

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

THE
DISPENSATION
OF GOD
TO FULFILL
HIS PURPOSE

WITNESS LEE

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Living Stream Ministry

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Romans is an all-inclusive book, a summary both of the Christian life and of the church life. It is impossible to exhaust the revelation conveyed and implied in this book. To say that revelation is implied means that it is not conveyed directly and explicitly, but that it is implied by what is directly conveyed. In the divine Word what is implied is often more important than what is directly stated. In this booklet we shall consider one of the implied revelations in the book of Romans: the dispensation of the Triune God for the fulfillment of His purpose.

GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

God's eternal purpose is to have a Body for Christ. This Body is the universal church. The universal church needs to be expressed in various localities in local churches. The dispensation of the Triune God for the fulfillment of His eternal purpose has much to do with the local churches.

In order to fulfill His purpose, it is necessary for God to dispense Himself into His chosen people. This is the very thing that God is doing with us today.

TRIUNE FOR DISPENSATION

In order for God to dispense Himself into us, He must be triune. The Triune God is not for doctrine or for theology, but for dispensing Himself into His people in order to have a Body to express Christ.

The word dispense means to distribute. Suppose we have a large container of juice. In order for people to drink the juice, we must find a way to dispense the juice from the container into them. The best way is to pour the juice into cups and then distribute it among the people present. The juice used to be in the container, but now it is in the people into whom it has been dispensed. When we speak of the dispensation of the Triune God, we mean that God distributes Himself to us and then dispenses Himself into our being just as the juice is dispensed from the container into those who drink it. In His dispensation, God actually enters into our being, fills our vessel, and becomes one with us. This is the dispensation

of the Triune God for the fulfillment of His purpose.

For God to dispense Himself into His chosen people, He must be triune; that is, He must be God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Although our God is triune, we reject tritheism, which is the doctrine that the Three of the Trinity are three distinct Gods. We do not have three Gods—we have the unique Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

We have indicated that the Trinity of the Godhead is not for theology, but for dispensing. God does not desire to exist alone. He longs to dispense Himself into men created, chosen, and called by Him. Hallelujah, we are those men, and God wants to dispense Himself into us! This is implied in the book of Romans. Let us now consider the Triune God as revealed in this book and then consider God's dispensation.

GOD BLESSED FOREVER

Romans 9:5 speaks of “Christ, Who is over all, God blessed forever.” Many Christians have read the book of Romans without noticing the declaration contained in this verse. This verse says that Christ is God, blessed forever. As God, Christ is over all things: man, angels, the

heavens, and the earth. Christ is the very God who has been and will be blessed forever and who is over all. The Christ who is our Savior and our life is God Himself. It is a shame that Christians argue about the deity of Christ and debate whether or not Christ is God. According to this verse, Christ is the God who is over all and blessed forever.

GOD SENDING HIS OWN SON

Romans 8:3 says that God sent His own Son. The God in **8:3** is, of course, the very God in **9:5**. Christ is God's Son. How can we explain then, that the unique God sent His own Son when Christ is both the Son of God and God Himself? According to **9:5**, Christ is God. According to **8:3**, God sent His own Son, who is Christ. This indicates that Christ is both God and the Son of God. This reminds us of **Isaiah 9:6**. This verse says that a child is called the mighty God and that a son is called the eternal Father. Here we see the mystery of the Triune God: God is three, yet He remains one.

THE DEATH OF GOD'S SON

Romans 5:10 says that we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son. This verse

indicates that the Son of God once died. But how is it possible for the Son of God to die? To me, this verse would be more understandable if it spoke of the death of Jesus. However, it speaks of the death of God's Son. Whether we can understand this or not, it is a fact that, even when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the wonderful death of the Son of God. Furthermore, according to [5:10](#), now we are being saved in His life. This indicates that the One who died still has life. This implies Christ's resurrection.

DESIGNATED THE SON OF GOD

[Romans 1:3 and 4](#) say that God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead. All the titles related to Christ in these verses are related to God's dispensation. Apart from God's dispensation, there is no need for His Son to be Jesus Christ. It was for dispensation that the Son of God needed to be a man (Jesus) and to be the anointed One (Christ). Furthermore, only through dispensation could the Son of God, Jesus Christ, become our Lord. Because Christ

has been dispensed into us, He is not only *the* Lord, but *our* Lord.

According to [verse 3](#), the Son of God came out of the seed of David according to the flesh. Here we have the element of the flesh. According to [verse 4](#), Christ was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead. Here we have the element of the Spirit. Although Christ was already the Son of God, He still needed to be designated the Son of God in resurrection.

The various phrases in these verses imply the Triune God in His dispensation. Although the word dispensation is found neither here nor in the remainder of the book of Romans, the fact of dispensation is still implied. Everything related to Christ in [Romans 1:3 and 4](#) is for God's dispensation.

INTERCHANGEABLE TERMS

Now we come to [chapter eight](#), a chapter that is inexhaustible in its revelation and spiritual significance. [Verse 2](#) speaks of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. In this verse there are a number of things difficult to explain: law, Spirit, life, and Christ Jesus. Notice that here Paul does not say Jesus Christ, but Christ Jesus.

In [verses 7 and 8](#) Paul mentions God. Then in [verse 9](#) he goes on to speak of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. As we shall see, in these verses Paul is speaking of the Triune God in His dispensation.

Paul uses the terms God, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ interchangeably. He begins with God, goes on to the Spirit of God, and then proceeds to the Spirit of Christ. But instead of stopping here, in [verse 10](#) Paul speaks of Christ, saying that Christ is in us. In the span of a few verses, four divine titles are interchangeably used: God, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ. These four terms denote one being, the Triune God Himself.

The Spirit of God is God Himself. Do not interpret this title to mean that the Spirit is something different from God. In the New Testament, phrases such as the love of God and the life of God mean that love and life are God Himself. In the same principle, the term the Spirit of God means that the Spirit is God. The same is true regarding the Spirit of Christ. This title means simply that the Spirit is Christ. According to the context, the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God.

From the Spirit of Christ Paul proceeds to

Christ. Thus, Paul takes us from God to Christ through the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. Paul's thought goes from God to the Spirit of God, from the Spirit of God to the Spirit of Christ, and from the Spirit of Christ to Christ. Therefore, we have God, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ. However, these four terms all refer to the unique Triune God.

CHRIST IN US

Verse 10 says that Christ is in us. The preposition “in” here is most remarkable. Christ, the wonderful One, is actually in us! In order for Christ to be in us, God must be the Spirit of God, the Spirit of God must be the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ must be Christ. If God were simply God Himself, He could not get into us. There are two reasons for this. The first is that God is divine, infinite, and almighty. However, we are human, and God cannot come into us without human mediation. Second, we are sinful and unclean. Because of the fall, every part of our being is defiled. It is impossible for a holy God to dwell in such sinful people. To bridge the gap between divinity and humanity, God had to become a man named Jesus. Jesus means Jehovah the Savior. As such a One, He

died on the cross for our sins, shedding His blood to cleanse us from all defilement. Hallelujah, the infinite God became a finite man to die on the cross for us! This removed the barriers which hindered God from coming into man. Now in Christ the infinite, holy God can come into us. For this reason, in [verse 10](#) Paul declares that Christ is in us.

It is significant that Paul does not say that God is in us, but that Christ is in us. The Spirit here joins God with Christ. The Spirit is both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. How profound and inexhaustible are all these terms!

THE SPIRIT MAKING HOME IN US

[Verse 11](#) says, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.” According to [verse 10](#), Christ is in us. But according to [verse 11](#), the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in us; that is, His Spirit makes His home in us. In this verse we have the Triune God: He who raised Jesus from among the dead (the Father), Christ Jesus (the Son), and the Spirit. Here we see the Triune God

dispensing Himself into us. Furthermore, He is making His home in us and even giving life to our mortal bodies. This is the full dispensation of the Triune God into our entire being.

IMPLIED REVELATION

In [verse 11](#) we do not find the words triune or dispensing, but the fact of the dispensation of the Triune God is implied. The Triune God is implied here, and the dispensing of the Triune God into our being is also implied. We have pointed out that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all to be found in this verse. Furthermore, Paul's word about life being given to our mortal bodies implies a dispensation. This is not an explicit revelation; it is an implied revelation of the dispensing of the Triune God into the believers.

PROCESS AND DISPENSATION

In [verse 11](#) Paul speaks of the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead. This implies not only God's dispensation, but also the process required to make this dispensation possible. Dispensation requires a process. Raising Christ up from among the dead was part of this process. Hence, in order for the Spirit of Him

who raised Jesus from among the dead to dwell in us, God had to become involved in a process. Paul does not say simply that the Spirit dwells in us. That would have been too direct. Rather, He says that the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus dwells in us. This implies the process that is involved.

The preparation of food for eating can be used to illustrate the process required for God's dispensation. Most of the things we eat must be processed before we eat them. For example, my wife does not buy a fish at the market and then bring it home and simply set it on the table at mealtime. No, the fish must be thoroughly prepared; only then can we eat it. In the same principle, the Triune God has passed through a process in order to dwell in us.

The process in [verse 11](#) is indicated by the very indirectness of the verse. The entire verse is actually one long, indirect statement. In this [verse three](#) crucial matters are covered: the Triune God, the process, and the dispensation. In order for God to indwell us, He has to be the Triune God who has passed through a complete process.

This process involves incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. Before the Son of God

could die for us on the cross, He had to be incarnated as a man. By incarnation He put on humanity with flesh and blood and became a man called Jesus. Only in this way was He able to shed His blood on the cross for our sins. Hence, Paul's word regarding Christ's resurrection in [verse 11](#) implies His incarnation and crucifixion. All this is related to the process.

Our God is no longer the unprocessed God. The One who dwells in us has been fully processed. The Spirit who indwells us is the realization of the Son, who is the embodiment of the Father. The Father is embodied in the Son, the Son is realized as the Spirit, and the Spirit indwells us. This is the Triune God who has been processed through incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, who is dispensing Himself into us, and who is now dwelling in us.

[Verse 11](#) indicates that the Triune God is being dispensed not only into our spirit, the center of our being, as indicated in [verse 10](#), but even into our mortal body, the circumference of our being. This means that the dispensation of the Triune God is saturating our whole being. The more I experience and enjoy this dispensation, the more I am energized spiritually, psychologically, and physically. I can testify from experience that the

dispensation of the Triune God is not mere doctrine. The Spirit of the One who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead gives life to our mortal bodies. How amazing! [Verse 11](#), therefore, implies a great deal: the Triune God, the process, the dispensation, and the saturation of our entire being with the divine life. This is the dispensation of the Triune God.

ISSUING IN SONSHIP

Such a dispensation issues in sonship. It transforms sinners into sons of God. Once we were sinners, enemies of God, but now we are sons of God.

[Verse 14](#) says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” We know that we are sons of God by the fact that we are led by the Spirit of God. Day by day, we are led by the Spirit who indwells us. Perhaps you may desire to go to a certain place, but instead the Spirit leads you to the meeting of the church. We often are inclined to do things that are contrary to God’s nature, but the indwelling Spirit is stronger than we are. Eventually, He leads us, and we follow Him. Such experiences are a sign and a proof that we are sons of God.

Another proof is seen in [verse 15](#): “For you

have not received a spirit of slavery to fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father.” As sons of God, we cry, “Abba, Father.” Through the dispensing of the Triune God, we have truly become God’s sons in life; we are not sons-in-law. If we were merely sons-in-law, we could not call, “Abba, Father,” so sweetly. This is illustrated by a man’s relationship to his father and to his father-in-law. When he calls his father “Dad,” it comes naturally and feels very sweet. But if he uses this term with respect to his father-in-law, it does not come naturally or feel sweet. The fact that we are God’s sons in life is proved by the sense of sweetness we enjoy whenever we call, “Abba, Father.” As sons of God, we have within us the life of God, the nature of God, and the Spirit of the Son of God.

THE FIRSTFRUIT

According to [verse 23](#) we also have the firstfruit of the Spirit. The firstfruit of the Spirit is the first taste, the foretaste, of the Spirit. Today we have the indwelling Spirit as the foretaste of our enjoyment of God. This foretaste gives us the assurance that the full taste is coming.

THE INTERCEDING SPIRIT

[Verse 26](#) reveals that the Spirit is also the interceding Spirit. Inwardly, the Spirit is constantly interceding for us. We may think that we alone are praying, only to discover that our prayer actually comes from the indwelling Spirit. Because we are one with Him and the Spirit is mingled with our spirit, we cannot always discern what is of us and what is of Him. As [1 Corinthians 6:17](#) says, “he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” When we pray, He prays, and when He prays, we also pray. Thus, our prayer is His prayer, and His prayer is ours.

THE ULTIMATE ISSUE

According to [verse 29](#), God’s only begotten Son has become the Firstborn among many brothers. This is the issue of the dispensation of the Triune God into us. This dispensation makes us the many sons of God, the many brothers of the Firstborn. These many sons of God and many brothers of the Firstborn are the members which constitute the Body of Christ. Therefore, the ultimate issue of the dispensation of the Triune God is to produce sons to be the members which constitute the Body of Christ. This is God’s way to

fulfill His eternal purpose. His purpose is accomplished neither by teaching nor by organization, but by the dispensing of Himself as the processed Triune God into our being.

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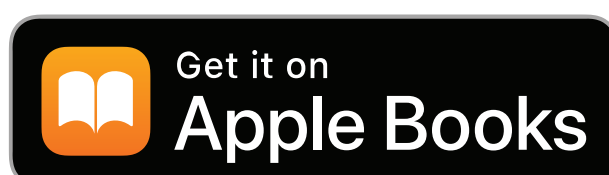
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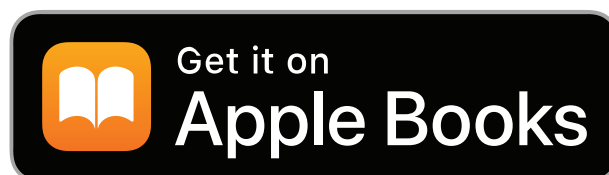
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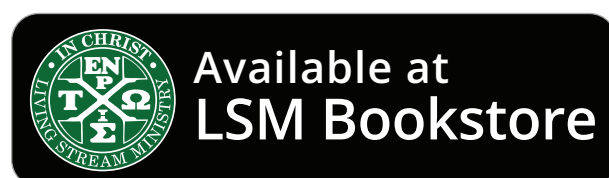
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