

ATTAINING THE FULNESS OF CHRIST

Ep. 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

Ep. 4:12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Ep. 4:13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.

Ep. 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Ep. 4:22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

Ep. 4:23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

Ep. 4:24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ep. 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

"Christ" is the Anointing, the Holy Spirit or the divine essence. Any person who attains to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ becomes exactly as Jesus Christ was during His earthly ministry. This is what Jesus says about such a person:

Jn. 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

How exactly does a person grow up into Jesus Christ?

Jesus Himself Grew Up

Jesus didn't start life as God, as many people believe today. He started life like every other human being. Around the age of thirty, He submitted himself for baptism by John the Baptist. As soon as he was baptized, the Holy Spirit (the Anointing or Christ) came from heaven and entered his inner being. This initial deposit of the Spirit was not anywhere close to the full measure; he could not do any miracle by it.

Ge. 2:7 the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Ge. 2:8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.

Ge. 2:9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

After Jesus received the Holy Spirit, he became as Adam was before the fall. Ge. 2:7 tells us that not only did God create Adam as flesh, He also put His Spirit in Adam's inner being. God then put Adam in a garden, at the centre of which were the tree of life and

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A competition immediately ensued, between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They competed for Adam's soul; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil won.

Mt. 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

God did not create any garden for Jesus, but rather moved him into the desert. The desert is the world of Adam. Adam moved himself from the garden of God to desert. Jesus, the new Adam, began life with anointing in the desert of Adam. Even there in the desert, both the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were also present and, once again, they competed for the soul of Jesus.

Mt. 4:2 After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

Mt. 4:3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Mt. 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

The first temptation to which Jesus was subjected is lust of the flesh. Jesus kept away from a number of things his flesh would want him to do; that is some kind of fasting. Satan (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) began to project the spirit of lust (one of the fruits of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) upon Jesus to move him to satisfy the cravings of his flesh. The only way for Jesus to escape falling into the temptation was to go to the tree of life (God) and ask for His fruit (Holy Spirit) so that he would be strong enough to do God's word. It is the desire to do His word that moves God to give His Holy Spirit to a person. Disobedience to His word grieves God and makes Him to withdraw His Spirit. That was what happened to Adam—the fall of man.

Mt. 4:5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

Mt. 4:6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

Mt. 4:7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Having failed to fall Jesus through lust of the flesh, Satan began to project the spirit of pride upon Jesus. Display your spiritual power just to show that you are the great one and not necessarily as a means of furthering the purpose of God. Once you begin to use the power God has given you for egoistic purposes and not for leading people to God, He will begin to withdraw His Spirit from you. The only way Jesus could overcome the spirit of pride was by constantly praying to God to give him the spirit of humility (meekness and lowliness).

Mt. 4:8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour.

Mt. 4:9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

Mt. 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

Mt. 4:11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Having overcome both lust of the flesh and pride of life, the spiritual level of Jesus had greatly increased. It is when a person has become great that Satan projects the desire for worldly glory. Human beings sell their souls to Satan in order to achieve worldly glory. In order to overcome this temptation, a person needs to ask God for the spirit of godliness with contentment and by rejecting Satan and his ways.

Follow the Example of Jesus

1Pe. 2:21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

He. 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Every Christian needs to copy the example that Jesus left for us, starting from baptism by immersion in water carried out by a real servant of God, to praying for the initial deposit of the Holy Spirit and growing in the Spirit through prayerfully overcoming lust of the flesh, pride of life and the desire for worldly glory.

Lk. 10:41 "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, Lk. 10:42 but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

There is only one thing that a human being really needs, and that is to be filled with all the fullness of God—to become like Jesus. Any person who attains to all the fullness of Christ has no problem again in this world. Unfortunately, in Christendom, people worry about so many unnecessary things. As people pursue so many goals, the real goal that matters is completely lost. In order to achieve the only one goal that is necessary, we must crucify ourselves to the other goals. Since it is the other goals that matter to the world, we will actually have to crucify ourselves to the world in order to achieve the only necessary goal.

Mt. 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

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