

The Shincheonji religious movement; a critical evaluation

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The Shincheonji religious movement; a critical evaluation

I. Introduction

A. Statement of the problem

What is the true identity of Shincheonji? The Shincheonji movement started in 1984 and its registered number of members is over 150,000¹. It has expanded its influence in all directions, even reaching South Africa.² According to Shincheonji beliefs, the spirit of Jesus Christ descend into Man Hee Lee, and presumably the followers of Lee believe that he is the immortal, promised pastor that New Testament predicts; the overcomer noted in the book of Revelation (Lee M 2009:95-96). Mostly influenced by previous apocalyptic leaders, Lee employs a different way to approach the Scripture. Lee maintains that the Bible is made up of parables and secrets. Unless one understands the exact meaning of hidden truth in the Scripture, it is impossible to be saved according to Lee's teaching (Han 2013: 325). Moreover, when the number of saved people in Shincheonji reaches the restricted number, 144,000, Lee asserts that the souls of

¹ Theacro (2015: <http://theacro.com>)

² "This is a warning about a cult from Korea, Which is attempting to establish itself here in South Africa. They are very deceptive and trick people into becoming involved with them. The cult is called Shinchonji, Man Hee Lee is the leader (and Messiah) and Mannam is a volunteer organization that they use as a front. They are organizing an event (or some events) is Cape Town on the 15th of December 2012" The storehouse church (2015: <http://thestorehousepe.tumblr.com>)

144,000 martyrs who have waited in heaven, will come to the bodies of the 144,000 Shincheonji saints, and then the life of immortality will be given to these saints (S, Lee. 2011:140-143). All these teachings of Lee sound like fairy tales, but many Christians, rather wishing to reject the teachings of their regular church leaders, join Shincheonji, and it has become too big organization to ignore in South Korea.

B. The Purpose of this Study

In order to defend a church from Shincheonji, it is necessary to know who they are. Had the church leaders known the true identity of Shincheonji, where their root is, what their teaching content is, and how they lure people, they could have prevented many churches from falling victim to Shincheonji. The problem church leaders in South Korea have is indifference in perceiving Shincheonji. For this reason, my research would help to provide church leaders with knowledge of Shincheonji, and the way to keep their churches away from such deception.

Aside from the opinions coming from people who point the finger at Shincheonji because of their illegitimate propaganda, we should evaluate this organization from a Biblical perspective. In other words, what the Bible says about the doctrine of Shincheonji. In order to evaluate this organization fairly, its root and doctrine have to be dealt with. After reading through my

research, one would perceive that it is much beneficial to defend God's body. This is the purpose of my study.

C. The Limitations of the Study

Although my research is going to deal with the main issues related to the doctrine of Shincheonji, there are some unavoidable limitations. Firstly, my study and method to compare the doctrines of Shincheonji with Biblical view are based on a fundamentalist³ point of view. Instead of being obsessed with the notion of intellectual and academic respectability, all debates to handle with the problem of Shincheonji, are based on the belief of fundamentalism. Secondly, due to the page limit, the research cannot deal with all the doctrinal issues Shincheonji has. The teachings of Shincheonji are various from a simple allegorical interpretation to complicated postulate. However, my research is going to focus on the most critical and crucial teachings of Shincheonji, and its influence on Korean society. Thirdly,

³ *The Fundamentals* articles were compiled into twelve books and the series was completed by 1915... They provided a sound biblical defense for every one of the essential doctrines then under attack by theological liberals. The articles condemned "higher criticism" (which imposed humanistic assumptions on biblical scholarship and often resulted in rank unbelief). They defended biblical inerrancy and authority, the historicity of Scripture, verbal inspiration, the deity of Christ, the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, and several other crucial biblical distinctive. Well-known contributors to the series included B. B. Warfield, J. C. Ryle, G. Campbell Morgan, C. I. Scofield, James M. Gray (president of Moody Bible Institute), A. T. Pierson (another of Spurgeon's successors at the Tabernacle), and Thomas Spurgeon, Charles's son (MacArthur, J. 1993. *Ashamed of the gospel : When the Church becomes like the world* (106). Crossway Books: Wheaton, Ill)

because of the lack of references dealing with the Shincheonji movement in an English format, most of my research content comes from volumes written by Korean scholars.

D. The History of this Study

Increasingly, many theologians and pastors began to do research on the Shincheonji movement once its negative influences on a normal church had extended roughly to every direction, from one's family even to a mega church in South Korea. Several books, criticizing Shincheonji and its teachings have been published, but there is no English version. It is necessary to give warning about Shincheonji globally with written word, because they are attempting to extend the number of the congregation globally.⁴ My research will help churches to have leaders equipped with fundamental knowledge about Shincheonji and its main teaching, so that they are able to prevent the church from falling apart due to the teachings of Shincheonji. Secondly, other researches do not deal with various orthodox views about the doctrine in regard with the doctrine of Shincheonji. Instead, they approach Shincheonji from single point of view coming from covenant theology. Because Lee's approach to eschatology is based on literal interpretation, the dispensational view has to be mentioned in order to evaluate

⁴ Shincheonji homepage in English (2015: <https://correctunderstandingofshincheonji.wordpress.com>)

Shincheonji fairly. For this reason, my research employ various views coming from different denominations to approach the doctrine of Shincheonji.

E. Method of Study

My overall methodology is based on setting principle first which extracted from orthodox point of view. To discern whether it is genuine or not, it is necessary to study traditional view first. The research then introduces the newly emerging doctrine brought by Lee, a leader of Shincheonji. At the end of each chapter, the research analyze the doctrine of Shincheonji to find out whether it is Biblical or not. In the course of the analyzation, I employ more information from the books of commentaries to evaluate Lee's teaching and come to conclusion.

F. Summary of Each Chapter

The content of my research starts with the history and statues of Shincheonji, so that one can see where its root was and how influential Shincheonji is. As it goes to chapter three, it introduces Shinchonji's main doctrines. In the account of the main doctrines, the pair doctrine based on Isiah 34:16 is dealt first and Old and New Covenant doctrine will follow and then the doctrine of salvation by good deeds will be going on. As we move to chapter four, the research will address Lee's allegorical interpretation, which is one of features of all end time movements

in South Korea and then Lee's approach to the Trinity will be in chapter five. At the end of my research, the actual influence of Shincheonji on South Korea and way to cope with it, is in chapter seven.

II. The status and history of Shincheonji in South Korea

Shincheonji, officially known as the Church of Jesus, the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony, is a rapidly growing religious movement which was founded by Lee Man-Hee on March 14, 1984 in South Korea. As of 2014, it has its registered members are over 150,000 and its organizations are made up of 12 tribes which were named after the 12 apostles of the New Testament. Those twelve organizations are mainly scattered throughout South Korea according to Shin Hyun Yuk, who used to be a leader of Shincheonji for 20 years.⁵ Each tribe has settled on a new goal to recruit new members every year. This creates a lot of competition between the tribes. In order to accomplish this goal given to each tribe, they take advantage of any mean including lying which is used to get people to join in Shincheonji. Because of this immoral propagation activities which even influence on a family and on a normal church, many

⁵ "Shincheonji's official title is "Church of Jesus, the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony." Its headquarter(s) is (are) located in(on the) 4th floor (of the) Jalll Shopping Center in Seoul and two tribes of twelve(two of the twelve tribes), John and Simon are in Kyoung Gi Province. A (The) tribe of Bartholomew is located in Seoul and Kimpo, Matthew in Inchun, and..... Awennews (2013: <http://www.awennews.com>)

families have been exposed to the danger of collapse and Shincheonji precepts and instruction has driven the majority of Korean churches into chaos.

Having failed to register as a non-profit religious organization because of their negative influence on society, Shincheonji could not establish a legitimate church building. Instead, they rent a building and disguise the building as a normal church so that they can carry out the propagation activities continually. According to a survey, the number of these Shincheonji church buildings disguised as a regular Presbyterian churches is more than 150 and its numbers continue to grow rapidly now.⁶

We can see to what extent the Shincheonji religious movement is popular through the following two events. The first event is “Open Bible Seminars” which were held in Olympic hall in Seoul on early May, 2012. It accommodates a maximum of 4300 seated people, and for two days in a row, Lee gave lectures on the Bible four times a day. Every seat was rapidly occupied before another lecture started and people who couldn’t get into the hall stayed outside and listened to Lee’s teaching via a big screen TV. In addition to that, the other seminars held in the other nine main provinces were a great success with a large number of people attending. The

⁶ (2013: <http://newsmission.com>)

second event was entitled “The Culture and Art of Heaven”. It was held in Seoul Olympic Main Stadium, September, 2013. This is the Shincheonji National Olympiad featuring sports, card performances, and various other activities. Almost all the available seats were occupied and a spectacular 12,000-member card performance reminded the people of North Korea about the Arirang Festival (Han 2013:18).



The Shincheonji National Olympiad: Culture and Art of Heaven⁷

While Shincheonji only has 30 years of history, its systems are well organized in order to produce well-equipped disciples of Lee Man-Hee and it provides a free Bible study school. In order to graduate, every student is required to pass a Bible content exam of 100 questions and students who graduate are around 800 to 1000 each year. As of 2013, the total registered members in Shincheonji are near to 120000 and its number has almost

⁷ Shincheonji Homepage (2014:<http://www.shincheonji.kr>)

reached the appointed number, 144000 mentioned in Rev.7:4.⁸ Thus its rapid growth cannot be ignored and it also gives us an affair of how to respond this movement.

The number of Christians in South Korea has been decreasing for various reasons. The main reason would be the corruption of church leaders. Many mega church leaders become involved in the problems of abusing the finances of a church, scandal with woman, and heredity (Song 1992: 132-136). In addition, the movement of liberalism has a great impact on conservative churches (Kim H.S. 2015:170-171). While the number of normal churches has decreased, the number of other religions has grown up.⁹ However these days, the Korean church is facing a particular challenge that is called namely“Shincheonji.” The aim of my research is to help all Christians including church leaders to figure out truly what Shincheonji is and how to protect the church from the negative influence of the Shincheonji movement.

A. The meaning of Shincheonji

⁸ According to Mr. Lee’s book, Creation of Heaven and Earth, he teaches that “the 144,000 constitute a prophecy for those who unite to Shincheonji.” (Lee 2009:203-205)

⁹ According to Dr. Chel “the highest growth of Korean church in term of its number is found in 1970s. Its growing trend went on till 1985 from 500,198 in 1950 to 3,192,621 in 1985. However its growth had been stop in the middle of 1990s and rather has been decreased (Chel 2011: 1-2).

It would remain a puzzle if we do not understand the literal meaning of Shincheonji because the name itself implies what they believe and follow. The name, Shincheonji is derived from the Chinese characters. The word, 'Shin' 新 means 'New', the next word 'Cheon' 天 means 'Heaven', and 'Ji' 地 indicates 'Earth'. It is the emblem of the new heaven and earth which is mentioned in Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22; 2Peter 3:13 and Revelation 21:1. It would be really hard to define the meaning of the term "New heaven and earth" in those verses. Certain believers who have a dispensational background would say that it implies the physical Millennium (Pfeifferls 1962: 65:17) and others instructed in Covenantal named "A millennial" believers would say that "New heaven and earth" indicate a spiritual Kingdom of God rather than a physical kingdom (Calvin 2002: Is 65:1). However in the case of Shincheonji, the new heaven and earth refers neither to the physical Millennial Kingdom nor the spiritual Kingdom. It is rather referring figuratively to the new tabernacle (New Heaven) and the new congregation members (New Earth).¹⁰ Just like Moses who built a tabernacle on the earth after receiving the idea of how to build up temple which God had shown him from

¹⁰ Shincheonji Homepage (2014: <http://www.shincheonji.kr>)

heaven, people believe that the promised pastor would build up the new tabernacle and gather new saints.

B. The History before Shincheonji was founded by Lee

Apocalyptic movements have been very attentional phenomenon in Christian history.

This is because it is very easy to threaten people and make them ready to follow what the movement's leader requests. The following report shows us Mr. Lee's involvement in three other Korean apocalyptic movements before he founded Shincheonji. According to Dae-Buk Lee, who has specialized in the study of heresy for 20 years, there is the comment on Lee's previous life.

"Mr. Lee was born on September. The 15th. 1931, at 702 Punggark Village, Chung Do District, Kyoung Sang Province as a sixth son of twelve. He was just a regular country boy and when he was seventeen years old.... He moved to Seoul and worked as a handy man in a construction site.... One day, he was led by a pastor to a tent church and began a life of faith by receiving baptism by immersion. Then he went back to his hometown and, attending a Presbyterian church, he became a pious Christian. One day he read a book entitled "Spiritual Life" and he had a mystical experience. Not knowing how to pray, Lee went to the back-yard to pray. Leaving his eyes open, he began to pray. Suddenly, a tiny star came upon him and it spun upon Lee's

head like a helicopter. Being surprised, Lee woke his dad up who had been sleeping and showed him, saying “watch the star (Lee D.B 2008:225-227).”

In spite of many mystical dreams and visions he had undergone, his real life was not appeared to be being guided by God. His financial situation was getting harder and harder. Then he went back to Seoul and visited a church named a Temple of Tabernacle led by Jae Yul Yoo. After listening to Yoo’s powerful message, Lee admired Yoo’s excellent teaching. This led Lee to throw himself into studying the Bible. Meanwhile, upon hearing the voice of God saying “follow the truth”, Lee determined to be a member of the Tabernacle Temple led by Yoo (Lee D.B 2008:227).

Everybody would think Lee’s life of faith started from the Tabernacle Temple, but that was not the case. This is the secret Lee wants to hide; the fact that Man Hee Lee originally belonged to the Evangelism Center operated by Tae Sun Park for 10 years before becoming a member of Tabernacle Temple. The statement about this fact used to be on the homepage of Shincheonji but as it became problematic, they removed this statement from the homepage (Han 2013: 91). Why did he want to hide the fact? This is because Park, a teacher of Lee, was expelled from the

Presbyterian denomination and it considered him as heretic on Feb, 16th, 1956,¹¹ Lee does not want people to know his background of heresy and thus he deleted the incriminating information from the Shincheonji website.



The picture of Duk-Eun Chung¹²

What did Lee learn from Park for 10 years? Knowing who Park was would help us to figure out who Lee truly is. Park's life of sexual promiscuity started from the time he met a fifty year old woman named Duk-Eun Chung, who came from North Korea bring sexual promiscuity religion during May, 1947. She called herself "the great holy mother" and taught people that no one

¹¹ Unveil Shincheonji (2014):<http://cafe.naver.com/soscj/>

¹² Downwave (2014):<http://downwave.blog.me>

could be sanctified without the sexual relationship with her. Admired in her teaching which was called the doctrine of spirit and body, Park and his wife invited and provided a room for her. As time went by, more people came to learn about her doctrine. She taught it there for three months. Influenced deeply by her doctrine, Park began to build up his own heretical doctrine, which had been based on her teaching. Since then, many people including Park and his wife, have been involved in sexual relations with her and others. People believed that a sexual intercourse is the way to become purified. The person having intercourse with Chung earlier becomes purified first and has the privilege to hand one's purity over to the other sex. Desiring to purify a woman, a man stays on top of the woman during the sexual activity and the position is changed if a woman wants to purify a man.¹³ In addition, having denied one of Calvin's five creeds, namely predestination, Park argued that "John Calvin is in the middle of hell now" and called the pastors of traditional churches "sons of vipers." In accordance with the terms of Presbyterianism, he was expelled and they pronounced him and his teaching a heresy on Feb, 15, 1956. In addition to this, it was a hideous activity that Park had sexual intercourse with his mother in law and sister in law, and this had been officially reported in the daily newspaper in

¹³ Hanguira Newspaper 2014 (<http://h21.hani.co.kr>)

1957.¹⁴ Perceiving these facts about Park, Lee began to attend the Evangelism Center managed by Tea Sun Park in 1957. According to Lee, the Holy Spirit guided him to the center, and since then he has been a student of Park for 10 years.

As time went by, even Park's shallow bible knowledge had become collapsed and instead brought fabulous and ridiculous arguments about the deity of Jesus. The following account tell us how far he went wrong.

"As 1980 drew near, Park and his followers brought a radical revolution in Korean church history. Denouncing Jesus Christ as a son of a bitch or a son of Satan, they criticized three elements related to the divinity of Christ. The first was regarding Bible inerrancy; they argued that 98 percent of Scripture are made of errors. Secondly, Park thought he was better than Christ, because he had fasted twelve times while Christ only fasted once. Thirdly they criticized His sinless nature. Park said that because Mary, a mother of Jesus and a sinner, gave a birth to Jesus, He was filled with sins, Park said. Moreover, ignoring all written word in scripture, Park said "my word is the true word of God" and insisted his actual age was over 1,500,000,000,000 years old (Teak 2002:183)."

¹⁴ (Hangulra Newspaper 2014 (<http://h21.hani.co.kr>))

Park's abominable activities and teaching went on continually. He identified himself as the Righteous Man of the East, one of the two witnesses or olive trees in Revelation 11, Overcomer, and God (Felix 1964:110-120). This is too much to bear with. Once being educated in a proper institution or assembly, anyone would know the true character of Park's teaching. However, by 1963, the number of Park's followers has been over 800,000. Many people believed he would never die, or at least that the last day of the world would come within his lifetime (Felix 1964: 120). Those followers would have many reasons to follow Park, but the main reason is because he had performed many visible miracles.¹⁵ It is difficult to say whether these miracles are real or simply an artificial show but we cannot say all miracles come from God, because Satan also has the power to conduct them although the quality is incomparable. Nevertheless, due to Park's apocalyptic revelation, many followers deserted their families to offer worldly possessions with the goal of receiving eternal life on Park's terms. Even some pious women followers were eager to donate whatever they had; watches, clothing, and

¹⁵ Felix says "Mr. Park was an industrialist and elder in the Presbyterian Church who was attracted to revivalist movements. He had a growing sense that there must be more to the Christian faith than the Presbyterians seemed to offer. While helping to lead an all-night revival meeting for 20,000 people in southern Seoul in 1955, he received a vision of fire and water descending from heaven. He then came down from the platform and massaged the head of a man identified as a cripple, and Mr. Park's helpers then cried out that the man could walk. By sunrise, after Mr. Park had circulated among the crowd and massaged many heads and limbs, his helpers shouted to great applause that he had healed 1,000 people"(Felix 1964: 115-116).

wedding rings. According to Felix Moo, some woman shed their skirts during revival services because there was nothing else to give (Felix 1964: 119). It is a complete mystery that Lee Man-Hee joined the Evangelism Center, knowing exactly who Park was, Lee reported the joining Evangelism Center was carried out by the guidance of Holy Spirit. Meanwhile, Park was accused of defrauding his followers, and as a result, he was sentenced to two and a half years in jail in 1959. However, due to a regime change and a swift pardon for Park, his prison sentence was shortened and he became a free man again after several months in jail. His life had resulted in mass infection due to having a lot of sexual intercourses with various young women, and this was unveiled to people in 1970(Huntley 2002: 208). Before Park's scandals were published, Man-Hee Lee left the Evangelism Center and joined another end-time movement named the 'Tent Temple' movement founded by Jae Yul Yoo in 1969. Yoo became the second man who had a major influence on Lee's own doctrine. Unfortunately, Yoo's previous life of faith was also by no means normal. He was a member of the Hosnag Prayer House which was led by a senior pastor, named Jog Kyu Kim. As Kim's scandal with a young female member was made known, Yoo left the Hosang Prayer House with a substantial amount of members and founded his own church (Seung 2011: 139). Yoo believed strongly that the scriptures were made up of only parables and secrets. In line with Park's instruction, Yoo had

also emphasized on the end times and instructed people that God's judgment was imminent, that it would be impossible to enter heaven without knowing these parables and secrets, and that Jesus only gave Yoo the gift to interpret them. His method of understanding the scriptures was so peculiar that normal believers could not understand his teaching unless they were brainwashed to learn his way of interpretation. What he believed was that each verse of Scripture coupled with its own veiled verse which is located in other book, and only the one to whom God had granted the gift of interpretation, could interpret each pair correctly (Seung 2011: 139-140). In line with Park's own spiritual interpretation, there was a secret room near the reservoir of Mt. Chungkye, which is located in the southern outskirts of Seoul. This room would be a refuge of escape from the battle of Armageddon. As soon as all the chosen believers entered the room, the world would turn to a disastrous place filled with smoke and fire. Then the world would be governed by those saints (Seung 2011: 138-139). Yoo's Tent Temple movement was no sooner accused of fraud than 5,000 members were scattered. Subsequently, Yoo was arrested and put in jail for five years. As soon as he was released from the prison in 1980, he gave up his leadership of the Tent Temple, and gave its assets to the Presbyterian Church. He then immigrated to America in Oct, 1980 (Han 2013: 56), where he now has a private business.

Yoo downplays the teaching of Lee, because Lee has criticized him for leaving just as Lee's own movement started.

The third person who influenced Lee's religious movement, was the Man Bong Baek who had created an offshoot of the Tent Temple movement. Before Yoo, a leader of the Tent Temple movement was accused of defrauding people, Baek and Lee were Yoo's pious followers. Other six men including Baek were taken advantage of to be the followers as well. They called themselves the "Six Angels" and they worked together with Yoo in an effort to prepare for the end times at a secret room near the reservoir of Mt. Chungkye. Even though he left Yoo's movement, Baek's teaching and doctrine was not far from Yoo's. Baek did not hesitate to apotheosize himself and followers identified him with "Solomon." Baek, as a typical apocalyptic movement-leader, stipulated a date for the end of the world. Meanwhile, Lee Man Hee merged with Baek and became his disciple in 1978.¹⁶ According to Baek's own prediction, the last day of the world would be at noon March. 13, 1980. On this day he told all his 120 followers to gather together on the top of a mountain near to a horse racetrack. However the predicted time came, but nothing happened. After several days, Baek came back and told the followers that all

¹⁶ Christian blog (2014: <http://blog.naver.com>)

his ministries were over and he would ascend to heaven within three days. But when this date came and went, Beak's followers, including Lee, had deserted him. This was when Lee Man Hee gathered some of those followers and formed the Shincheonji Church of Jesus. The date was on March, 14, 1984 and Lee appointed this date as the beginning of Shincheonji (Han 2013: 102-103). Having been influenced by these three apocalyptic movement leaders, Lee has built up his own doctrine. In line with the three previously mentioned leaders' teaching, Lee argues that the Bible is comprised of parables and secrets. Without understanding the exact meaning of those parables and secrets in Scripture, no one, according to Lee's assertion, can be saved. No doubt he was also apotheosizing himself as the aforementioned apocalyptic leaders by calling himself the "promised pastor" and he asserted that only the promised one could impart a complete mastery of the scripture. Resembling the instruction which the leaders of the Tent Temple movement had taught, Lee also stipulated that Korea will be the place called the new heaven and new earth. As soon as the appointed numbers, 144,000 are filled, the era of Shincheonji will begin at Gwa Chon City which is located in the same valley predicted by Yoo earlier. Those elected numbers will subsequently be united with the souls of 144,000 martyrs who have been waiting in heaven. By that time, Lee will have turned into a fleshly immortal being and his followers will take part in this transformation as well (Seung 2011: 140-143).

To summarize, the root of the Shincheonji movement is found in three Korean apocalyptic movement leaders, and Lee's own doctrine is mostly influenced by Yoo's Tent Temple movement.

III. Shincheonji's main doctrine and its problems

If you want to discern whether doctrine is heresy or biblical, it is necessary to study the orthodox view first. Paul says "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed (Gal 1:8 NAS)." Unless one look at Scripture from an orthodox point of view, it will not be easy to see if the doctrine is fake or a genuine statement. Therefore my research is going to introduce the orthodox view first, and then deal with the problems of Lee's doctrines.

A. The nature of Biblical doctrine

The term "doctrine" comes from the Greek word "διδάχη." When used in active sense, it is the act of teaching or it is the result of teaching when used in the passive sense. In other words, doctrine is that which is believed and taught. It is the creed and a faith accepted as authoritative by believers. Based on the teaching of the Scriptures, Christian doctrine answers the essential questions of our life; namely, who God is, where human beings comes from, what the result of

sin is, and what our next destination after death is. The answers one finds with regard to questions mentioned above, become one's doctrine, faith, and content. The doctrine cannot be invented or created by individuals' ideas and philosophies, because all the elements of doctrines systematically come from the teaching of Scriptures. Therefore the doctrine has to be treated as the most reliable and trust worthy because it has been confined only to what is taught in the Bible (Elwell 1997: "doctrine" in electronic ed). For instance, the basic doctrine or teaching of the first generation of believers was "Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the Scriptures; that he was buried; and that he was raised to life on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures." The Christian faith is founded upon the belief of the community, that "Christ died for our sins, He was buried, and he was raised to life on the third day (Komonchak and Lane 2000: 291)." This doctrine is based upon 1 Cor 15:3-4, and is systematically and logically the overall truth of the Bible. Thus the doctrine refers to the entire body of essential theological truths which define and describe the message of the Scriptures.

These are the important functions of doctrine within the Christian community. The primary function of church teaching or doctrine, is to enable people to make the indispensable link between spirituality and doctrine. Christian's way of life is bound up with the doctrine. This is an indispensable relationship between the way of a believer's life and their doctrine. Some people

would disparage being harmonized with both doctrine and spiritual life. Inspired completely by the Holy Spirit, Paul, however, argued that a believer's spiritual growth is dependent on faithfulness to sound doctrine (Komonchak and Lane 2000: 293). In Paul's letter to the Colossians, he describes the responsibility of believers to be consistent life in line with the teaching of the Scripture (Col 2:6). When Jesus prayed to the Father for believers' spiritual growth, He said, "sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). The term "sanctify" refers to "set apart from sin." In other words, it means to be separated unto God; it encompasses the whole concept of spiritual growth. Jesus was teaching that truth provides the means of growth.

Second function of doctrine is to prevent believers from being deceived by false teaching. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul said "preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction." Then he added the reason saying "for the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (NIV: 2 Timothy 4:3, 4). This is Paul's final warning. In the last days men will not tolerate sound doctrine and will be dominated by their flesh desires and subsequently will look for false teachers who deliberately refuse to tell the truth.

Consequently, people will fall victim to fables, tickling their ears. In order to protect people from such a spiritual crisis, Paul gave Timothy and his people the following message in 1 Timothy 4:16 “watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” Here Paul emphasizes two theological demands. These are a personal holiness and a public instruction (doctrine), and the consequence of persevering in them is to save both Timothy and his hearers. Obviously our efforts in being holy and teaching doctrine, are not the source of our salvation, but they are the instruments God is using to save people from false teachers (MacArthur 2003:24-25). It is no doubt very hard to set the standard of being holy, but the standard of Biblical doctrine is crystal clear; it has a saving impact on those who hear it. Why is a doctrine most reliable method to guide people from falling victim to heresy? It is because doctrine provides people with discernment. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul expounded on what spiritual man can do. Knowing doctrine, spiritual man has a comprehensive ability to discern a falsehood and true (1 Cor 2:15). Then the question is: Who is the spiritual man? An earlier verse gives us the answer to this question. Not by human wisdom, but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, which refers to doctrine, believers can discern things. (1 Cor 2:13) discernment is third function of doctrine. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul describes how spiritual man respond to false teachings, “tossed back and forth by the waves,

and blown here and there by every wind of teaching (doctrine) and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14). In the same verse Paul first says: “Then we will no longer be infants.” In other words, a spiritual man and woman holding comprehensive doctrine, is not wavered by false teaching because they possess the knowledge of doctrine to discern between that which is false or true.

For instance, throughout entire Christian history, many scholars and pagans have attempted to re-interpret the doctrine of the Trinity, one of the mystical attributes of God. There are critics who illustrate the Trinity as liquid which is turned to ice and vapor. By picturing different forms of water, they are trying to understand the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one unit. However, the Trinity is not forms of God; each one of them is the equal and separable God. In terms of oneness, which is one of the attributes of God, this illustration is right, though the picture is not entirely accurate because it cannot expound the divisibility of three Gods, one of God's attributes as well. An infinite God cannot be fully described by a finite illustration. That is why the Trinity has to remain as one of the mystical doctrines, although those people without Holy Spirit try to analyze the Trinity by their own wisdoms and strengths, ignoring the doctrine. Thus the doctrine functions as the criteria to discern whether someone's teaching is correct or false. Things will become chaotic if a criterion is changed or transformed. A Believer's spirituality

which has made progress through Bible teaching will be in vain, and spiritual discernment will be obscure if biblical doctrine is changed or deterred. Therefore, we have to rely on biblical doctrine most unless Scripture itself teaches us different view.

B. Lee's philosophy in translating the Bible

Once having interacted with end-time groups, including the members of Shincheonji, one would find oneself being frustrated because of their strange interpretation of the Bible. This is because Lee is using different approaches to interpret the Bible. He ignores biblical doctrine which functions as the indispensable link with spirituality and spiritual discernment. I would say that this interpretation could be called "revealed-word to a promised prophet." As mentioned above, the end time movement leaders usually regard the Scripture as sealed by the angels or by Jesus, and those entities give revelations to final prophets. Having been educated in the center of those end time movement leaders, no doubt Lee considered himself as "a promised prophet or pastor, and Lee's title proves this fact."¹⁷ Just like previous movement leaders, Lee also focus on the last stage of Christianity, and especially focuses on prophecies about Christ's return to earth. According to Lee's comments, the prophet's interpretations are superior to

¹⁷ Anti Shincheonji (2014:<http://macodo777.blog.me>).

Christian doctrine and to the written Word (Han 2013: 152-153). This is why it is essential for people who want to be regular members of Shincheonji, to memorize the prophet's interpretations.¹⁸ Even when the prophet's interpretation or analyzation appears to be false, the promised prophet's explanation is the right one and is even superior to a traditional interpretation. In other words, the prophet is considered a "revealer of God's Word", and has the mystical power to add or deduct meanings that the content of the Scripture by no means supports. For instance, having regarded the words "ascending from the rising of the sun" (Rev 7:2 NAS) to mean the east, Lee refers to Korea as the east, Lee justifies his statement by suggesting that God revealed this knowledge to him (Lee 2009: 194). However Scripture itself does not make this clarification. In practice, the final authority to interpret the word of God is given to the prophet, while Lee finalizes the true meaning of the Scriptures. To Christians who believe that the Word of God written in Scriptures are a perfectly sufficient revelation; "the law of the Lord is perfect in reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;...(Ps 19:7-9), and "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 pet 1:3), God's written

¹⁸ According to the confession of people who had been in Shincheonji, "there is the beginning class which is called "gospel room" which is designed to decoy (wrong word: this does not make sense) people. After two months, "a mission room" is waiting for those who have finished the previous course successfully. After another two months, the last room, "propagation room" is ready for them. Thus it takes a total of 6 months to graduate from the school." (Han 2013: 48-54)

word has to be the final and correct authority. This paper will continually deal with Lee's own revelation which is not consonant with the independent voice of the written word of God and its doctrine.

C. Shinchonji's "doctrine of mates" (Isaiah 34:16)¹⁹ and its problems

The interpreting method Lee has learned and applied is focusing on a single word or single verse in lieu of understanding the entire context. Regardless of different themes and the narrative background, the meaning of the term itself becomes the final application. For example, the tree of knowledge in Genesis 2 is interpreted as a figurative evil's organization. This figurative interpretation is applied to all trees regardless of different context. In the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, The 4th chapter of the book of Daniel speak about a tree in the midst of the earth, which refers to the king and his domain who are bothering the people of God. In terms of the location of these trees, the tree of knowledge and the tree in Daniel, both are described as being planted in the "middle." Therefore according to Lee, the tree in the garden has to be an evil organization in the same way that the tree of the king is.

This contents was found in the book, "The Creation of Heaven and Earth" written by Lee.

¹⁹ Lee relates that Scripture are made of symmetry structure which is called "doctrine of mates." For instance, Old Testament has been portraying coming Jesus Christ (John5:39) and New Testament also has been anticipating "promised pastor (Lee 2009: 100)."

“The Old Testament testifies about Jesus coming soon (John 5:39) and the New Testament also indicates a promised pastor. As the Old Testament predicts about Jesus’ birth and life, the New Testament also expounds the coming pastor who has the ability to interpret Scripture (Lee 2009: 100).”

Under the premise that the Old and New Testaments both have symmetrical structure, Lee argues that all the prophecies the New testament mention will be fulfilled by a promised pastor in the same way that the prophecies of the Old Testimony had been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. What we are curious about is who the promised pastor will be. Then we need to view what is going to happen according to Bible. Incidentally, there is no mention regarding the promised pastor in the New Testament. However you can suppose that the pastor refers to a figurative and not a literal one. Provided that one was educated under conservative church leaders, one would think the truth that the promised pastor has to be Jesus Christ for Bible does say so in Acts 1:11. Jesus Christ however has not predicted that anybody else will come back to judge the world but himself. Let us look at two biblical views concerning the second coming of Jesus Christ. The First view is the A millennial view. When Jesus came to this earth first time, He came as the lamb bearing all the sins of the world. However the second coming of Christ is the complete opposite. He will come as Judge, Lord of lords and King of kings. During the

judgment, the Lord is going to judge people according to the faith in their lives. Those who do not have the faith in name of Jesus, will definitely be out of God's present, whereas others who possess true faith will be with God in heaven forever. This is the one of the Bible's teachings and doctrines. However, Lee, in order to apotheosize his identity, argues that the second coming of Jesus Christ already took place on the earth, and that Christ's spirit came upon Lee's body instead of the body of Christ (Han 2013: 129-132). According to an A millennial view, during the time of His second coming, Jesus Christ is supposed to judge the entire world and bring believers into heaven, while unbelievers are destined to be away from God's present. However, there is no judgment and no classification between Heaven and Hell. If Lee were the one carrying out the role of Jesus Christ, he would be a ruler over the entire world. However, the world government has been as used to be and nothing has changed. It is not fitting at all that Lee should be the promised pastor, even though he argues that the spirit of Jesus came upon him.

In order to maintain an open-minded understanding, let us look at another view, known as the Premillennial view"so that we might ascertain whether or not Lee's theories about the second coming is based on this view. According to this view, the rapture takes place first, and then seven years of tribulation start. The premillennialist believes that the millennial kingdom

starts after Jesus Christ comes back in physical form, which will happen after the seven years of tribulation. During the millennium, Jesus will rule the entire world together with those saints who will have been raptured before the seven years of tribulation and those who will have gone through the seven years tribulation. The world will become the heaven during this millennium, and people will not taste a death. However this period will not be final. After the millennium, “white throne judgment” will take place. Satan will be released from the endless pit, and he will persuade people to forsake Jesus and to rather follow Satan. “In chapter 20 of the book of Revelation” says the number of the followers of Satan will be like sand in the seashore. Although people have known Christ’s goodness and love for thousands of years, their hearts are depraved and subsequently they turn against God. Under the control of Satan, they will prepare a war against God; this is called “Gog and Magog” (Rev. 20:8). Then a blow of fire will come down from heaven, fall onto them and devour all of them. After this war, God’s final judgment will continue. This is the premillennial view and is considered one of three reliable doctrine throughout church history.²⁰

²⁰ According to Millard “Although all three millennial position, Amillennialism, Premillennialism, and Postmillennialism have been held virtually throughout church history, at different times one or another has dominated” (Millard 2000: 1212)

In case of Postmillennialism, the second coming of Christ will take place after symbolic millennium and along with this event, general resurrection of believers and unbelievers will occur at the same time. General judgement of all people then will take place. Following the resurrections and judgments, believers will be with God forever in heaven while unbelievers fall into other place (Benware 1995: 125-126). These are invariably three main millennium views (Benware 1995:92).

However, Lee's timeline for the second coming of Christ does not fit in all three views, In contrast to authoritative doctrines regarding eschatology, Lee has newly invented the unknown end-time theory which says that the Millennial Kingdom already started on March, 14, 1894 (Lee M.H. 2010: 436-438) which is the same date when Lee founded Shincheonji. If Lee's argument is right, the everyone on this planet would have had to watch all believers being raptured or some other events, but no one saw it. If the Millennial Kingdom has already started, believers living in this period ought not to suffer from sickness and death. But so many followers of Lee have been suffering from physical sickness and have even died in the time of Millennial Kingdom.

Thus, what Lee calls "pair doctrine (Han 2013: 139)" does fit neither in with Scripture nor in doctrine but it is the means invented by Lee to elevate his identity as a god. The following

paragraph shows another of Lee's doctrine called "orthodoxy and heresy" which is derived from the "pair doctrine."

"How can we tell the difference between orthodoxy and heresy? Orthodoxy refers to true believers who are united with God, and heresy refers to the ones united with Satan.... The initial representative of orthodoxy God created was Adam. However as he hearkened to the words of a snake controlled by Satan, God left Adam and went to Noah.... Thus Adam, who used to be orthodox turned to heresy by listening to the snake, and Noah emerged as part of the new orthodox. As Noah was accused of corrupting himself, God left him and went to Moses. Due to the faults of Moses, God departed from him and went to Jesus Christ and Christ predicted a promised pastor (Lee 2009: 153-157)"

In this way, Lee stipulates the orthodoxy and heresy by dealing with each character's good traits as well as their shortcomings. Lee argues that all of the bible are comprised of such a symmetrical structure, and this is called "pair doctrine." This pair doctrine is ultimately designed to drive people into believing the deity of Lee and the argument is that he is the promised pastor. As matter of fact many followers call Lee by various kinds of titles, such as "Anointed,"

“Overcomer,” “Two witnesses,” “One sitting on throne with Jesus Chris. Another one of these titles is “promised pastor.”²¹

In order to rationalize his pair doctrine, Lee takes advantage of the Bible verse, Isaiah 34:16.

“Look in the scroll of the LORD and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together”

(Isa 34:16 NIV). Based upon this single verse, Lee rationalizes that all scripture demands being part of a pair and insists that only the one anointed one by God has the power to interpret the Bible.

Let us therefore analyze this verse from Lee’s point of view, as well as from the point of view of the biblical context in which the verse is found.

If one looks at this verse without the entire context, it could seem to be correct that everything has its own pair. Unfortunately the words “None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate” have been interpreted and understood by many normal church leaders in the way Lee expounds them. However, this verse by no means refers to the doctrine “every Bible verse has its pair.” Instead, this verse implies the mate of an animal, and is not referring to a pair of

²¹ Anti Shincheonji 2014 (<http://macodo777.blog.me>)

verses. From Isaiah chapter 34:1 to 35:10, it is talking about a cry for justice against the nations, especially Edom. Isaiah, a prophet in the Southern Kingdom who had been anointed by God had been struggling with Israel's kings and people about God's coming judgment due to their disobedience. Isaiah perceived, however, that God would not forsake His oldest son, Israel forever even though he had to deserve God's punishment soon. The book of Isaiah contains two main themes, God's Judgment and the Restoration of Israel. Particularly chapter 34 and the early part of chapter 35 are focusing on God's revenge against the sinful nations; Edom is only one example of God's judgment in verses 5-6 in Isaiah 34. When Jesus Christ comes back not as the lamb bearing the sin of the world, but as a Judge, the divine judgment will be upon the entire world. In the Day of the Lord, Jesus will take revenge on them in the same way they have treated the Jews in verses 2-5 in Isaiah 34 (Wiersebe 2002: 41). The following verses show the consequence of God's revenge. Because of a thoroughgoing destruction of Edom, the entire land will be desolated and no one will be able to survive. Instead, many unclean animals will replace the former inhabitants of the nation in verses 11-15 in Isaiah 34. In order to emphasize upon the fact that God will surely implement this judgment, He says in verse 16: "Look in the scroll of the Lord and read; none will be missing." The term "the scroll of the Lord" refers definitely to the book regarding the story of Noah, and is to express the certainty of God's

judgment liken to the time of Noah. The next words show the consequences of the Judgment; “not one will lack her mate.” The word “mate” is the same word mentioned at the end of verse 15, and the meanings are identical (Motyer 1993: 271-2). In other words the previous word “mate” in verse 15 implies animals and repeated word “mate” in verse 16 also indicates the same animals.

The reason Isaiah has mentioned an abundance of different types of animal life in the previous verses: hawk, porcupine, owl, raven, jackals, ostriches, wild beasts, hyenas, satyrs, night hag, and kites, is to remind the readers of Noah’s animals entering the ark. After God’s judgment on the earth by means of the flood (Gen. 6-7), the only inhabitants were Noah’s family and the animals that had been in the ark. The city of Edom will be similar to the one after the flood, and all the wild animals will replace her kingdom, and only animals and their mates will inhabit in the land of Edom (Seitz 1993: 237). Therefore the term “mate” does not justify the doctrine of mates; it is just referring to an animal’s mate. As matter of fact, all of Lee’s doctrines are formulated with this symmetrical structure. They are first tabernacle and the second tabernacle, the first heaven and last heaven, of illusion revelation and true revelation. This is what he calls his “pair doctrine.” However Isaiah 34:16 cannot be an anchor verse to support the doctrine of mates.

D. Shincheonji's doctrine of the Old and the New Covenant and its problems

Another doctrine that Shincheonji has employed is “old and new Covenant” which is the offshoot of the doctrine of mates. In order to see whether the second of Lee doctrines, “Old and New covenant” is biblical or not, it is first necessary to view the relationship between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. This research is therefore going to deal with the relationship first, and thereafter introduce Lee's doctrine of Old and New Covenant and its problems.

1. The Relationship between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

The Bible is mainly divided into two sections, the Old Testament and New Testament. Sometimes it is called Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The term, “covenant” was often used to describe the arrangement between two parties, which also required a mutual obligation to honor in ancient times.²² While many horizontal relationships are described as covenantal, such as marriage and other various arrangements between two parties, The Bible uses this term to build up the relationship between God and His people. Through the covenant, God expressed His grace first to Israel and then to the church, and wanted to provide humanity with the meaning of human nature and salvation (Elwell & Beitzel 1988: 530). The two features of the

²² Willmington defines the term, covenant “A covenant (*berith* in Old Testament Hebrew, *diatheke* in New Testament Greek) is a promise or an agreement between God and man.” (Willmington 1987:92)

covenant are condition or unconditional but in terms of salvation through Christ, it is purely unconditional.

The first agreement God made, was the covenant with Adam before the fall. The covenant was that had Adam wanted to remain in Eden, he should have obeyed the command; this particular promise applied to the tree of knowledge- covenant and it was conditional. This is not entirely the covenant of salvation. The term “salvation” is used mainly to express deliverance from death. Before his disobedience, Adam was sinless and had no need for someone’s help to save him from the danger of death. Unfortunately, through the deception of Satan disguised as snake,²³ Eve, Adam’s wife, took the fruit and ate it and also offered some to Adam. They were both convinced to eat it in the hope of being equal with God. The consequence of disobeying God was that Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden.

Before the fall, Adam and Eve had the free will to please God and to enjoy a relationship with Him. However since the fall, all human beings including Adam, do not have any ability to please God with their wills. Sin becomes part of humans we have no power to cleanse ourselves from that sin, as mentioned in Jer 13:23. In other words, human beings cannot fulfill

²³ MacArthur supports that the snake is identified with Satan: “The word in Genesis 3:1 means “snake.” The apostle John identified this creature as Satan (cf. Rev. 12:9; 20:2) as did Paul (2 Cor. 11:3). The serpent, a manifestation of Satan, appears for the first time before the fall of man.” (MacArthur 2005: 15)

the conditional covenant due to their sinful natures. It is for this reason that Rom 3:23 says “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23 NAS). That is, it is impossible to fulfill the conditional covenant to earn salvation. Knowing exactly who we are, God initiates the unconditional covenant to save us, and this is called the “covenant of grace”. In Gen 3:15 God promised to give Adam and Eve ‘a seed,’ Jesus Christ who choose to be a Savior. This is the unconditional covenant and the covenant of salvation. However, Lee argues that the “tree of knowledge-covenant” is the covenant of salvation, since the consequence of disobedience is death. This does not make any sense, because Adam was not on the brink of death when the tree of knowledge-covenant was arranged.

The next covenant was given to Noah who was only righteous man on the earth. The Noahic Covenant can be found in Genesis 9:8-17 and it is the arrangement God made with two entities, namely, Noah, and his descendants after the flood Judgment which destroyed the entire world. God promised Noah that there would be never be another worldwide flood as happened in the days of Noah. As a sign to remember this promise, God settled the rainbow in the cloud. For this reason there are some who call it the “rainbow covenant.” One of the main characteristics of the Noahic covenant is that it is a soundly unconditional one. There is no demanded deed or mandatory obedience for human beings to fulfill the promise. It is totally dependent upon God

alone. No matter how wicked mankind becomes, the covenant which is based upon God's faithfulness alone will be kept. This does not mean that God will never destroy the earth again. As found in the second book of Peter chapter 3: 10- 11; and in Revelation 20:9, 21:1, "God is going to come back to judge the world not with the flood but with fire which is known as the day of the Lord." Nonetheless the covenant with Noah has been still in effect since the days of Noah (Ryken, Penney, & Reid 2000: 177). Lee convinces people that God left Adam and moved to Noah. If does so, there are a critical issue arisen; as God left Adam, He moved directly to Noah (Lee 2009: 153-154). Lee's point ignores two important facts. Firstly, he disregards a time gap between the days of Adam and the days of Noah. There is a time gap of approximately 1000 years between the two figures. Since Noah was not part of the generation which followed Adam, nor was he a contemporary figure, the shifting God's presence from first created man to Noah whose generation is far from Adam, is not logical. Secondly, ignorance is found in other faithful figures in between Adam and Noah. According to Lee's assertion, God wiped out all descendants of Adam with the flood judgment due to their corruptions (Lee 2009: 147). However, Enoch, who lived during this time, was one of Adam's descendants and he walked with God, which means that God was with him. Later he ascended alive to heaven because of his faithfulness to God. In addition, Hebrew 11 introduces many faithful figures between Adam

and Noah. All of them were with God and God was with them. In this regard, Lee's covenant doctrine cannot be regarded as biblical.

To return to the covenant, one must note that the covenant of redemption and grace which dominates the entire Bible begins with Abraham. Calling Abraham who actually was unworthy to deserve the title "the founder of a great nation," God blessed him with the covenant which required an obligation of obedience (Gen12: 1-7); this was conditional. This crucial covenant which was an agreement between unequal parties is described in Genesis 15. Approaching Abraham in a vision and speaking with him, God took the initiative in the ritual of "the cutting of the covenant" between God and Abraham. Having Abraham sleep, God went through the animal carcasses alone in the form of a smoking pot and flaming torch. This ritual activity implemented by God symbolizes that the covenant belongs to God alone (Gen 15:7-21) (Elwell & Beitzel 1988: 532). Through this covenant, God promised Abraham that Palestine belonged to his descendants forever, and that the number of his offspring would be like the number of the stars in the heavens. This was the unconditional covenant and had been carried out by God alone. God added the vital promise regarding the "seed" in Gen 22:17 which refers to the coming Messiah. The covenant was an unconditional one as well.

So far, God had taken the initiative in retaining a covenant relationship with a particular man and his particular descendants. However, no longer establishing the covenant with a series of patriarchs, God built the covenant with an entire nation. This is called the “Sinaitic covenant” and it became the formal institution of a relationship between God and His chosen people, Israel. This was the conditional blessing given to Israel through Moses. Had they been faithful to the terms of this “Sinaitic covenant” in Exodus 19:20 (Ryken, Penney, & Reid 2000: 178), Israel could have possessed the Promised Land at that time and enjoyed it. However, Israel forfeited all God’s blessings by disobeying the commandments. This covenant is appeared to be that it is conditional covenant but the blessing of the covenant is little delayed due to their disobedience. However God was planning to give Israel the territory, just like the covenant He had made with Abraham to give him the Promised Land (Gen 15:18). This was unconditional.

At this point we come to the Davidic Covenant. Whereas the Sinaitic covenant was built between God and Israel through Moses acting as mediator and the promise was regarding the land, the covenant between God and David is with regard to the everlasting throne and kingdom. It specifically refers an everlasting covenant with David’s royal lineage (2 Sam 23:5) (Elwell & Beitzel: 1988: 535). In other words, it is called a messianic covenant. Through the

everlasting nature of the covenant with David, God was presenting a Messiah, Jesus Christ who would be born of David's descendants.

Up until this point, God had various covenants with different believers and with different conditions. However one unique, consistent and everlasting covenant throughout all the history of the Old Testament was the covenant regarding the coming Messiah. God promised Adam and Eve "seed" in Gen 3:15, Abraham "seed" in Gen 22:17,²⁴ and "offspring" even to David in 2Sam7: 12. All are referring to Jesus Christ; Only Christ is able to take revenge on the enemy of Eve, all nations are blessed through the name of Jesus, and Christ only is the everlasting King of the world. All the covenants concerning the Messiah have been fulfilled by Jesus Christ in the New Testament, which is called a new covenant. Even all the conditional covenants which demand complete obedience to be blessed in the Old Testament, have been fulfilled by Jesus Christ who obeyed all the requirements from the law and who has ratified a new covenant through his shed blood on the cross. The new covenant is a new arrangement which Jeremiah had been looking forward to seeing (Jer. 31:31-33) and the author of Hebrews had referred to (Heb 8:8,13; 12:24; 9:15). By the divine initiative of God, the new covenant would be

²⁴ "The last part of the earlier quoted Genesis 22:17, and Genesis 22:18, do not refer to the people of Israel in general. The offspring or Descendant of Abraham whom that passage refers to, is Jesus. It is Jesus who was to possess "the gate of his enemies". Biblespages 2015 (<http://www.biblespages.net>)

established and would be evident within human hearts and a radical spiritual transformation would be happen. It was necessary that God had to take the initiative to establish the new covenant because sinful human beings are unable to keep the covenant themselves. John Calvin calls it the “depravity of a human’s heart” which is derived from Romans 1. It is for this reason that God alone can initiate it by sending His one and only Son. Jesus Christ has satisfied all demands of the covenant by shedding His divine blood on behalf of the entire world (John 3:16). His sacrifice has restored the covenant relationship between all human beings and God. Through the faith in Jesus Christ and by receiving forgiveness by the blood of Jesus, people can identify themselves with Christ and through Him people can enter into a covenant relationship with God (Elwell & Beitzel 1988: 536). In other words, this is the redemption of God and ultimate blessing to believers.

In conclusion, in the Old Testament the two main covenants have been arranged between two parties that is conditional and unconditional. All the conditional covenants which could not be kept by people, have been fulfilled by Jesus Christ. All the unconditional covenants with regard to the coming Messiah have been fulfilled by Jesus Christ as well (Rom 5:17-21). Thus we see that all things are about Jesus Christ. Through each covenant in the Old Testament, God wants to foreshadow the coming Messiah, the only One who is able to fulfill the covenant

and please God, and in the New Testament, God unveils that the long-awaited Messiah is Jesus Christ. Thus the relationship between the Old and the New Testament is absolutely inseparable. Both the New and the Old Covenants are devoted to describe Jesus Christ.

2. Lee's approach to Old and New covenant.

One of the familiar terms to a layperson in a church would be the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. It would not be easy to discern the difference between the biblical concept or relationship of the Old and New Covenant and Lee's new doctrine of them, unless one has a solid foundation in this area. The radical difference between biblical covenant theology and Lee's covenant theory is its effectiveness. According to Lee, all covenants given to a party are considered totally temporal and there is by no means the united content between Old and New Testament (Han 2013: 160). Following comments are taken from the book "The creation of heaven and earth."

"God has chosen a certain man to make a covenant since Adam. Whenever the man or the other party breaks the covenant, God chooses another one to establish the covenant. For instance, Noah was chosen to make the covenant when Adam broke the promise with God. As the covenant with Adam became the Old Covenant, the covenant with Noah was subsequently regarded as the New Covenant. However, as the generation of Noah became corrupted, God

made the covenant with Abraham which became New Covenant while previous covenant with Noah was considered the Old Covenant. This process has been repeated and continued up until the first advent of Jesus Christ (Lee 2009:177).”

Lee argues that if somebody has a new covenant, the previous covenant automatically becomes the old covenant. Lee’s covenant doctrine makes sense when we understand it in a literal sense, because the term “new” indicates that it would replace the “old”. However, we should not understand these terms in a literal sense but in a spiritual sense. As mentioned above, the covenant had been given to a different people in a different era though, it has referred to a virtually identical promise regarding Jesus. As we establish Jesus as a central figure, the covenants prior to Jesus are called the Old Covenants, and covenants after Jesus are called the New Covenants.

Following shows the reason why Lee argues that his covenant theory is biblical. Lee wants to rationalize his argument by suggesting that the covenant he personally received from God is a new covenant, and that it is just as effective and authoritative as the other covenants mentioned in the Bible. This means that the traditional biblical teaching and doctrine about the covenant is no longer orthodox and that Lee’s own teaching and doctrine is the new covenant.

In addition to this, in order to insist that his covenant is the new one, Lee mentions Yoo's temple of the tabernacle and considers it as the old covenant.²⁵ As discussed earlier in this paper, Yoo played a role in the history of Shincheonji by initiating the temple of the tabernacle. Lee was one of his followers and was influenced greatly by him. However, as Yoo's temple was broken up, Lee argues that the second temple of the tabernacle has been built, and that new covenant has been given to Lee who becomes the owner of the new temple. The following text comes from the book, "The growth of Shincheonji history."

"New covenant written by a "president Lee Man Hee" with his followers' blood, unveils that all written predictions in the Bible are being fulfilled these days, and that it is the promise for the followers of Lee to keep the covenant (Lee 2009:49)."

According to Shin Hyun Yuk, who used to be a leader in the education department in Shincheonji, the seven department leaders made impressions of their fingerprints using their own blood on a covenant record sheet made by Lee. By performing this ritual, Lee wanted to prove that his covenant is new and the old one is now obsolete (Han 2013: 163). Unfortunately,

²⁵ Lord's sunflower 2014 (<http://knw1022.blog.me>)

Lee's disregard for an orthodox covenant has extended to the New Testament's teaching which is being taught in regular conservative churches. Lee says the following words in his book:

"There are no pastors preaching the truth and no seekers for the truth in this generation. There is no one who realizes the true state of this generation which is filled with darkness. People respect God with their lips, but they are only attracted to the physical blessing, and they cannot discern between orthodox and unorthodox. Similar to old times when God replaced one who did not keep a covenant with another, Jesus now chooses a new pastor to preach the truth (Lee 2009: 155)."

Lee's argument implies that all orthodox teachings have become part of the old covenant, which is no longer in effect, and that his teaching has become new covenant, which has equal authority to the Scriptures in this generation. To some extent, one has to admit that there are many negative influences coming from the mega church leaders in South Korea as previously mentioned by Lee. In fact, several pastors put too much emphasis on the prosperity gospel; implying that being a Christian means being a rich and successful man in this society. However, the majority of preachers' sermons are based on the solid word of God, and there are many people looking forward to hearing the pure word of God from a pastor. Having dealt with all the emerging problems from the main church leaders in Korea, Lee has denounced entire

protestant churches and their leaders, and also considers all their messages as heretical regardless of the teaching content. Suddenly, according to Lee's criteria, the teaching and content of all the conservative churches' pastors in South Korea has become heretical. For this reason Lee criticize the other churches. Needless to say, Lee wants to deify himself as a promised pastor having a unique capability to interpret the Bible. This is procedure to honor Lee's identity. Since the content of his teaching is completely different from a traditional interpretation, it is necessary that Lee first denounces an orthodox doctrine in order to make his own doctrine acceptable. In order to persuade people that his doctrine has been inspired by God to be the new covenant, secondly he has to elevate his identity as a promised pastor. Moreover by teaching his followers the doctrine, the gospel of the Bible is rejected. Calling himself the promised pastor, Lee argues that salvation can be given to the one who receives and welcomes his doctrine.

3. The Biblical approach to Lee's doctrine, "Old and New covenant."

Instead of debating Lee's doctrine of the old and new covenants with logic, let us look at what the Bible has to say about it. Although it was mentioned previously, let me add additional information concerning Lee's old and new covenant doctrine, which is based upon his book, "The creation of heaven and earth." Lee claims that old covenant which had been made with

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and even John the Baptist is a corrupted condition, and that the time of physical Israel is over and the new era of a spiritual Israel has started. In other words, the later time has begun, as Jesus Christ has already come to the earth. Since the first advent of Jesus Christ, His disciples preached the gospel which He had taught them. At the end of the time, Jesus Christ will descend onto the promised pastor in spirit to preach the gospel.

This can be found in the Old Testament (Mal3:1; Ps2:6-7; Isa 61:1-3; Jer 31:22). The promised shepherd is Jesus Christ and the New Testament (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:13-15; Rev 1:1-3; 22:8, 16) verifies that Jesus Christ is the true One who was predicted in the OT. Thus Christ will also appoint the promised pastor when the end time is near (Lee 2009: 154).

This is the basic theory of Lee's Old and New Covenant doctrine. Very importantly, we also need to know whether the old covenant has been abolished completely or whether it is still in effect. The first reference to answer this question is found in the book of John 5:39; "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me" (John 5:39 NAS). Jesus Christ performed a miracle on the Sabbath Day by healing the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years in Jerusalem. The healing miracle, regardless of His goodness, stirred the anger of the religious leaders and they challenged the authority of Christ to heal the sickness on the Sabbath. In verses 24-29, Christ claimed to have

the authority to raise the dead, and in the next passage, verses 30-47, He claimed that there are valid proof which supports His deity in Old Testament. In particular, verse 39 answers the question regarding His deity. He showed appropriate evidence from the Old Testament; “you search the Scriptures (39a).” The term “scriptures” is not talking about the New Testament but it is regarding the Old Testament; more specifically speaking, it refers to the oral Torah (Carson 1991:263). Because New Testament was not recognized as the Scripture at that time, everybody knew that the term referred to the Old Testament. As matter of fact, the Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day undoubtedly did throw themselves into studying The Scripture, because they believed the final acceptance by God would be available to the one who diligently studied the Scripture. It is for this reason that Christ added the following words; “because you think that in them you have eternal life.” Now we can see that Christ wanted to talk about salvation. Religious leaders had been attempting to seek salvation through the diligent study of the Scriptures. However, Christ corrected them by explaining that salvation comes not by knowledge of the book but by finding out who the Scriptures foreshadowed. This can found at the end of verse 39, where it says “it is these that bear witness of Me.” Jesus says that Old and New Testament are the Scriptures that testify about Him. Although He did not adduce specific passages, Christ says that the writer of Old Testament Scripture has been speaking and writing

of Christ. In other words, Jesus reminded the Jews that studying Scripture is not the way to find eternal life but that the Scriptures were the very writings that testified of Him. By using various methods such as predictive prophecy, covenants, revelatory events and anticipatory statutes, the Old Testament is understood to point to Christ and His ministries linked with his teaching, his death and resurrection. If they had studied hard with pure faith, they would recognize that the Man standing among them was the true Messiah (Nichol 1978: John 5:39). Moreover the salvation, Jesus argues, is only through Jesus, and not through anyone else (JOHN 14:6). The same truth should have been applied to Lee. Had Lee studied the Old Testament carefully with eyes of faith, he would have seen that the ultimate purpose of the Old Testament was to describe the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ and only His name is the way to receive eternal life. We can see that the various covenants which appeared in the Old Testament have by no means been abolished by the New Testament and have not been turned to heresy. Christ brought about that all the covenants which had been established from Adam to David including the prophets, are legitimate and orthodox. Even conditional covenants as mentioned above, have been fulfilled by the obedience of Jesus Christ.²⁶

²⁶ ` Carson says "Jesus makes a similar point in numerous passages in the Synoptic Gospels: both law and the prophets prophesy until John (Mt11:13), and Jesus has come to fulfill the law and the prophets (Mt5:17). Paul discovered that the law was not life-giving in itself (Rom7:10), and argue that, granted the sinfulness of the human

The following three verses also prove the validity of the Old Covenant. Jesus says that ““Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad” (Joh 8:56 NAS). The same promise was also given to Moses “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me” (John 5:46 NAS). According to Lee’s argument, Abraham’s Covenant had to become the Old Covenant which became useless when the New Covenant was built up with Moses later on. However, both faithful forefathers were referring to the same One, and the covenant was fulfilled by the One, Jesus Christ. In addition to this, Jesus says that the law of Moses, the predictions of the prophets, and even the Psalms had been written to describe Jesus, and through Him all the promises given to them were fulfilled (Luke 24:44). Having lived in a different era and with different circumstances, one unique being commonly had waited for and portrayed was Jesus Christ. Upon having the covenant regarding the Messiah, All the pious forefathers in the Old Testament had been looking forward to seeing the covenant being fulfilled, and Jesus was the one who fulfilled the covenant. Unfortunately Lee does not understand it in that manner, he takes advantage of the book of Jeremiah instead (Jeremiah

race, no such life-giving law was possible (Gal. 3:21). Jesus Christ is the one to whom the Father has granted the right to have life in himself and to impart it to others (5:21, 26), as the Prologue has already suggested (1:4). He is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes (Rom.10:4)” (Carson 1991:263-4)

31:31-34)²⁷ in an effort to support his theory that the New Covenant cannot be in accordance with Old Covenant. In the same way that most heresies focus on a single verse, Lee's focal point is in the words "not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer 31:32). However, it is not about the changed covenant, but is about the changed condition of those receiving. The content and nature of the covenant are the same as they used to be, but the verse says that the condition of the believers receiving the covenant has changed. Jeremiah compared two conditional covenants, one covenant was the one given to "the house of Judah," which referred to the Mosaic Covenant contained in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And the other covenant Jeremiah described, is God's New Covenant. As noted earlier, human beings have lost the ability to obey God's words completely since the fall of Adam. Due to man's nature which is inseparable from sin, all the conditional covenants have been broken by people (Jeremiah 11:1-8). However God's holy standard cannot be changed. Therefore all people in the

²⁷ Jeremiah 31:31-34 (NAS) "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Old Testament had to deserve the consequence of their disobedience with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Something had to be changed in order to receive a blessing from God in lieu of a curse.

Jeremiah expounds the difference between the Old and the New Covenant by boasting of two features of the New Covenant. First, unlike the Old Covenant, God's New Covenant provides believers with the privilege of the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, as predicted in Joel 2:28-32 (Walvoord 1985: 1171). Due to God's bestowal of Holy Spirit on believers, the inner ability in our hearts to obey His holy standards is restored and we can enjoy His blessings.

Jeremiah expressed such a change with the following words; "I will put My law within them, and on their hearts I will write it" (Jer. 31:33) (Thompson 1980: 581). Secondly, unlike the Old Covenant, God's way to manage the sins of people has changed. The consequence of disobedience had always resulted in the curses of the Old Covenant. However, God's New Covenant, as noted in Jer. 31: 34, provides the people with the divine provision for sin; God will forgive people's iniquity, and will also not remember their sin. This does not mean that God overlooks people's sins and the penalty thereof. On the contrary in the New Covenant God provided a substitute, Jesus Christ, to take care of those penalties through the shedding of His blood. In other words, Jesus Christ takes a sinner's place and becomes the Scapegoat. Thus,

Jeremiah by no means maintained that the content of the Old Covenant was not in accordance with the New Covenant. As Isaiah claimed in Isaiah 55:11, “So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it” (Isa 55:11 NAS). The words of the Bible have eternal power and their direction will never be altered by anything.

Therefore Lee’s doctrine regarding the Old and New Covenant cannot be Biblical doctrine.

E. Shincheonji’s doctrine of salvation by good deeds.

One of the critical errors that plague the church is the subject of salvation and good works. Some suppose that gaining enough merit for salvation is mandatory, whereas others think that good works have no connection whatsoever with salvation. However, the Bible clearly states that one is saved through faith alone, and that good works are not needed. This fact is especially evident in the book of Romans; Rom. 3:28; “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law” (Rom 3:28 NAS). However, this teaching seems to be contradicted in James 2:18-26. These verses discuss the fact that good works are crucial evidence to prove whether someone has been truly saved or not. On the other hand, the leader of Shincheonji, Man Hee Lee, claims that salvation is granted through two essential merits, faith

and works. In other words, the person having true faith can lose their salvation if there are no good works found in their lives.

In order to find out whether Lee's doctrine of salvation by good works is biblical or not, It is necessary for us to look at the orthodox view. After that, this research is going to point out certain verses in regard to salvation by good works, and why his interpretation of these verses is inappropriate.

1. The Biblical view of salvation by good works

The traditional orthodox position on salvation is connected to the understanding of the human predicament. If we revisit the story of the first human beings Adam and Eve, we notice that the relationship between Adam and God was a very important one. Due to Adam's deviation from the law, the relationship was broken and the consequence of his sin resulted in his very nature being spoiled. The only desire left in every human's heart is an inclination towards evil, and a propensity for sin. In other words, God has to restore the relationship Himself, because of the depravity of our hearts (Millard 2000:917-918). In addition to the need to reestablish our relationship with God, there is also the need to change the condition of our hearts from an inclination toward sin to a desire to live righteously. This transformation is called 'regeneration' or 'rebirth' in theological terms. People get saved through these two changes. As

noted earlier, the entire process of salvation is accomplished by God's initiative and afterwards this salvation can be seen by other human beings through faithful confession and a fruitful life. Then from a human perspective, how we know whether one gets saved or not. By looking at one's faithful confession or at fruitful life.

The matter of justification by faith versus justification by works is appeared to be a supernatural issue and some people regard it as a very controversial in Scripture (Rom.3:24, 28; James 2:18-26). However, there is no conflict between these arguments; Paul's faith alone and James' good deeds. Paul and James was merely looking at the same problem from different angles. In Paul's case, he had in mind the Jewish Christians in Rome who believed that faith was not enough to be saved, and that good works played a role in salvation (Douglas 1996:221). Thus he taught them that no one can ever be good enough to earn salvation. It was for this reason that it was necessary for God to change us from being guilty sinners to being righteous through faith in Christ Jesus alone. While Paul put an emphasis upon faith, James stressed good works as the consequence of genuine faith. It also implies that Paul did not disregard the importance of good deeds (Rom. 1:5) while at the same time James did not ignore the importance of faith (Jam 14:14-26) (Dennis 1995:53). A verse which accurately represents the answer to what leads a lost soul to salvation, would be Ephesians 2:10; "For we

are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10 NAS). It implies that salvation is entirely of God and the good works naturally follow as the consequence of salvation. God takes the initiative to both save sinners as well as to complete the salvation. Even by doing good works, we cannot claim any glory because the deeds are done by the grace of God alone. Check the following three arguments from verse 10.

First, Genuine salvation results in human beings becoming new creations, a transformation which is accomplished by God alone.

Paul says, “for we are His workmanship(Ephesians 2:10 NAS).” An emphatic word order is used in the Greek, with the emphasis being on the first word of the clause, ‘His’ (Best 1998: 229).

Paul is emphasizing the truth that our salvation was ordained by God from eternity, and that there is nothing we did to earn salvation. As mentioned in Ephesians 2:1, we were ‘dead in our sins’ in the same way that something dead like a lump of meat in a butcher shop, has no desire to please God. However God raised us up from the dead. All things were done by God alone.

Along with this salvation accomplished by God, comes another important element. This is the fact that our natures have been changed from being an old creation to a new creation. The term “workmanship” is ποιημα in Greek and it is repeated in only one other place in the New

Testament, where it is translated as “what has been made” (Roman 1:20) (Best 1998: 229).

Paul is not referring to a regular work but to the works of God as creator. Just as God brought creation into existence, He brought the power of creation into our lost soul when He saved us.

The supporting verse for this is found in 2Corinthians. 5:17 “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.” The term “His workmanship” in Ephesians 2:10 implies His complete sovereignty over salvation and the re-creation of a lost soul (Boles 1993: Eph 2:10).

Second, Genuine salvation results in a life of good works.

A student with a reformed theological outlook would say that people are saved by faith alone. It is not necessary to have subsequent good works to be saved; salvation is achieved by grace alone, apart from works. However, reformers would not agree with the view that after being saved, people may continue living in sin. John Calvin said “we have been clear upon the fact that good works are not the cause of salvation; let us be equally clear upon the truth that they are the necessary fruit of it (Calvin 1960: 798).” No doubt we are saved by faith alone not by good deeds but we are saved for good works. It is very critical to discern between these two views; being saved by two merits, faith and virtuous deeds, and being saved for good works. It is likely that both views demand good works, but the first one’s stance demands each individual

merit, faith and deed, whereas the other one demands the natural process featuring the faith, producing fruit of the believer's life (Gal 5:22). A Good illustration to explain this natural process would be a tree. When a seed is sown in a field, it will take roots in ground. Unless the seed is dead, the roots is going to grow down into the ground to naturally suck nutrition from the ground. After a while, when the tree is fully grown, the branches will grow, and sooner or later the tree will produce fruits. This is the natural process when a tree bears fruit. Good works are the evidence of salvation in the same way that the fruit is the evidence of the living seed. The same point is made by Paul in the book of Titus; "they profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed" (Titus 1:16). Paul is warning about false teachers saying that the false teachers in the church are not genuine believers at all, and subsequently their lives are disarray and there is no evidence of salvation (MacArthur 2005:1822). Jesus also taught us to be alert in discerning false prophets; "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruit. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit" (Matthew 7:15-17). Jesus says that by observing their fruit, we can discern whether people are genuine believers or not. Moreover, in the book of Romans which is known for the scripture which

says “saved by faith alone apart from good works” Paul says “Therefore...to offer your bodies as living sacrifices” (Roman 12:1). This implies that believers also have to live out their lives as a worthy persons who have received the immeasurable grace of God. So far, Paul has discussed the importance of faith which leads to salvation, and as we come to chapter 12, he explains in great detail how believers are to practically live out after dealing with the theological truths mentioned from the previous chapters (1-11). Paul is by no means taking about another element which is required for salvation, but as one can see through the words “by the mercies of God” Paul is talking to the unworthy one who has been granted the wonderful mercy of God regarding how to live in order to answer such grace (Courson 2003: 970). It is natural and fitting that a saved soul, knowing God’s grace and mercy, obeys His words. Thus, both being saved and being new creations are the acts of God’s sovereignty. As new creations we are made for good works.

Third, Genuine salvation results in knowing God’s preparation for the sanctification of his saints. Upon knowing that genuine salvation involves good works, we wonder if our sanctified lives are already planned by God in the same way that our salvation was, or whether we have to do our best to live fruitful lives. From the earliest days of the church, it has been debated which of the following two views is the most accurate and Biblical; whether it is the power of God

which sanctifies believers into Christ-likeness or whether it is the responsibility of believers to live Christian lives. In other words, does genuine salvation involve active obedience or passive trust? Is the sanctification of believers accomplished by God alone, or is it the believers' doing? As noted earlier, we know that salvation itself is done by God alone (Eph 2:8-9; John 6:44) and that sanctification to a believer is a natural result, nevertheless, in regard to the process of being sanctified, many protestant churches have maintained two different views, namely "quietism and pietism."²⁸ However, as far as Scripture is concerned, we can see that both theories are beautifully combined. Paul says to the Corinthians that "by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain" and then he goes on to say, "but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me" (1Cor. 15:10). It is apparent that the apostle combines God's divine empowerment and the believer's obedient effort together. Philippians 2:12-13 is another good example to present the appropriate resolution between the believer's responsibility and God's authority in sanctification. Paul says "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). Paul does not refer here to the eternal welfare of the soul of the individual, but rather commands the Philippians to work

²⁸ According to John "in regard to sanctification, the view that emphasizes God's role while virtually eliminating the believer's involvement is often referred to as quietism...Pietists, on the other hand, are typically aggressive in their pursuit in their correct doctrine and moral purity." (MacArthur 2001:152)

hard until their salvation is achieved (Gerald 1983:98). It is crystal clear that Paul is emphasizing the believer's responsibility to sanctify himself. However, the next verse, verse 13, says otherwise; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). Although there is the believer's responsibility to work out his sanctification, Paul also says that sanctification pertains to God. Although knowing the difference between the two verses, Paul makes no effort to rationally harmonize the two different views. Admitting both truths, sanctification is of believers and on the other hand, it is of God, and Paul is satisfied with the incomprehensibility. Although the Scripture does not clearly say by what means believers are sanctified, it is apparent that the sanctification is not optional but that it is planned beforehand by God. Paul says in Romans 8:29 "for whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son...." The term "foreknew" does not simply refer to God's omniscience but implies a predetermined election to set His love on believers (Achtemeier 1985: 144). God's love does not stop at salvation. The next words show the purpose of God predestining His own people. The words "conformed to the image of His son" indicate that the believers are predestined to be made like Jesus Christ after conversion (Douglas 1996:533-534). God's perfect plan is not completed at the point of salvation, but also includes a life of godliness and an end goal of Christ- likeness. Needless to say, it does not

mean that we can sit back and do nothing because our sanctification will happen regardless of our efforts and aggressive participation. Unless they understand the doctrine of predestination correctly, people can easily fall into fatalism; everything is done by God and the lives of people are already fixed according to God's foreordain. This is not true. A Good example is found in the story of Israel wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. God had promised to give them the Promised Land since the time of Abraham. Giving the land to the chosen nation was God's plan and it was foreordained long ago. However the blessing of the promise had been delayed due to their disobedience. Instead, they had to wander around in the wilderness for 40 years. Thus the doctrine of predestination cannot couple with the fatalism.

Thus, genuine salvation involves a changed identity in a believer from an old to a new creation, which is carried out entirely by God. It inevitably results in a life of good works, because God ordained such works before He saved us. However, God's predestination for these works does not relieve us of our responsibilities. We actively participate in good works while relying in faith upon God.

2. Lee's doctrine of salvation by two merits, faith and works

Before getting into Lee's doctrine on salvation, one thing we have to confirm is the fact that all human beings except Jesus Christ are sinners, as noted in Rom 3:23, and Eph 2:1.

However, Lee's view on the nature of human beings is different. He believes that humans can be sinless and righteous before God. The first reference Lee mentions in the Scripture is Genesis 6:9. According to Lee's argument based on the book of *the creation of earth and heaven*, After Adam committed sinned, God looked for a righteous man. He chose Noah, who was part of the 9th generation after Adam. Then God wiped out the entire earth with a flood in judgment of sin, because God did not want Noah and his family being influenced by people's sin (Lee 2009:147). Referring to Gen 6:9; "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God," Lee claims that Noah was saved due to his righteousness. His argument undermines the foundation of the biblical view of human nature. As noted in Rom 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Paul is saying that the entire human race without exception, no matter where and when you were born, are sinners and have failed to meet the divine standard of righteousness. This is sound doctrine and is one of the five points made by the great reformer, John Calvin. It is called "total depravity of the human heart." Since Adam's initial sin, natural man's free will has no longer been used to please God, instead it has been used to commit sin. Noah was no exception. However, we could then ask why God says that "Noah was a righteous man" Generally the term "a righteous person" is given to one who keeps the moral law at that time. It is used to describe a person who stands against the "wicked

(Wenham 1987: 169). However, it does not mean that Noah was sinless and did only righteous things. His righteousness did not come from his good deeds, but it was the gift of God who granted the position of being righteous to the one who had faith in God as mentioned in Eph 2:8-10 (Barton 1996: 46). The author of the letter to the Hebrews, mentioning all the faithful fathers, maintains that Noah's righteousness did not come from his good deeds but from his faith in God. For Noah believed God's word and that faith was counted to him as righteousness (Hebrew 11:7). Let us consider Roman 4:9. It says "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness." The faith is the key point. As noted earlier, Lee maintains that God forsook Adam because of his sin and chose Noah, for he was a righteous man. According to Lee's argument, there should have been no righteous men in the era between Adam and Noah. However the Bible says that there is a righteous man in that era and this man was Abel; "by faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous" (Hebrew 11:4). Abel, just like other faithful forefathers, was counted as righteous man not because of his good works, but because of faith (Walvoord 1983-c1985: 808). The entire sixth chapter of Genesis shows the consequences of the very first sin, which Adam committed. All the descendants of this first man who had fallen into sin now no longer had the ability to please God; "then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth,

and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). As a result of their iniquities, God wiped out the entire surface of the earth with the flood. According to Lee’s argument, the reason God judged the world was to secure Noah from being influenced by people’s sins. If it was so, the people who survived the flood, had to be sinless because all the sinners were destroyed by the judgment. However, Scripture says the opposite. Genesis 8:21 says “ And the Lord said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done” (Genesis 8:21). It says that even though the flood wiped out the transgressors, and there was going to be a new beginning with a righteous man and his family, the judgment itself had done nothing to convert the human heart (Gowan 1988: 99). These words were spoken to Noah and his family. If those who were saved during the flood were the sinless and righteous ones, it would not be necessary to say “the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” Thus the Bible clearly affirms the fact Noah and his family were sinners.

However, by the grace of God, God chose Noah to be saved, and through Noah, God would send His only Son into the world to take care of the sins of human beings, including Noah’s, by sacrificing His Son on the cross in order to withhold the judgment for which all sinners are destined. Therefore, Noah was not saved by good works, but by the grace of God through faith.

Lee's argument goes on with another reference to Matthew 7:21; "Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). It is true that true believers are supposed to have the fruit of life, and it is the natural consequence for those who are saved to answer the unforgettable grace of God by living a sanctified life. However, Lee uses this verse to his own advantage, for according to him it supports his theory of salvation by good works. Rather than believing that salvation is achieved through faith alone, he maintains that salvation is achieved through good works (Han 2013: 428). One cannot deny the fact that the fruit in the life of a believer is the evidence of salvation, but these verses are not dealing with true believers who are lacking good works. A verse taken out of context can easily drive readers into wrong direction, and a passage read without the correct biblical doctrine will lead one to the wrong conclusion. Jesus Christ began to expound on his teaching, mentioning the "false prophets" in verse 15. The main characteristic of these false prophets is hypocrisy; "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15). These men were pretending to speak the truth while in actual fact they were telling lies (Knowles 2001: 418). Though they performed many miracles and prophesied, they did not come from God. The message Christ is trying to convey is not to do with true believers who are lacking in good works, but rather the

fact that men who do not have true faith become hypocrites. Originally it implies that the false prophets did not have faith. Thus they are not believers. They just utilized religion for their own benefit. This is why Christ Jesus says that inwardly they are wolves. Verse 18 in the same chapter supports the fact that these men are counterfeits; “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.” Genuine faith produces good works, but a person who is not saved cannot bear good fruit (Knowles 2001: 418).

Therefore, unlike Lee’s argument which states that Matthew 7:21 proves that salvation is achieved through good works, the passage implies that a genuine believer can bear good fruit, while one who is not a believer cannot.

IV. Lee Man-Hee’s allegorical interpretation

In the time of the early church, there was a group of interpreters called “allegorists (Dwight 1964:24).” They interpreted the Scriptures from the view of a multiplicity of its idea and meanings within it. This does not mean that they denied the existence of a literal, historical, or grammatical sense to Scripture, but they considered the literal meanings as vehicles for finding more hidden, spiritual, and profound meaning within the Scriptures (Ramm 1950: 124). In attempt to find a spiritual and hidden message in the written words, they understood the scripture superficially, and at last it came to them depreciating the literal exegetical meaning.

A fine example of the allegorical interpretation is found in “the two denarii” given to the innkeeper by the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-36). According to their interpretation, two denarii implies the baptism and the Lord’s Supper (Tan 1974:37). In actual fact the parable of the Good Samaritan was told because Jesus wanted to teach “an expert in the law” about who is a true neighbor (Luke 10:25). While having a great deal of knowledge about the book of the law, a priest and a Levite just ignored and passed by the man who had been left half dead. However, a Samaritan came along, and as soon as he had found him, kindly took care of him kindly and brought him to an inn nearby. The following day, a Samaritan gave two denarii to an innkeeper, saying “take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return, I will repay you” (Luke 10:35). Jesus did not want to teach about the hidden meaning of two denarii the Samaritan gave to the innkeeper for the sake of caring for the man. He rather wanted to teach about the failure of the experts in the law to keep those very same commandments. The reason they failed to keep the commandments was not that they had a lack of information but that they had lack of love (Carson 1970: Lk 10:25). Consider an additional passage in verse 37. After brief teaching, Jesus told the expert in the law “Go and do likewise.” Jesus wants to put emphasis on the one who will do goodness in a time of need (v.27), and not on those who just profess to love according to the law. Jesus does not attach a secret meaning to the two denarii in this context,

but rather has in mind the good works which spring from the love. Thus the allegorical interpretation depreciates the original meaning of Scripture. Here is an excellent comment from Charles L. Feinberg "The allegorizing and spiritualizing method had its beginning with the rabbis...who steadfastly maintained that the Old Testament in its literal sense is at times inadequate because of its imperfection, triviality. Their remedy was to twist the letter of the Word by means of allegories and spiritualization into whatever conception was most amenable to their reasoning or their preconceived views (Reinberg 1985: 41)." According to Bernard Ramm, the church fathers and the Roman Catholics took advantage of this allegorical method to justify their sacramentarianism and hierarchy from the Old Testament (Ramm 1950: 125). Relying on secondary strata of meanings is the way to place Scripture in the dangerous position where it can be abused by personal imagination. This is what Bernard Ramm comments again "The curse of the allegorical method is that it obscures the true meaning of the Word of God (Ramm 1950:30)." Therefore it is really dangerous to follow the meaning of allegorical interpretation. Unfortunately, Shincheonji's method of interpreting the Scriptures rests totally on allegorical interpretation. Their fundamental belief concerning the Bible is that all of its contents are sealed and no one is able to understand its meaning unless the promised pastor interprets them. The reason why regular people cannot perceive its contents is that all prophecies and messages

regarding the kingdom of God are made up of mystical allegories (Kim 1983:23). The worst part of their teaching is that people cannot get saved unless they know these allegories.

A. Supporting references to rationalize allegorical interpretation

In order to persuade people into using the formula of Shincheonji's allegorical interpretation, Lee refers to Psalm 119:130. As mentioned earlier, it will be dangerous if we understand a letter and a word without comprehending entire context. We can figure out the meanings of individual words in the sentence which is understood by the context surrounding the sentence.

Psalm 119:130 says "The unfolding of Thy words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple"(NAS). Lee maintains that the term "unfolding" itself implies that the word of God had been sealed, which means a certain person is needed desperately to open the Scripture.

Another reference Shincheonji are using to rationalize that allegorical interpretation is biblical, is Nehemiah 8:8. It says "And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading" (Neh 8:8 NAS). Lee argues that the modern church does not understand the word of God because there is no one who is able to "translate to give the sense" as noted in Neh 8:8. Unless a promised pastor comes and translates its meaning, the people will remain spiritually blind (Han 2013: 443). An Additional reference is Matthew 13:34-35; "All these things Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables, and He did not speak to

them without a parable, so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world" (Mat 13:34-35 NAS). These verses seem to be the most reasonable biblical reference to support Lee's allegorical interpretation. Looking particularly at the words "He did not speak to them without a parable...I will utter things hidden" it would seem that Lee's interpretation based on allegory, is biblical. Lee's additional decisive bible reference is Matthew 13:13-15; "Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand..." (Mat 13:13-15 NAS). These verses also seem to support Lee's argument that the Scripture is sealed and made up of allegory.

Unfortunately, all Lee's arguments are the consequences of ignoring the context, in the same way that other end-time movement leaders did. Let us delve deeper into this issue by dealing with each verse that Lee has laid out. The reference in the bible which was mentioned first was Psalm 119:130. Unlike Lee's opinion, the Psalmist of this section is not dealing with the issue of a secret message sealed for regular people, but is talking about the wonder of God's word and reader's reaction from verse 129 to 136. This is why it starts with the words "Thy testimonies are wonderful" (Ps 119:129 NAS). The author wants to say how much the Word of God is beneficial to believers spiritually. If the contents of scripture are sealed and consist of

allegories, and a promised pastor is needed to interpret them, His testimonies cannot be wonderful. The Next sentence leads us naturally into the responsibility of the readers “Therefore my soul observes them” (Ps 119:129 NAS). Since the Word of God is wonderful, it makes believers obey its truths. In addition, the following verse shows what spiritual benefits people can acquire when they read it with an obedient mind. It says “The unfolding of Thy words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple” (Ps 119:130 NAS). It is crystal clear that it is not talking about whether the book is sealed or not. It is talking about the features and benefits of the Scriptures. The Hebrew term “unfolding” is *‘pethach’* and has two main meanings, which are “door” and “unfolding” (Boice 2005: 1040). In the case of the KJV, which is viewed by some as the finest translation, it is translated as “entrance.” The Following comment was made by Boice “In early days of the formation of the Hebrew language, the Jews were nomadic, who for most of the time lived in tents. The only opening in a tent was the flap of skin that was the door. So as the door was opened, light came into the tent, illuminating everything inside” (Boice 2005: 1040). The psalmist reflects this image exactly when he speaks of the entrance of God’s words giving light. In addition, the next words explain the consequence of opening the Word of God; “It gives understanding to the simple” (Ps 119:130 NAS). In other words, all this spiritual blessing has been given to every single Christian. As one opens the Bible with an obedient mind, it leads

us into understanding the Word of God. Needless to say, this passage is not about the book being sealed or allegory as mentioned by Lee.

Another reference is Nehemiah 8:8. It is also nonsense to maintain that a promised pastor is needed to perceive the Scriptures because the people cannot understand the Word. The term “translating” was used to help people who had a language barrier, to understand. As one can see in verse 8, Ezra had read the book of the law which was written in the Hebrew language.²⁹ Since many people had grown up in Babylon, they did not know the Hebrew language but they rather knew Aramaic, which was prime language at that time, Thus Ezra had to translate the book of the law from Hebrew to Aramaic so that the people could understand it (Constable 2003: Nehemiah 8:1). Hence the term does not refer to a figurative meaning as suggested by Lee, but we should rather understand the word in its literal sense. So the term “translating” in Nehemiah 8:1 does not have any connection with Lee’s argument that promised pastor is needed to interpret or translate the hidden meaning.

²⁹ According to Schoville “The NIV footnote for **making it clear** provides an alternative meaning for מְפָרֵשׁ (*m³phōrāš*), “translating it.” The KJV renders the word, “distinctly,” but the NRSV has “with interpretation.” Interpreters must choose from two possibilities: one emphasizes clarity of reading, the other suggests that the Levites were translating into Aramaic, the common language of the people, what was being read in Hebrew. The latter was the language in which the scroll was written (Schoville 2001: 216).”

Other challenging verses are Matthew 13:34-35 and a concurring verse is 13-15 in the same chapter. Particularly two sentences among them, seem to support Lee's opinion; "He did not speak to them without a parable" (13:34) and "you will keep on hearing but will not understand; and you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive" (13:14). The entire chapter of Matthew is about the kingdom parable. As mentioned earlier, noting context is quite important. Having authenticated His power by various miracles, Jesus Christ had the people, including the religious leaders, to realize His true identity; the Messiah who had been foretold in the Old Testament. However, those leaders had regarded Him not as a special deity, but as a fraud. They even denied many miracles performed by Jesus and concluded that those things were done by satanic power and not by divine power, and so Israel's leaders worked together to oppose Jesus and planned to crucify Him (Walvoord 1985: 983). Knowing exactly what would be going to happen to Him, Jesus wanted His disciples to know the secret of the kingdom by means of a parable. Christ wanted to make sure that the kingdom of God would be more powerful than ever, in despite of His death on a cross. This implies that Christ wanted them understand the truth regarding the kingdom. In other words, this parable is not mystical or a sealed message which cannot be understood unless a promised pastor expounds it.

It is profound that Christ spoke every teaching in a parable, as noted in verse 34. While reading through the rest of the chapter, one will see that neither the “multitudes” nor the disciples understood the parable. Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." (Mat 13:36 NAS). Christ does not want to unveil the truth to unbelievers.

The Following comments give us the idea why Christ taught many things using parables.

“Parables were a common form of teaching in Judaism... Parables require more explanation (cf.v.36), and Jesus uses them to obscure the truth from unbelievers while making it clearer to His disciples” (vv. 11, 12) (MacArthur 2005: 1147). Jesus Christ did not want to teach the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to believers. He wanted to instruct only His disciples about the kingdom not to the unbelieving multitudes or religious leaders. In order to hide this precious truth from those who rejected Him, He took advantage of parables. His parable teaching brought the disciples the significant spiritual enlightenment about the kingdom whereas it was ambiguous to unbelievers. The Bible says “while seeing they did not see, and while hearing they did not hear, nor did they perceive”(v.13). However, the same parable, which had been taught to unbelievers and left them uncertain, was given to His disciples again to help them perceive the truth (vv. 37, 38). There was no reason to hide the truth from those who believed. Thus the Scriptures is by no means a book sealed to believers.

There is another Bible reference which Lee takes advantage of to sustain his theory that Scripture is sealed. These verses are found in Dan.12: 4, 9. It says "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase" (Dan 12:4 NAS). It is because of the words "conceal these words and seal up the book" that Shincheonji believes that the scripture is sealed and no one can understand it unless a promised pastor comes to open it and translate it (Han 2013: 458-459). To be clear, not only is it not talking about a mystical message which is concealed from people, but it is also not about a promised pastor. As confirmed in the context of the book, Daniel refers to the end of time as noted in 11:40 "at the end time" and this prophecy was continued in chapter 12; "Now at that time" (Dan 12:1). The Entire chapter 11 was describing the details of Israel's history under the second and third empires, and as it moves on to chapter 12, Daniel begins to unveil what is going to happen at the end of time. Above all things, Daniel was extremely interested in what would happen to his people (Constable 2003: Dan 12:3); "but at that time your people shall be delivered" (Dan. 12:1). In other words, Daniel began to predict what would happen to the Jews at the end of time. More specific information is found in verse 2; "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (Dan. 12:2). Daniel is saying that at the end of time, believing Jews will be resurrected, and honor will be granted them from

God (Dan 12:3). Before we proceed further, it is necessary to know three different eschatological views, in order to understand this chapter of Daniel. All three views believe the truth that believers' resurrection is going to take place, but each has a different view on its date. These three main Eschatological views are called "Premillennialism, Postmillennialism, and Amillennialism." In the case of Premillennialism, they believe that two resurrections are expected to occur; the first resurrection will happen before the seven years tribulation and second resurrection will occur after the millennial kingdom (Benware 1995: 95). In the case of Postmillennialism, they believe in the single resurrection, which is going to happen after the millennium kingdom (Benware 1995: 125). In case of amillennialism, they believe that a resurrection happens after a symbolic millennium (Benware 1995: 108). Though each view has different timing with regard to believers' resurrection, a common issue is that the event occurs at the end of time. No doubt Daniel was dealing with the event which would happen at the end of time. However, it is much too far from his immediate readers. It is too much for them to comprehend all the details of the prophecies given in this book (Zuck 1983-c1985: 1375). This is why God ordered Daniel to "shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end" (Dan 12:4). These words which could not be understood by the immediate readers, could not comfort them in the same way that they comfort us now, but at least they knew that God would deliver

His people in the future. In addition, Daniel added more information to say that the prophetic messages would not remain totally uncertain. He says “Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall increase” (Dan 12:4b). This implies that the prophetic messages of this book that have been sealed, will be comprehended by “many” who seek to gain knowledge from it.

It is difficult to say what kind of eschatological view Lee has, but he does not follow any pattern of the three main millennium views. All three of the views commonly indicate that Daniel 12 is describing the end time event, which immediate readers could not understand, and all the views are commonly affirming the truth that all people who have died in the name of Jesus Christ will be resurrected physically at that time.

However, Lee’s argument is that these days are the end time Daniel prophesied about, and he teaches his followers that only the people who come to Shincheonji, are qualified to be in the restricted numbers, 144.000 noted in Rev 7:4 and are able to be saved, ignoring the believer’s physical resurrection.

Secondly, Lee again ignores a message added to the content about concealed book; “many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase” (Dan 12:4 NAS). It apparently says that these veiled issues will be unveiled little by little as time goes by. Therefore, Lee’s teaching

cannot be accepted as biblical teaching and rather it is considered that he invents his own theory by retrieving relative verse from the Scripture.

B. The example of Lee's allegorical interpretation

Whenever a new religious movement or unknown revelation emerges, we as believers have to be cautious and test it with the Bible just like the Berea church did (Acts 17:11). We have to make sure if their new teachings are within the scope of the Bible, or beyond the Scripture and if they interpret the word of God in context. Along with this standard in mind, let us test Shincheonji's instruction.

1. The parable of the two seeds in Mt.13.

The parable of the two seeds in Matthew 13:24-29 is the first reference to teach the people with regard to Lee's peculiar allegorical method to interpret the Bible (Lee 2009: 289). Prior to explaining this parable, Lee introduces the origin of this parable, which had been revealed in time of Jeremiah. It says "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast" (Jeremiah 31:27 NAS). According to Lee, this prophecy of Jeremiah is the background of the parable of the two seeds, and through this message, Lee teaches that God would sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah, the seed of man and the seed of beast. This prophecy

was fulfilled in the time of Jesus Christ (Lee 2009: 289). According to Lee, The two seeds planted in Jeremiah 31:27, symbolize two entities, God's word (good seed) and Satan's word (a bad seed). Shincheonji believes that the good seed has been given to them, while the bad seed pertains to the rest of people on earth, including other churches.

Lee continues his argument that the people who have been spiritually born again in Shincheonji as the result of God's seed, will be harvested into the barn of heaven. On the other hand, people who will not be harvested at time of the harvest, belong to the seed of Satan. Jesus promises that He will return to harvest the field where His seed (the Word of God) has been sown. Lee concludes that the prophecy given to Jeremiah had been fulfilled roughly 600 years later in Jesus' first coming (Mt. 13:24,25) and the other prophecy Jesus Christ foretold in Matthew 13:30 has been fulfilled by Lee Man Hee today after 2,000 years (Lee 2009: 303). Even though the Bible apparently says that Christ will come back to harvest the field, Lee argues that the spirit of Jesus came upon him, and all power and authority was given to him. So Lee said that he is the one harvesting the field.

Lee teaches that both seeds are placed in the same field, which represents the believers' church and they exist together. Any other church who does not come into Shincheonji to learn the word of God, belongs to the seed of Satan and unless they join Shincheonji, people

will be left behind when God harvests. The Following comments come from the book written by Lee.

“In this parable the good seed is the word of God, and the man who sowed it is Jesus. The field is Jesus’ church, and the enemy is the devil. The weeds the enemy sowed represent the words of the devil. Since the weeds were sown among the wheat, it is clear that the good seed and the weeds have been planted in the same field. This tells us that the word of God is mixed with the word of Satan within the churches of Jesus. Again, Satan’s word has been sown in the church. The true grain (wheat) refers to the true believers who are born again through the Word of God. The weeds are church congregation members who are born of the word of Satan. Which of these two groups of church goers will the angels harvest when the time comes? Certainly it will be the wheat-like believers, born of the Word of God, who will be harvested (Mt. 13:30, Rv. 14:14-16). The children of Satan (the weeds) will be left behind in their churches (Lee 2009: 300-301).” To sum it up, Lee explains that the prophecy given to Jeremiah is the origin of the parable of the two seeds in Matthew 13, and that the two seeds which appeared in Jeremiah 31:27 “the seed of man and seed of beast”, represent Jesus’ word and Satan’s word respectively. As we come to the New Testament, we see that the prophecy was partially fulfilled by Jesus Christ, and that the two seeds in the parable taught by Jesus,

also represent Jesus' words (good seeds) and Satan's words (bad seeds). These good seeds allegorically point to true believers in God's Word which is taught only in Shincheonji.

As noted earlier, it is mandatory to evaluate Lee's interpretation with the Scripture to see if it comes from God or from another entity. First of all, just like typical characteristics of apocalyptic leaders and end-time groups in South Korea, Lee ignores the context. Chapter 31 in Jeremiah should be linked with chapter 30, and those chapters explain the consequence of God's judgment on the earth. The following chapter, chapter 31 is the revelation regarding national restoration. This chapter deals with the covenant God made with His first nation, Israel. It says that not only will God judge the defiled world but that He will also restore all Israel to Himself (Fleming 1994: 290). This is why at the beginning of chapter 31, it introduced the object of this revelation; "I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they will be my people" (Jer 31:1 NIV). As it happens, I have counted how many times Jeremiah mentions the name of the receiver in chapter 31. In all the forty verses of chapter 31, the receiver's name and related region's name are repeated fifteen times in this chapter; 31:1 "all the clans of Israel", v.2 "to give rest to Israel", v.4 "O virgin Israel", v.5 "the hill of Samaria", v.6 "Com, let us go up to Zion", v.7 "the remnant", v.12 "the height of Zion", v.18 "Ephraim's moaning", v.20 "Ephraim my dear son", v.21 "O Virgin Israel", v.23 "the God of Israel", v.31 "the house of Israel and with the house of

Judah”, v.37 “the descendants of Israel.” It is apparent that this revelation belongs to physical Israel, because all the specific names of the regions and events described, are restrictively applied to physical Israel. Going back to the critical verse 27 in chapter 31 with this understanding, you will see that God wants to provide a new beginning for His covenant people. Through the metaphors of agriculture and architecture, “I will plant the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the offspring of men and of animals”(Jer 31:27 NIV), God wants to let His people, Israel, know that God will restore her again at the end of the Judgment which was given to her because of her sin (Wiersbe 1996, c1995: Je 31:1). However, Lee Man Hee fully eliminates the concept of physical Israel and her restoration in the context of Jeremiah 31, and argues instead that the prophecy spoken to Jeremiah, had been fulfilled roughly through Jesus’ first coming, and the extended prophecy revealed by Jesus Christ in Matthew 13:24-29 has been fulfilled today after 2000 years by Lee (Lee 2009: 289-303). There is no connection between the prophecy of Jeremiah and the parable of the two seeds. They are totally different teachings. This is the typical failure of allegorical interpretation. In addition, the context in Jeremiah 31:27 shows that God is the one who is planting. How could the Holy God spread two different seeds; the seeds of Satan and the seeds of Jesus? In the written word, there is no sign

and mystical content in Jeremiah 31 to symbolically reveal Satan in this context. It is all about a time of re-building and the prosperity of Israel in the future.

Moving back to the parable of the two seeds, Lee explains that the field in which a farmer, who represents Jesus, plants his seed, is Jesus' church. Under the premise that Jesus sows seeds in His own church, he adds following application "Satan also spread his seeds in Jesus' church to drive Christian churches into confusion in understanding the truth (Lee 2009: 300)." Because of this teaching, many normal church members get confused or are convinced that Lee's own revelation is the only truth. Through this teaching, Shincheonji lures many members into their own institution. However, the written word does not say that the field is Jesus' church. Jesus said that the field is "the world" (Matthew 13:38).

What Jesus Christ wanted to teach through the parable of the two seeds was obviously to deal with unbelievers' judgment. This is why His disciples came to Him to ask Him to "explain to them the parable of the tares of the field" (Matthew 13:36). As they were listening to the parable, the disciples were probably wondering why the wicked tares would be allowed to coexist with the good wheat. They would not have asked further questions if the landowner had done as the slaves suggested, and pulled all the tares out. There are two reasons why the landowner did not allow the slaves to pull the tares out. Firstly, Christ wanted them to understand the greatness of

God's grace and His plan of redemption for the period before the Day of Judgment came to the world. Secondly, Christ was afraid that pulling out the tares would result in the slave removing much of the wheat with the tares by accident. This is why Christ said in Matthew 13:29 "No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them" (Mat 13:29 NAS).

Unlike Lee's argument,³⁰ Christ wanted to describe the situation featuring the coexistence of believers and unbelievers in the same world not in the Christ's church. The following comments were made by John MacArthur.

"It is abrupt to understand that the field in this parable represents Jesus' church, and what Christ wanted to reveal, is that true and false believers, represented by the wheat and the tares, will exist together in the church throughout the present age (MacArthur 1989:381)."

What Christ described was the church which existed in this world.

In addition, Lee's argument that the field represents Jesus' church, the good seed in the parable refers to those who are born of Lee's own word as observed above. The followers of Lee believe that the spirit of Jesus Christ came upon Lee Man Hee, and this results in the following consequences; the revealed word invented by Lee symbolizes the good seed and only those

³⁰ According to Lee's revealed word "the field in which Jesus plants his seed is the Jesus' church. "In this parable the good seed is the word of God, and the man who sowed it is Jesus. The field is **Jesus' church...**" (Lee 2009: 300)

who come and believe the word will deserve eternal life. Even though the written word clearly classifies each character, “the one who sows” is Jesus Christ, “field” is the world, “the tares” are the sons of the evil one, while “the good seed” refers to the sons of the Kingdom, and “the reapers” are the angels (Mt. 13:34-44), Lee teaches that those reapers are the members in Shincheonji, and these people as reapers are sent to a normal church to reap the harvest, regular church members. The aim of these reapers, no matter what costs, is to pull people out of the church and to bring them into Shincheonji.

One thing we can commonly notice, is that Lee’s approach to the Scriptures is based entirely on his personal allegorical interpretation method, and this results in the wrong application, which was also used to put Lee on the map.

2. A parable for a Chosen Pastor in Gen.1-3

The Scripture is always our highest criteria to help us discern what is right, whenever a new revelation appears, or a new spiritual movement starts to emerge. Certain people might think that it would be rude to test a leader with the Scripture, but it is absolutely necessary in order to avoid deception. Lee himself insists that he received a final prophecy and that the revelation he received directly from God is being fulfilled physically and accordingly. As noted earlier in “*old and new covenant*,” Lee argues that God choose someone as a pastor, and as the people

forsook God, He chose another pastor, like Adam, Noah, Abraham...and so on. This pattern has been repeated until the last pastor, Lee appears. In order to rationalize this pattern, Lee picks up the first character, Adam, as the first chosen pastor, and interprets Genesis 1-3 as a figurative account. Lee claims that at no point Genesis 1 has to be understood in literal sense. He adds that God's creation order is figuratively described so that regular people cannot comprehend the secret of God's world which is separated from the evil world (Lee 2009:33). The following contents are the summary of Lee's teaching about a pastor in the beginning.

"On the 1st Day, - God creates a light which figuratively represents a pastor. In the same way that Jesus Christ is regarded as a light, the light indicates a pastor.

On the 2nd Day,-God creates the expanse and sky, which symbolize the tabernacle and heaven for the chosen people. A Good reference for this symbolization is found in Genesis 37:9-10; "Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me...Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (Gen 37:9-10 KJV). As the chosen people are described as the sun, moon, and stars which exist in heaven in Gen 37:9-10, those planets represent Jacob and the chosen people in the Bible. Water also has to be understood figuratively. It represents the "revealed

word” coming from the pastor as described in Deut.31:1.2; "Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth. Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As the droplets on the fresh grass and as the showers on the herb” (Deut 32:1-2 NAS).

On the 3rd Day,- “Dry land” figuratively indicates the chosen people and their tabernacle, and the vegetation, plants, and trees represent believers as noted in Isaiah 40:6-8).

On the 4th Day,-“the great light” refers to the chosen pastor and “lesser light” represents evangelists in the position of a mother. The many stars are believers in the positions of children, but they have different levels of glory as described in 1Cor. 15:41.

On the 5th Day-“Water” indicates the Word of God, and the “fish” implies believers as mentioned in Mt4: 18-22. the “bird” represent the spirits that pertain to God. Thus we can figure out that Holy Spirit carries out its work as a bird.

On the 6th Day, -“Cattle, creeping creatures, and wild animals” all refer figuratively to the four beasts in Rev. 4:6-7, which make up a spiritual army in heaven (Lee 2009:33-51).”

After the explanation about a pastor in the beginning, Lee claims the Interesting statement that the order of creation which figuratively represents the history of a pastor, is not restricted to a specific generation but it is repeated over and over until all of Revelation are fulfilled. Lee adds

that the creation period of six days represents six thousand years, and we are on the verge of the last days of the six thousand years (Lee 2009: 47). It is quite an interesting idea to equate the six days of creation to six thousand years, but we will see why Lee's allegorical interpretation cannot be biblical.

Firstly, Lee's problem is his allegorical interpretation; the individual word recorded in other books has the same meaning in spite of a different metaphor, mood, and context. For instance, Jesus says "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser" (Joh 15:1 NAS). In an attempt to illustrate an intimate relationship between Jesus Christ and His disciples, He calls Himself the "vine" and He calls his disciples the "branches", through which Christ wants to teach a vital spiritual connection between the branches and the vine. It is very much a spiritual illustration and the term does not imply a literal vine tree. We can find the same word appears in the book of Judges 13:14; "She should not eat anything that comes from the vine nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; let her observe all that I commanded" (Jug 13:14 NAS). In this story, the angel of the Lord, convinces Manoah's wife, a mother of Samson that she would conceive a son who would save Israel from the burden of the Philistines. The angel then provides Manoah with a dietary restriction by prohibiting the consumption of any grape products produced from the "vine." It is obvious that the word "vine"

here is talking about a literal vine. However if we follow Lee's allegation, it ought to be Jesus Christ because He said "I am a true vine" in John 15:1. This is total chaos. As mentioned above, Lee interprets "fish" in Genesis 1 as men, because of the fact that God describes people as "fish" in Matthew 13:47-50.³¹ Jesus Christ takes advantage of parables, which is a concept familiar to fishermen, to explain God's judgment on unbelievers. Although the word "fish" is the same, Genesis is talking about literal fish and Matthew is talking about figurative fish. Moreover had Lee's interpretation been right, there would have been numerous human beings in the garden of Eden.

Secondly, Lee denies the truth that Adam was the first human being. If another human being existed before Adam had been created, it logically concludes that Adam could not have been the first human. In line with this logic, Lee claims that Adam was not the first real man, but that he was only the first man to receive God's Word, thus he can be called the first chosen pastor (Lee 2009: 75-76). There are various reasons why he denies the fact that Adam was not

³¹ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,(Mat 13:47-49 NKJ)

the first human being created by God. First of all, Lee wants to fit Genesis 1 into the theory of evolution. Here are the comments from Lee's book "*the creation of heaven and earth*."

"If we regard Adam as the first human being, the entire history of the Bible would be around 6000 years. However, according to the studies implemented by geologists and biologists, the age of the earth would be over several hundreds of million years. If we account for the age of the earth under the condition that Adam was the first human being, an evolutionary study will be a fallacy. If a prehistorical human being had been existed before Adam, all problems are dissolved (Lee 2009: 75)."

There is another reason why Lee cannot buy the truth that Adam was the first human being. A critical passage is found in Genesis 2:24; "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Gen 2:24 NAS). According to Lee, he relates there is no reason to mention "his father and his mother" if Adam did not have parents. What God intends to teach through this verse is not that there were many people prior to Adam. He is instead setting the principles of the first marriage which would then apply to all marriages after that (Wenham 2002: 70). Nevertheless, Lee denies the truth that Adam was the first human being. As mentioned earlier, Let us test his argument with the written word of God. The name "Adam" appears a total of 21 times, and two of the verses clearly say

that Adam was a first human being; “So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit” (1Co 15:45 NAS) and “For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve” (1Ti 2:13 NAS). It is undeniable that there were no other human beings before Adam.

Regarding an evolutionary study which maintains an age of the earth would be over several hundreds of million years, Lee relies more on biologists and scientists than on the written word of God. As the term “the theory of evolution” says itself, evolution is one of the opinions concerning the origin of the universe. Unlike “the law of (universal) gravitation” it cannot be an approved or reputable law. Here are excellent comments regarding the theory of evolution.

“In support of the great age theory of the universe.....the erosion technique.....and the potassium-argon and uranium 235-lead methods.....the fallacy of the entire procedure become obvious in light of two or three factors. Firstly, it must be proven that the original deposit containing the potassium had no lead whatsoever. Secondly, one must assume that there has been no leakage of the deposit. Thirdly, if there had been some means whereby the present potassium-argon ratio could have risen quickly, what appears to be millions of years old might

be only thousands (Eugene H 2002: 49).”There is no reason to put our trust in this theory.³²

However, Lee attempts to fit written words into the theory, and instead of correcting the secular and allegorical theory, he twice the content of the Scripture and forces it to fit into the theory of evolution. We cannot buy Lee’s teaching in light of his strong faith in secular information.

V. Lee Man Hee’s Trinity

One of the perplexing doctrines is the doctrine of the Trinity and it is one of the doctrines which has driven people into heresy. One of my lecturers when I was a Bible student in the class of the Trinity said “do not mess up with the doctrine of trinity and just leave it alone and we will find out exactly what it is when we get to heaven.” The lecturer had to say so because the Bible does not explicitly teach the Trinitarian view of God in detail. One thing we know with confidence regarding this view is that God is one, and yet at the same time three persons. So many people who have studied this, have attempted to delineate the formula of the Trinity. However while explaining one aspect of it, another aspect has been distorted or ignored. In order to get a

³² Dennis J concurs “major flaws of evolution is that the mathematical odds of spontaneous generation of life from non-living matter are incredible-1 chance in trillions. And living cells can reproduce themselves but do not grow more complex. A single microscopic DNA molecule carrying the hereditary code in the human genes is more complex than the largest computer in the world. And no transitional missing links between species (e.g. monkey and man) have ever been found (Mock 1989:181).

certain standard on the view of the Trinity, this paper will deal with a biblical view of the Trinity, and will introduce Lee's doctrine of the Trinity along with its problems.

A. A Biblical view of the Trinity

A Few people would ask whether or not the term "Trinity" appears in the Bible, because the word is repeated many times from the pulpit. As matter of fact, the word "trinity" does not appear in the Bible, but the concept is clearly biblical. The basic concept of the trinity is that God is three beings in one God, and one God in three persons. It is really hard to comprehend or to describe the concept, for sometimes God appears as One, while at the same time He is three independent entities. There are plenty of evidences showing those entities. Firstly, let us look at the Oneness of God.

1. The Oneness of God

The religion of the ancient Hebrews understood God as One entity. The Following verses are going to prove the unity of God. In Exod. 20:3: it says "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exo 20:3 NAS). The term "before me" refers literally to "my face," which is used in the singular (Erickson 2000: 348). Having demonstrated in the previous verse His unique reality by what He had done for the people in Egypt; "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exo 20:2 NAS), God pronounced that there are

no other gods worthy of being served. The following verse also indicates His unique reality;

"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth"(Exo 20:4 NAS). Having dealt with the prohibition of Idolatry, God also required from His people unique devotion to Him because He alone is God.

A clearer indication of the oneness of God is found in the book of Deuteronomy 6:4; "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" (Deut 6:4 NAS). This verse stresses God's unity as a state of being single. Let us look at the context of it. Asking for total commitment Himself, God commanded the people of Israel to absorb the great truths, as well as the fact that those who were well versed in the Word of God, ought to inculcate their children with the truths.

The methods of memorizing the Scriptures were laid out in the following verses 6-9; "these commandments.....are to be upon your heart.....talk about them.....at home and on the road, when lying down and when arising.....wearing them on their hands and foreheads and writing them on the doorframes of their houses and on their gates.....". There is nothing else to concentrate on but God, "Yahweh" because He is totally unique and He alone is God. In the ancient Near East, the gods were known to be unpredictable and morally capricious. Thus there was no sense of security from the gods because people at that time thought that the gods did not work in harmony with one another. In the case of pagan worshipers, in order to avoid the

capricious wrath of one god, they worshipped various gods to secure the sense of protection from other gods.³³ However, God announced “the Lord is one,” which emphasizes the unique, unmatched deity of Jehovah. Due to His incomparable uniqueness, the following verse says “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut 6:5 NAS). Since He is One, God commanded the people of Israel to “love your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” without division in Israel’s commitment.

The explanation of God’s oneness is not only restricted to only the Old Testament. James 2:19 says “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder” (Jam 2:19 NAS). As the uniqueness of God was well known, it says “you do well and demons also believe.” The pronouncement “you” indicates Jewish readers who believed in and were very familiar with the *Shema* which appeared in Deut, 6:4 (MacArthur 2005: 1888) and the “demons” represents spiritual entities, fallen angels. That is, James wanted to pronounce that all

³³ Walvoord adds more information in light of the culture of the ancient Near East “The “gods” of the ancient Near East rarely were thought of as acting in harmony. Each god was unpredictable and morally capricious. So a pagan worshiper could never be sure that his loyalty to one god would serve to protect him from the capricious wrath of another. The monotheistic doctrine of the Israelites lifted them out of this insecurity since they had to deal with only one God, who dealt with them by a revealed consistent righteous standard. This confession of monotheism does not preclude the biblical doctrine of the Trinity.” (Walvoord and Dallas Theological Seminary 1983-c1985: 1:274)

creatures know that God is one. Even Paul, who wrote most books of the New Testament proved the uniqueness of God; “Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one” (1Co 8:4 NAS) and “yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him” (1Co 8:6 NAS). Through the statement in I Cor 8:4, Paul expressed his agreement with the assumption that idols were nothing and that the food sacrificed to those idols could not defile believers. Paul added the reason why it could not contaminate believers, saying “there is no God but One.” Paul stressed this to correct the wrong view regarding the gods. Influenced by the Greeks and Romans who were polytheistic (worshiping many gods) and polydemonistic (believing in many evil spirits), Christians were afraid of eating the food which was offered to Idols, because during that time, the people thought that evil spirits would try to invade the human being by attaching themselves to food before it was eaten (Conzelmann 1975: 142). Paul asserted that there are no deities but for the one true God. He excluded all possibility of any spiritual entity which could possibly be considered a god, because there is only one God. In order to highlight the uniqueness of God, Paul confirms again with verse 6; “yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus

Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him” (1Co 8:6 NAS). No doubt Paul and all mature believers perceived the truth that God is one.

2. The deity of three

Not only has the Scripture revealed God’s oneness, but it has also in an equal manner proven the fact that God is made up of three persons.

a. The deity of Jesus Christ

In addition to Paul’s references regarding God’s oneness noted above, he accounted for God as being a separate deity from Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy says “For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus” (1Ti 2:5 NAS). The role of “mediator” refers to someone who intervenes between two parties to reconcile them. In this verse, Jesus Christ was described as a mediator and His role was to restore the broken relationship between God and sinners and make it peaceful (Towner 1994: Vol 14, 1 Ti 2:3). Two facts draw our attention in this verse. First of all, we notice that God and His Son, Jesus Christ, seem to be separate entities and Christ obviously acknowledges the individual deity of the heavenly God. There are much clearer verses to support these two elements, which can be found in Matthew 6:26, 31-32. Jesus says “your heavenly Father feeds them” (Mat 6:26 NAS), after which, He indicates “your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things”

(Mat 6:32 NAS). We can see that the terms “God” and “your heavenly Father” are interchangeable expressions, and we also perceive the two facts that Jesus and God are separate entities and that Jesus has in mind God as the Father.

Although Jesus Christ considers his father to be God, it does not mean that God is superior to Jesus Christ in terms of the qualification of deity. Scripture also identifies Christ as God with the equal quality. A key reference featuring the deity of Christ Jesus who is equal with God is found in Philippians 2. In this passage, dealing with the example of selfless humility, Paul mentions the name of Jesus who had demonstrated how to be humble. Especially verse 6 shows Christ’s original position in heaven; “who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped” (Phi 2:6 NAS). Paul stresses the truth that Jesus Christ has been eternally God. This is why Paul uses the term “ὑπάρχων” (existed) which emphasizes the essence of a person’s nature and one’s continuous state, instead of using the regular word for “being” (Ash, A.L. 1994: Php 2:6). In addition to this, Paul could have chosen one of two Greek words for “form,” but he chooses μορφή (form) to describe Christ’s essential, unchanging character. One of the finest scholars in the book of Philippians, Beets expounds the word “form” in the following way:

“It is to the essence what the outside is to the inside, what the manifestation is to the underlying and unseen reality. It is “the utterance of the inner life” (Trench) of whatever exists. Same word in the N.T. only Mr 16:12; also Da 5:6, 9, 10; 7:28; 4:33; Isa 44:13; Job 4:16. Cognate words in Ro 2:20; 2Ti 3:5; also Ga 4:19; Mt 17:2; Mr 9:2; Ro 12:2; 2Co 3:18; Ro 8:29; Php 3:10, 21. It is closely related in sense to *image*, which, however, suggests the idea of comparison and similarity (Beet 1999: Php 2:6).”

What Paul wants to emphasize in the term “form of God” is the truth that Jesus Christ Himself is the essence of God, not in the sense of shape or superficial appearance. In fact it is indeed an astonishing utterance for Paul who used to be an orthodox Jew who had been educated in the rabbinic teaching of strict Judaism. It reflects how much Paul has convinced of the full deity of Christ. Paul’s deep commitment to the deity of Jesus is found in continued words; “did not regard equality with God” (Phi 2:6 NAS). The Greek words “equality with God” literally means existing in a manner equal to God. It suggests that Jesus Christ is exactly the same in size, quantity, quality, character, and number (MacArthur 2005: 1716). However, Christ did not attempt to be equal with God even though He possessed equality with God; “did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped” (Phi 2:6 NAS). Thus Jesus Christ is the exactly same when compared with God in terms of every attribute of deity.

b. The deity of the Holy Spirit

There are also many references in the Scripture which validate the identity of the Holy Spirit as God. There are numerous times the Holy Spirit is described with the interchangeable name with references to God. A Good example is found in Acts 5:3-5. It is the story of Ananias and Sapphira who were dead as the consequence of their lie. Having held back a portion of their property which they had sold, Ananias lied to the apostles saying that the portion he gave to the church was the entire amount they had received for the property. He was lying and trying to deceive the apostles and God. Knowing exactly what was going on by the wisdom of God, Peter first told him that he was lying to the Holy Spirit (v. 3); “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit” (Act 5:3 NAS), and Peter continued and said to him that he had lied to God; “You have not lied to men, but to God” (Act 5:4 NAS). We can see that Peter uses the term “Holy Spirit” as an interchangeable name with the reference to God. Peter intended to say that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God (Calvin 1995: Acts5:4). The Holy Spirit is also described to have God’s unique ministries, convicting people of sin, being righteousness, and being able to judge. A good example showing these merits is found in John 16:8-11. Jesus promised His disciples that after Christ left for heaven, a Helper, the Holy Spirit, would come (v.7). Thus Jesus Christ began to introduce the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit

convicts people of sin; “He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin”

(Joh 16:8 NAS). He also forms believers into righteousness of Christ; “and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me” (Joh 16:10 NAS), and he convicts them of Judgment; “and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged” (Joh 16:11 NAS). We also can find that the ministries of regenerating a sinner and giving new life are done by the Holy Spirit. John 3:8 says “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (Joh 3:8 NAS). Paul repeats twice the truth twice that believers are God’s temple and his Spirit dwells within them in 1Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20. In other words, the Holy Spirit lives in the place where God dwells, which implies the fact that the Holy Spirit is God. Thus we can see that the name of the Holy Spirit is interchangeable with the reference to God.

On the surface, researching two lines of evidence, God’s oneness and the fact that He is three persons, we are confronted by the difficulty to sort it out because the two features of God seem to be contradictory. Throughout all of church history, the church has studied the relationship between these two sets of data. In attempt to put the two features of God in order, the church concluded that God must be perceived as three in one. There is a good reference

which fits the conclusion. It shows clearly that God is three in one; “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (1Jo 5:7 KJV) (Erickson 2000: 353). Though there are critical views against the fact as to whether these words are talking about the Trinity or about something else,³⁴ numerous people consider this passage a succinct statement of the three-in-oneness. Another supporting passage, unveiling the three-in-oneness is found in 2Co.13:14; “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all” (2Co 13:14 NAS). This is obviously the Trinitarian benediction the church in Corinth has received. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ indicates two natures; the name, “Lord” implies His divine nature and the word, “Jesus Christ” indicates the Messiah, the long-promised Redeemer. The Next phrase “the love of God” obviously refers to the Father, who gave His son because of the love he has for us and the next words introduce the Holy Spirit, “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hodge 1995: 2Co 13:14). It clearly sorts out the distinct personalities and the divinity of the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, although the name of Jesus was mentioned prior to the

³⁴ According to John MacArthur, External manuscript evidence, however, is against them being in the original epistle. They do not appear in any Greek manuscripts dates before c. the tenth century A.D. Only eight very late Greek manuscripts contain the reading, and these contain the passage in what appears to be translation from a late recension of the Latin....(MacArthur 2005:1967)

Father to emphasize His sacrificial death. Needless to say, this benediction was written under a clear recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity, the three-in-oneness.

Even though it is not possible to delineate certain formula of the doctrine of the Trinity as we have examined it, we have to rest on the Scriptures proving the deity of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, as well as the uniqueness of God that is called three-in-oneness.

B. Lee's interpretation of the Trinity

On Shinchonji's website, there are quite interesting articles stating that "the Christian belief in the Trinity is false."³⁵ What they basically deny is the word "trinity." This is the comment which comes from their website.

"What is the trinity? Few people ever stop to ask whether or not the term trinity appears in the Bible. In traditional Christianity, the trinity refers to the concept that God is three beings in one. The Bible, however, never mentions the word trinity. The Bible speaks about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but it never refers to them as a single entity or unit. The doctrine of the trinity states that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are a single unit or entity. Now, it could be argued that they seemed to single entity at the time of the first coming, when both the Father

³⁵ Shinchonji homepage (2015:<http://www.shincheonji.kr> (2015.10.Feb))

and the Holy Spirit dwelt within the body of the Son, Jesus Christ. However, in the spiritual world, these three exist as three separate entities. They are individual beings with distinct spiritual bodies.”³⁶

Except for the time when Jesus Christ was baptized by the Holy Spirit and the voice from heaven indicated the presence of the Father, they maintain that three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always a distinct entity. However, after Jesus left His bodily form and ascended to Heaven, those three personalities existed in different forms as used to be, they argue. Here is their argument.

“Prior to the first coming of Christ, God and Jesus were two different entities. When Christ came, he said that the Father was greater than him (Joh 14:28), and he prayed to God (Mt 26:39). God spoke to Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (Mt 17:5), the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism (Mt 3:16-17; Jn 1:32), and while Stephen, the first martyr, was being stoned to death he said he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56). The Bible also explains how the Apostle John sees the Lamb standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. In his vision, John watches as the Lamb

³⁶ Shincheonji homepage (2015:<http://www.shincheonji.kr>]

approaches and takes a scroll from the hand of God who is seated on the throne (Rev 5:6-7).

These examples make it clear that the Father and Son have separate spiritual bodies in the spiritual world.”³⁷

In order to emphasize the “separated entity of God,” Shincheonji ignores a lot of references which prove the uniqueness of God in the Old Testament. God says that there is no God except the Lord in Isa 45:5-6 Isa 45:5-6; God alone stands outside nature as its Creator. All other beings are created by him. The Following verses also says the same thing; Dt 4:35; Dt 6:4; Dt 32:3; 1Ki 8:60; Ps 83:18; Ps 86:10; Isa 43:10-11; Isa 44:6-8; Isa 45:18; 1Co 8:4-6; Eph 4:6; 1Ti 2:5; 1john 5:7. It is too obvious to deny the uniqueness of God, but by forcing his followers to read limited and selected verses which only show the separated entity of God, Lee is deceiving people with thought taken out of context. Needless to say, the correct definition of the Trinity is, as noted above, that there is one God-being and three God-persons, which is called three-in-oneness. If this definition is altered or ignored, one will end up with heresy.

VI. The influence of Shincheonji on churches and societies, and its strategy to induce people

³⁷ Shincheonji homepage (2015:<http://www.shincheonji.kr>)

The influence of Shincheonji is very negative. Many families have been broken, and her influence has also spread on college campuses to convince students that Shincheonji is only way to get saved.

According to a CBS TV report, Kim, one of victims who lost family members to Shincheonji, is a good example. Kim used to have a happy family. However, the conflict has been escalating since his wife became a member of Shincheonji. Being engrossed in the activities of Shincheonji, his wife did not take care of domestic affairs and subsequently more verbal fights occurred in the home. As the conflict between them grew worse, it led to physical conflict. Following one specific conflict, his wife went to a police station and reported the violence done by the husband. It was exceedingly unexpected to think that his beloved wife would accuse him of domestic violence. After becoming a member of Shincheonji, she has been changed in such a way. He was stunned and embarrassed by her attitude toward him which had changed to such an extent that she went to report him to the police. To make matters worse, he was determined to kill himself.³⁸ In fact, he endured depression for a long time after that incident and then decided to commit suicide while other families were not in the area. Such instances

³⁸ Article News (2015:<http://article.joins.com>)

are sadly numerous in Korean society. The numbers of direct victims who have been infected from the Shincheonji virus are measured up to 150,000.³⁹ According to Shinchonji's New Year report, Lee's pious followers are eagerly trying to spread the virus throughout our society and many strange incidents occur to its associated members. Running away from home, quitting work and school, divorce, assault, acts of terror, suicide, murder, arson, stalking, surveillance, sex crime, sex being used as a recruitment tool, family feuds, and suing, to mention a few happenings. At one time MBC news reported the tragic deaths of some children with the following announcement; "It happened yesterday around 9 P.M."-, the apartment was on fire at around 9 P.M. and Mr. Kim's four-year-old daughter and two-year-old son suffocated to death inside the building.⁴⁰ MBC news did not specify where Kim's wife was while the house was on fire, although, according to her husband, she had run away to Shincheonji after having had a religious argument with him.⁴¹



Two babies suffocated to dead⁴²

³⁹ Dang Dang Korean News (2015 <http://www.dangdangnews.com/news>)

⁴⁰ Naver News 2015 (<http://news.naver.com>)

⁴¹ Shincheonji vaccine (2015:<http://shinchonjivaccine.blogspot.com>)

⁴² Shincheonji vaccine (2015: [//shinchonjivaccine.blogspot.com](http://shinchonjivaccine.blogspot.com))

As seen in the picture above, the four year-old sister tried to make the two year-old baby sleep before being suffocated to death. A father with tears said that she forsook everything, even her children as she fell into Shincheonji. The Social issues associated with Shincheonji do not only remain within the constraints of family, but also extend to University campuses. According to *Korean Campus Life*, many youth members of Shincheonji have been deployed in campuses throughout Korea, have disguised themselves as regular students and have approached other students, using various methods and questions. They mainly approach students who look innocent, in order to carry out their surveys. As these innocent students participate in the survey, details such as their contact numbers are recorded. With this information, Shincheonji attempt to make more appointments to lure these participants into Shincheonji.⁴³

Persuading these naive students with words such as “let us have Bible Study or Quiet Time”, Shincheonji members lure them into their community, and begin to brainwash them with a textbook written by Lee. What happens if one does not want to study the subject of Shincheonji and one wants to get out of the membership because of advice received from someone else?

The following incident happened when someone wanted to quit the study. According to

⁴³ Campus news (2015: <http://www.campuslife.co.kr>)

Christian Forum News, three Shincheonji members assaulted Lee Jeong-Hwan in front of his house on the night of 2/5/2013. This happened after he had dropped out of Shincheonji membership.⁴⁴ This is not accidental violence. Those three seasoned members of Shincheonji slapped Lee Jeong-Hwan, pushed him to ground and kicked his belly several times. Since he no longer wanted to be a member of Shincheonji, they treated him like animal. According to Shincheonji, it is not tolerated if anyone to drop out of membership.

The stories regarding the victims of Shincheonji go on and on. Before we go further, we need to find out why those in Shincheonji are so eager to be members, and why they even forsake everything in order to do so. It is because they want to belong to the restricted number, 144,000, as noted in Revelation 7. Lee teaches that unless people join Shincheonji, they can neither be saved nor can they belong to the prophesied number of sealed people, 144,000. The following words are from the book, *Creation of Heaven and Earth*.

“God originally chose a church in South Korea, called the Church of the Seven Lampstands, and gave them his words... The one who overcomes the invaders was Lee with his message. He creates a new people, Shincheonji, and the new Spiritual Israel. Those who learn the

⁴⁴ Naver Info (2015: <http://cafe.naver.com>)

revealed word from Lee about the events in Revelation become the sealed 144,000 (Lee 2009: 195).”

The interesting thing about this faith is that as soon as the amount of Shincheonji members reaches the prophesied number of 144,000, the end of world will come. With regard to this matter, the Munwha, a Korean journal, discovered another victim whose wife constantly and urgently told her husband “if you do not join Shincheonji, you are a dead man.” Then she added “unless you join Shincheonji, I will divorce you.”⁴⁵

If Lee is a promised pastor receiving a revelation which used to be sealed and which has only been unveiled to him, and if his teaching is right about the restricted number of only 144,000 members in Shincheonji, the end of the world would have come long ago because the prophesied number, 144,000, has already been fulfilled in 2012.

The table below shows an annual growth of Shincheonji in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. Each year the growth increases from 58,055, to 70,122, to 85,513, and to 153,702. It shows the twelve tribe names from left-top; John, Peter, James, Andrew, Judas Philip, Simon, Bartholomew, Matthew, Mathias, Seoul-James, and Thomas.

⁴⁵ Shincheonji vaccine (2015: <http://shinchonjivaccine.blogspot.com>)

각지파 년도별 육체영생에 속은 신도 현황

지파명	지파장	신천기26	신천기27	신천기28			신천기29		신천기28년12월 (2011년 12월말) 현재 재정
		2009년	2010년	2011년			2012년		
				목표	실적	실적률	목표	실적	
요한(과전)	유○주	11,074	13,440	17,472	16,681	95.5%	33,362		
베드로(광주)	지○섭	11,053	12,559	15,699	14,755	94.0%	17,706	100억	
야고보(부산)	김○훈	2,548	3,746	5,600	4,744	84.7%	9,488	6억	
안드레(부산)	김○수	4,292	5,176	7,349	6,777	92.2%	12,000	26억1천	
다대오(대구)	최○석	2,319	2,394	3,420	3,095	90.5%	12,380	17억8천	
빌립(원주)	김○국	2,878	3,754	5,200	4,957	95.3%	8,000	34억4천	
시몬(화정)	이○주	3,242	4,114	5,600	4,948	88.4%	12,000	8억8천	
바울매(화곡)	정○영	1,702	2,004	2,705	2,362	87.3%	4,724	3억3천	
마태(인천)	이○석	2,782	3,021	4,500	3,849	85.5%	7,000	17억5천	
맛디아(대전)	장○식	8,047	10,269	12,865	11,849	92.1%	15,404	68억9천	
서울야고보	윤○한	3,526	4,134	5,611	4,819	85.9%	9,638	6억7천	
도마(전주)	이○상	4,592	5,511	7,200	6,677	92.7%	12,000	33억8천	
합 계	12지파	58,055	70,122	93,221	85,513	91.7%	153,702	0	

List of Shincheonji members by year and tribe⁴⁶

The second column shows the name of each tribe's leader. The subsequent columns with each year show the total amount of members in each tribe.⁴⁷ As seen in the table, the number of growth-goal during 2012 is 153,702. It is utter nonsense to set the growth number. 153,702 for 2012. Lee wants to get more members despite the fact that he teaches about the restricted number of 144,000. The number of members in Shincheonji has exceeded this restricted number for some time already. In contrast to Lee's argument, the end of the world has not come

⁴⁶ Theacro (2015: <http://theacro.com>)

⁴⁷ Amennews (2015: <http://www.amennews.com>)

nor has the new world come.

The most dangerous feature of Shincheonji is their strategy to induce regular church members. They have little interest in witnessing to unbelievers, but rather focus on people attending a normal conservative church. Their propagation strategy is called “moving the mountain (Han 2013: 31),” which means that they plan to get most regular church members to join Shincheonji.

There are various cunning ways in which they lure these church members. The typical way to persuade members to join Shincheonji is by joining a regular church themselves. In order to do this, they first disguise themselves as normal faithful Christians and begin to form deep relationships with each church member, and to receive credit they show frequent participation in church activities. In order to build up these intimate relationships with church members, members of Shincheonji participate in all church meetings, cell groups, bible studies, and women’s and men’s prayer meetings. The first thing they do through these participations is to find the members who frequently complain about their church or pastor. Organizing occasional meetings with these members on purpose, members of Shincheonji start the meetings with the nursing words of how much God loves them and how much they have prayed for individual

members who have problems with their church or pastor. Telling them about a special and mystical vision artificially created by Shincheonji, they lie to the members that God has given them a special message. The most popular verses which are often used to lure the members to Shincheonji is Ephesians 6: 14-17 which is talking about taking armor of God. They take advantage of these verses to make the church members to join their Bible study, lying “God told us to give you these verses so that you are equipped with Word of God” and introduce their Bible study, giving a wrong faith that this study would help them to put the spiritual armor of God. The Bible study which takes six months to finish, starts with friendly doctrine and at end of the last two months, it slowly begins to teach the deity of Lee Man-Hee as a promised pastor (Han 2013: 33-34). As noted above, various cunning methods are employed to attract regular church members who are available, and in order to accomplish this goal, a lie becomes a virtue. It is just like a virus which spiritually influences other members. To make matters worse, once someone has become the member of Shincheonji, the one goes back to one’s church and bring more people into Shincheonji. I personally saw half of a certain church’s members move to Shincheonji.

The task given to me is how to cope with Shincheonji or how to stop this negative influence.

The movement of Shincheonji is not restricted to South Korea. Lee started the first meeting in South Africa in Cape Town on the 15th of December 2012.⁴⁸ Since then, a lot of activity, Bible studies, seminars, etc... have been going on in Cape Town.⁴⁹ It is necessary to be vigilant against Shincheonji and to be aware of both the doctrine of Shincheonji and the way to cope with its influence on a church. By introducing the teaching of Shincheonji in this discussion, one can learn about ways to cope with Shincheonji. How are we going to prevent Shincheonji from moving into regular churches?

First of all, the church leaders including lay leaders and ministers need to be aware of Shinchonji's strategies of seducing, especially in its way of interpreting the Bible. Rather than looking at Scripture from a bird's eye view, Shincheonji accesses the Bible only partially, in order to support Lee's false doctrines. With regard to this matter, several teachings in terms of Shinchonji's ignoring the context of certain passages, has been noted above.

Secondly, it is important that the church members are familiar with the strategies of how Shinchonji's "harvest reaper" (Han 2013: 32)⁵⁰ sneaks in churches, and how this stranger

⁴⁸ Thestore housepe (2015: <http://thestorehousepe.tumblr.com>)

⁴⁹ Pinterest (2015: <https://www.pinterest.com>)

⁵⁰ According to Han's comments, well trained members in Shincheonji receive a special mission from Lee to seduce a regular church member to Shincheonji. They are called "harvest reaper." (Han 2013: 32)

accesses church members so that the church members can identify who the secret Shincheonji harvest reapers are in the church. There are several features of these harvest reapers, when they come to church for the first time. First, they do not want to disclose their true identities regarding where they live and what their phone numbers are. They also do not want their pictures to be taken. Secondly, they like to talk about the problems of ministers concerning their unknown relationships with women and financial abuse.

As noted earlier, these harvest reapers utilize many cunning methods to seduce people to their Bible studies. Do not be fooled by harvest reapers' deceiving acts.

Thirdly, professional assistance is definitely needed. Once people have been seduced into Shinchonji's faith, it is almost impossible to get them back to the traditional faith with our efforts alone. Professional help is needed for the victim of Shincheonji to restore them to the traditional faith.

Fourthly, it is important that all the people in a church are aware of the possibility of these harvest reapers entering a church at any time, in order to prevent the church from indifference towards this issue.

Fifthly, do not participate in meetings hosted by unknown institutions, because Shincheonji takes advantage of disguised buildings which look like a normal organization, such as fraud churches, prayer houses, cultural institutions, college clubs, cafes, and mass media.

Sixthly, it is desirable to share the information regarding Shincheonji with other churches in order to prevent these churches from further infection if possible.

In order to prevent people from falling into Shincheonji's decoy, Church leaders have to employ all the methods.

VII. Conclusion

My research serves to assist all Korean churches as well as other churches in other countries to be aware of true identity of Shincheonji because of their unbiblical teaching and their negative influence on the churches as well as society. In this regard, the history of Shincheonji as well as current status has to be dealt with to perceive the root of Shincheonji. Shincheonji founded by Lee Man-Hee on 14 March, 1984 is a rapidly growing religious movement in South Korea. According to Christian Amen News in 2014, its registered members are over 150,000 and its organization which is made of 12 tribes are scattered throughout South Korea. Shincheonji having failed to register as a non-profit religious organization, has to

disguises themselves as a normal church and carry out the illegitimate propagation activities which is interrupting a regular church in Korea.

Lee has suspicious religious background. Three Korean apocalyptic movement leaders have influenced most on Lee's teaching. Lee had been under Tae Sun Park for 10 years, who was expelled from the Presbyterian denomination due to his heretical teaching and cult. Abominable cult Park has been carrying out, was sexual promiscuity which was believed to purify one's soul. Later on, he was accused of defrauding his followers and was in prison for several months. Shortly after a news regarding Park's scandals, Lee left Park and joined another suspicious religious organization which is called "Tent Temple" found by Jae Yul Yoo who used to be a pious apprentice of Park. Unlike Lee, Yoo left the organization owned by Park with a substantial members of Park and found his own church. In line with the doctrine of Park, Yoo instructed that the Scriptures were consisted of parables and secrets, which was an invariable feature of the end time movement. Just like Park, Yoo was accused of fraud and put in jail for five years. 5,000 followers of Yoo including Lee became dispersed and Lee joined in other religious organization found by one of Yoo's disciples, Man Bong Baek who is a third influential person. Baek as a typical apocalyptic movement leader, apotheosize himself and emphasized his

supernatural ability to predict the last of the world. The fact that he was a scammer, was unveiled by his prediction regarding a final day of the world which would happen at noon March 13, 1980. Additional prediction about his rapture to heaven within three days was also not proven to be very lie. Lee as a forerunner and other followers deserted Baek and formed a new organization which is called the Shincheonji Church of Jesus on March, 14, 1984.

All Lee's religious background is made of illegitimate apocalyptic movements which have been identified with heresy and his teaching and cults are based on those previous leaders.

As it turns to Shincheonji's main doctrine which is invariably based on Lee's own interpretation, pair or mate-doctrine has been deal with. The distinctive feature of the doctrine of mate is to ignore context and to make a selected word figurative. For instance, the tree of knowledge appeared in Genesis 2 is interpreted by Lee as evil's organization and this figurative interpretation is applied to the tree appeared in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in the chapter 4 of Daniel. Thus the tree of knowledge in garden is coupled with the tree in the chapter 4 of Daniel and this kind of interpretation is called "doctrine of mate." Lee basically teaches that all words have its own pair. This interpretation is extended to section of Old and New Testament. The Old Testament testifies the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ and New Testament also testifies

the coming pastor which is called “promised pastor” who has the ability to interpret the word of God. Lee argues that he is the one New Testament testifies and that as Christ promised to come back in New Testament, the spirit of Christ comes to Lee.

Just like other end time leaders, Lee takes advantage of this pair doctrine to apotheosize his identity.

In addition, Lee maintains that the faith in Jesus Christ is not enough to be saved. He consider good deeds not as the consequence of the faith after being saved but as demanding element to be saved. Mentioning several personages, Adam, Noah..... in Old Testament, he relates that they were elected to be God’s vessels due to their good deeds. However they were forsaken by God, committing sins. Lee’s doctrine about the salvation by good deed, virtually denies God’s unconditional election, one of God’s attribution and the nature of human as mentioned in Rom 3:23. In case of Noah, he was counted as righteousness not because of his good deed but because of his faith (Hebrew 11:7).

Shincheonji’s allegorical interpretation is not newly invented method to approach Scripture. This method had been employed by allegorists in the time of the early church. Problem of this interpretation is found in that the literal meaning in Scripture is regarded as vehicles for finding

more hidden and spiritual message. In line with this interpretation, Lee concludes that all message has hidden and spiritual meaning and only promised pastor which is a title applied to Lee only is able to unveil this meaning. Good example is found in the parable of the two seeds in Matthew 13. According to his reckless argument, a good seed represents figuratively the souls who come to Shincheonji and get saved and a bad seed represents people who belong to Satan and who do not come to Shincheonji. It means all Christians on this planet will go to hell because they are not the members of Shincheonji.

As we go through Trinity of God, the research proves that Lee does not believe oneness of Trinity, which is actually one of features of God. He claims that God the Father, and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit has different position (John 14:28) and that three Gods have not united as singleness except the time Christ was baptized in Jordan River. Though Lee believe three separated entity of God, he deny the oneness of God.

It seems to be very contradictable how three different and distinct entities can be one while maintaining their unique identities. For this reason, many theologians have attempted to classify Trinity in various manners but fail to contain three different deity along with oneness of God at the same time. Describing oneness of God, Two crucial verses of many references noted above

are Deuteronomy 6:4 and 1 John 5:7. It is crystal clear that Deuteronomy testifies God is one; “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut 6:4 NKJV). 1 John also verifies that God is one, stating “there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, The word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one” (NKJV 1John 5:7). Three separated members of the godhead are appeared from time to time but are yet one. It is not possible to fully explain the trinity with our finite brains. The best solution of how to expound the trinity is to leave it alone.

The influence of Lee’s teaching and Shincheonji’s propaganda in Korea is so negative that many families as well as regular church members are on the verge of collapse. My research is designed to help not only Korean church but the church in South Africa to prevent them from falling into Shincheonji scheming. As noted above, disguising themselves as a new curious member, the harvest reaper deployed by Shincheonji tries to enroll in church member. One has to make sure new member’s full information, name, address, and telephone number because one of features of the harvest reaper is hiding one’s personal information. If a new enrolled member works hard in a church, participating with all type of meetings in a church, a church leader need to have counsel with the one because Shincheonji pretend to be a pious believer. However short after becoming influential leader, the reaper begin to convince members to lead

them into unknown Bible study which is held by Shincheonji. All church leaders have to be aware of this strategy Shincheonji employ so that ones can keep them away from ones' flock. I believe my research provides enough information regarding Shincheonji for a church leaders in term of giving them warning. Moreover, I hope my research help to relinquish the scheming of Shincheonji and more number of church knows the true identity of Shincheonji.

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