemy or to become the dwelling place of God. Praise the Lord that He is the Son

of God for us to have life, and He is the Son of Man for God to have a dwelling place.

Did God have a dwelling place of humanity in eternity past? Surely the answer is no. In [Isaiah 66:1](#), God says, “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool:... where is the place of my rest?” Heaven is considered as God’s habitation ([Deut. 26:15](#); [1 Kings 8:49](#); [Psa. 33:13-14](#); [Isa. 63:15](#)); yet God says, “Where is the place of my rest?” God’s resting place is man gained by Him ([Isa. 57:15](#); [66:2](#)). Today God dwells in the heavens, but the heavens will not be His habitation for eternity in the new heaven and the new earth. In the new heaven and the new earth, God’s habitation for eternity will be the New Jerusalem, which is composed of all His redeemed saints and which will come down from heaven ([Rev. 21:1-3](#)). What will be God’s eternal habitation? The regenerated, transformed, uplifted, and built up humanity which will eventually become God’s dwelling place. God will not dwell with a natural humanity, but with a regenerated, transformed, uplifted, and built up humanity. This humanity is regenerated, transformed, united, and built together by the divine life. The divine life will uplift our humanity to such a standard that we will become God’s dwelling place.

John 1 reveals Christ as both the Son of God and the Son of Man. He is the Son of God to impart God into us as our life, and He is the Son of Man to be the very essence of the building of God's house. In eternity past there was no humanity, and there was no dwelling place for God. In eternity future there will be humanity, and God will have a dwelling place.

ON THE BRIDGE OF TIME

John 1 reveals the two sections of eternity. How can God, who had no humanity in eternity past, have humanity in eternity future as His dwelling place? This will not happen overnight. Between these two sections of eternity is the bridge of time. In eternity past God planned and purposed, but He did not do anything. In eternity future God will not do anything, because, at that time, everything will have been accomplished. In eternity future He will simply enjoy His finished work. In eternity past He planned, and in eternity future He will enjoy. Everything that God needs to accomplish He accomplishes on the bridge of time. God is driving the car of His economy from the first section of eternity, through the bridge of time, into the last section of eternity. By driving His car across

the bridge of time, all the necessary work is completed. Once God has traveled from eternity past, through the bridge of time, and into eternity future, He will declare, “Finished!” In eternity future God will enjoy His finished work.

How long is this bridge of time? It may be more or less than six thousand years long. On this bridge of time God accomplishes five things, and we need to consider each of them in turn. We begin with creation.

CREATION

[John 1:3](#) says, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being which has come into being.” Creation brings things into being. The meaning of creation is to call things not being as being ([Rom. 4:17](#)). The purpose of creation is to produce a receptacle to receive God as life. Consider the items in creation: the heavens, the earth, the billions of physical things, and man. What is the most important item in creation? Nothing is more important than man. Man is a V.I.P., a very important person. According to the Bible, the heavens are for the earth, and the earth is for man ([Zech. 12:1](#)). Everything is for man. The minerals, the vegetable life, and the animal life

are all for man. The air, sunshine, and rain supply the vegetable life; the vegetable life is for the animal life, and both the vegetable life and the animal life are for man. All the living things on the earth are for man. Man, for whom all these things are, is for God, receiving God and fulfilling His purpose. There is a spirit within man which is the very receiver of God. By His creation, God produced the heavens for the earth, the earth for man, and man with a spirit as a receiver to receive God as his life.

Man is the center of the universe. Man, the center of the universe, has a mouth for eating and for calling. Eating is our most important daily activity. Regardless of how busy a person may be, he will take time to eat every day. Most people eat several times a day. Do not feel ashamed to say that your most important daily activity is eating. I am a good eater. I eat both material food and spiritual food, which is Christ. I eat the Lord by calling, "O Lord Jesus." Eating the Lord is an important matter. All the silent Christians are being starved to death. I was such a dumb, silent Christian for years, and I nearly died. But today I am an eating Christian. I eat by calling on the name of the Lord. God created

us with a spirit and with a mouth that we might receive Him as our life.

Have you ever thanked God for His creation? You need to say, “O God, my Creator, I thank You that You have created the heavens, the earth, and everything in it. I thank You for creating me. I thank You, Lord, that You created me with a spirit and a mouth.” Many Christians have never thanked the Lord for creating them with a spirit and a mouth.

[Romans 8:16](#) shows the importance of our spirit, and [Romans 10:9-10](#) shows the importance of our mouth. Justification is related to our heart, and salvation is related to our mouth. Although many Christians say that it is sufficient to have a believing heart, [Romans 10](#) makes it clear that we also need a mouth. We need to believe with our heart and call on the Lord with our mouth. The more you say, “O Lord Jesus,” the more you will be saved. Why are you so weak? Because you do not call on the name of the Lord Jesus. If you call on Him, you will be empowered. Many Christians only know how to talk about their weaknesses. They do not realize that the reason they are so weak is that they do not use their lips and their tongue to confess the name of the Lord. “Every tongue should openly

confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil. 2:11). Hallelujah for our spirit and our mouth! We have a spirit within and a mouth without. Our spirit, our mouth, and our whole being come from God’s creation. Oh, how we need to worship God for His creation. We owe Him a debt of thanks for creating us. Even at the Lord’s table we need to thank the Lord for His creation. Creation was the first item on the bridge of time.

INCARNATION:

To Bring God into His Creation—Man

The second item was incarnation (1:14). Without creation there would have been no way for God to be incarnated. Creation prepared the way and afforded Him the means to be incarnated. Creation brought things into being, and incarnation brought God into His creation. God waited approximately four thousand years after the creation of Adam before becoming incarnated. One day, He was incarnated, and there was on earth the little man Jesus with God in Him. God was wrought into that man. That was the greatest miracle of all. By incarnation, God was brought into mankind and became one with man. Divinity and humanity became one unit.

Between eternity in the past and eternity in the future is a gap, with time as a bridge to span it. On this bridge called time, Christ as the Word of God, through whom all things were created, was incarnated as a man. Creation was the first event on the bridge of time, and incarnation was the second. Creation means that things not being are brought into being through the Word. Before creation, nothing existed, but by Christ's creation all things came into existence. Incarnation is God coming into His creation. Although everything created by God was perfect and good, yet nothing of creation had been joined to God. Creation was but a preparatory step for incarnation. God firstly brought all created things into existence so that He could later become one with His creation. This is the reason that God created the heavens, the earth, and man as the center of the universe. It was His design to prepare creation so that He could join Himself to it. "The Word became flesh" means that God joined Himself to His creation by His incarnation. In incarnation, the flesh which God put on became His tabernacle (1:14). This tabernacle was the building of God on a small scale; it was a miniature of the New Jerusalem, God's tabernacle in eternity (Rev. 21:2-3). By creation,

God brought all things of the universe into existence; by incarnation, He mingled Himself with man, who is the center of His creation. The purpose of God in creation and incarnation is to fulfill His desire of mingling Himself with humanity and to make humanity a living habitation for Himself. He is not satisfied with heaven as His abode. He desires to build a living dwelling place with living people. Thus, He created man as the center of His creation and mingled Himself with man by incarnation so that He might make man His living habitation in the universe.

To Declare God

Incarnation is not only to bring God into His creation, but also to declare God to man in the Word, in life, in light, in grace, and in truth. In the incarnation, the Word, which is Christ as God, became flesh. The Word is God expressed, explained, and defined so that man may understand God. Life is God imparted that man may receive Him. Light is God shining that man may be enlightened to apprehend Him. Grace is God enjoyed by man that man may share His riches. Truth is God realized by man that man may have Him as reality. In total, it is through these five things that God is fully declared to

man in order that man may partake of and enjoy Him as everything.

REDEMPTION

The third item on the bridge of time is redemption ([John 1:29](#)). After living on the earth for thirty-three and a half years, the Lord went to the cross as the Lamb of God. The Lamb of God is for redemption. Through redemption, the Lord recovered fallen man and separated him from sin. By means of redemption, God not only removed sin, but also terminated the entire old creation. The very Jesus who was crucified on the cross took the old creation with Him into the tomb. When He was raised from the dead, He left the old creation in the tomb and came out in resurrection as the head of the new creation.

ANOINTING

Anointing follows redemption. The anointing comes by way of the dove, the Spirit, which is the continuation of the Lamb ([John 1:32](#)). The Lamb has removed sin and terminated the old creation, and the dove, the Spirit, has come to regenerate; impart life, transform, unite, and build. The dove, the Spirit, regenerates the created

man, transforms the natural man, and unites the transformed man. We may be in any one of three situations. We may be a created man who needs to be regenerated. We may be a regenerated man who is still quite natural and who needs to be transformed. We may be a transformed man who is still separate and individualistic and who needs to be united with others. If we are properly transformed, we would be willing to be united with others. So, firstly, we need to be regenerated; secondly, we need to be transformed; and thirdly, we need to be united for the building. The dove, the Spirit, regenerates, transforms, and unites. We are all under the anointing of the dove, the Spirit. Although we may not realize it or may be ignorant of it, the Lord is working to transform us.

I have the full assurance that all of the Lord's people eventually will be transformed. Sooner or later, we shall all be transformed. Transformation does not depend on us; it depends on Him. He has chosen us and ordained us, and we cannot escape Him. If we try to escape, we will simply waste our time and give Him a little trouble. Do not even say that you can delay Him, for with Him a thousand years are as one day. It is easy for Him to be patient with you.

Eventually, every brother and sister will be transformed. When we enter into the New Jerusalem, we shall see that everyone is jasper, precious stone ([Rev. 21:11](#)).

The Lord is truly doing a transforming work within us. He is not a great eagle, but a little dove—the life-giving Spirit ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). This little dove is the continuation of the little Lamb. Since the Lamb has died on the cross, the dove now in resurrection has His turn to work. Day by day, the little dove as the life-imparting Spirit speaks within you, rebuking you and touching your heart or conscience. Often, as you are in a department store, the dove bothers you from within. Do not expect a big experience or a sudden change. Expect the little dove to move and work within you all the time. We have become involved in a process from which there is no escape. This involvement is continuous and permanent. In a sense, we have inward rest; in another sense, the little dove troubles us constantly. The inward working of this little dove is the anointing.

We all are under the process of transformation. I have observed that certain brothers and sisters have experienced a significant change due to the dove's transforming work. If you say that

you do not like the church life and decide to leave it, you will find that you cannot escape the transforming work of the indwelling dove. Who can escape the way of the Lord? Once we are caught, there is no escape. We may say, “I don’t like it,” but He says, “I like you so much. You don’t like Me, but I like you. The more you dislike Me, the more I like you.” What shall we do? What shall we say? We should do nothing and should just say, “O Lord Jesus.” Once you have been captured by the Lord for the church life, you are “hooked” for transformation, and there is nothing that you can do to escape it. You may not like it, but what can you do? Where will you go? There is no place to go. This is our destiny. God has destined us to be transformed for His building.

BUILDING

After creation, incarnation, redemption, and anointing, we have building. This building is for the house of God. God is building a dwelling place for Himself, and He is using transformed people as the stones ([John 1:42](#)). Praise the Lord that we are not only undergoing the work of transformation, but are also in the process of building. What God needs is not a great number

of stones, but a house. For eternity God needs a builded house, a Bethel, as His habitation.

In order for the Lord to come back, He needs the nation of Israel to be prepared and the church to be built. Look at Israel: she is nearly ready. But Israel needs the church to match her. Although Israel is nearly ready, the church is not yet prepared. The Lord does not care for the number of people. Even if only a small number are completely processed, saturated, transformed, and built by and with Him, it will be sufficient. I do not speak this lightly.

The coming of the Lord will not be according to our natural concept. The religionists did not understand His first coming and neither will they understand His second. Do not follow the religious way of understanding the Lord's coming. You must take the way of life. If you are in the way of life, then you know the way in which He will come. It will be a "sneaky" way. The Bible tells us that the Lord will return as a thief ([Rev. 3:3](#); [16:15](#)). He will not come as a visitor who knocks at your door. He will come in a stealthy way as a thief. You may miss Him. If you keep yourself in the way of life, you will see that the Lord will come in such a hidden way. He will come in a mysterious way, in the way of life.

The Lord's coming back needs a solid building of His seekers. This building will be a stepping stone, a beach-head, for Him to take the earth, and it will be a mutual abode for both God and man. It will be the mingling of divinity with humanity and of humanity with divinity forever. Christ once was only divine. In order for Him to be the Son of Man, He must have the human life and the human nature. We are human, but we can be born of God to become the children of God (1:12-13). In order for us to be the children of God, we must have the divine life and the divine nature. Eventually, He, the divine One, has the human life and the human nature, and we, the human ones, will have the divine life and the divine nature. Thus, He and we, we and He, will be exactly the same in life and in nature. This is the mingling of divinity with humanity, and this is the mutual abode of God's building. This building will be the ultimate fulfillment not only of Jacob's dream, but of God's eternal plan. It will terminate the bridge of time and usher in the blessed eternity in the future. We must be for that building and we must be that building!

After all of these five items have transpired, we shall enter into eternity future with the Lord.

At that time, He will be both the Son of God and the Son of Man. As the Son of God, He will be life to us, and as the Son of Man, He will be the dwelling place for God. We shall be joined to and even mingled with Him, and we shall enjoy eternity with Him forever. Nathanael, and all of us with him, will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man. This is the revelation found in [John chapter one](#).

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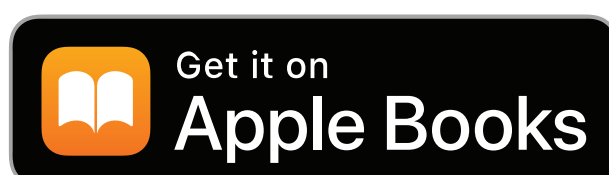
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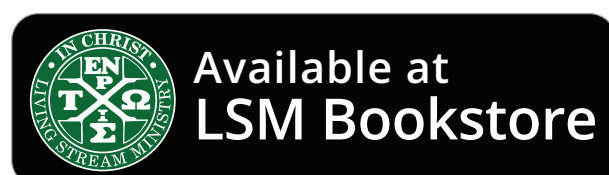
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