

# **BASIC TRAINING**

**WITNESS LEE**



**LIVING STREAM MINISTRY**

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by Witness Lee

**ISBN:** 978-0-7363-1447-3

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## **PREFACE**

This book is composed of messages given by Brother Witness Lee in Anaheim, California, in April and May 1978.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **SEVEN MYSTERIES**

According to the New Testament, there are many mysteries. In this chapter we will consider, in an introductory way, seven of these mysteries: God, the universe, man, Christ, the Spirit, the church, and the future. These seven mysteries cover the whole Bible.

#### **THE MYSTERY OF GOD**

The greatest mystery is the mystery of God, who is the source, the origin, of the universe. The Bible begins with, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). As the origin of the universe, God is altogether a mystery. Concerning the mystery of God, the Bible seems to contradict itself. (Actually, there are no contradictions in the Bible.) On the one hand, the Bible says that no one has ever seen God, but on the other hand, it says that Moses saw God. Thus, whether or not man has seen God is a mystery. Colossians 1:15 speaks of the visible image of the invisible God. Is God visible or invisible? He is mysteriously visible and invisible. Whether He is visible or invisible, He is mysterious.

Not only does the Bible reveal that there is God; human history also indicates that there is God. The book of Daniel was written about two thousand five hundred years ago. According to Daniel 2, King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream of a huge image with a golden head, silver breast and arms, bronze abdomen and thighs, iron legs, and ten toes of iron mixed with clay. The golden head signifies Babylon with its king, Nebuchadnezzar. The breast and arms signify Medo-Persia, two nations combined to make one power. The bronze abdomen and thighs denote Alexander the Great, and the iron legs signify the Roman Empire, which, as every student of history knows, was divided into the Eastern and Western empires. After Alexander the Great had subjugated the land of Palestine, he obtained a copy of the book of Daniel from the scribes. He came to know that a part of this prophecy referred to him. Only God has the wisdom to create such a picture as that found in Daniel 2. This image signifies the history of mankind, a history that was written long before the events took place. This is a proof that God is managing the universe and that He is able to foretell

future events. Many of the things prophesied in the Bible have already been fulfilled.

As everyone knows, today's world situation is focused on the Middle East, particularly on the nation of Israel, which has less than three million people. Six hundred years before Christ, Nebuchadnezzar took over the city of Jerusalem, and it was not returned to the Jews for more than twenty-five hundred years. Then in 1948 the nation of Israel was re-formed, and nineteen years later, in 1967, Jerusalem was returned to the Jews. All this happened as the fulfillment of prophecy. Both the re-formation of Israel and the return of Jerusalem were definitely prophesied in the Bible. This also is a proof that God administers the universe. God is both the source of the universe and its manager. Not until we recognize the existence of God do we have a way to account for the origin of the universe. But when we recognize that the source of the universe is God, we know that He created it. When some atheists are lying on their deathbed, they will have doubts about their atheistic beliefs. We have the full assurance that there is a God. If there were no God, how could the universe have come into being?

## **THE MYSTERY OF THE UNIVERSE**

This brings us to the second mystery, the mystery of the universe. The entire universe is a mystery. Scientists and scholars have exhausted their mental ability to understand it. However, they still do not know the meaning of the universe. Praise the Lord that we have the understanding of this mystery!

We live not only on the earth but by the earth. If the earth did not produce so many things, including vegetable life and animal life, we would have no way to exist. Day by day we eat what is produced on the earth and by the earth. Have you ever realized that everything you eat comes from one source and that this source is the earth? Actually, we ourselves are earthy (Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:47), for we were made of earth and with earth. Nothing is closer to us than the earth.

The earth needs the heavens. Without the sunshine and rain, everything on earth would die. Thus, God created both the heavens and the earth. However, do not make the mistake of thinking that the universe consists only of heaven and earth.

A number of years ago I read an article regarding the size of the universe published by an institute of astronomy. According to this article, two hundred forty million solar systems make one galaxy, and forty billion galaxies form the unique center of the universe. I believe that the throne of God is located in this unique center. Scientists refer to the present age as the space age, but what they are referring to is the comparatively small area of space in our solar system. When we think of space, we need to be aware of the vast amount of space involved in the two hundred forty million solar systems that form one galaxy and the forty billion galaxies that form the unique center. This is the universe.

Not only the universe as a whole but even our own solar system is a mystery. I read another article saying that the sun is 1,300,000 times larger than the earth and that the earth is forty-nine times bigger than the moon. We simply cannot understand such a mystery. Scientists do not know of any other planet capable of supporting life, for the other planets in our solar system have no air, no firmament. Since there is no air around these planets, how can there be life on them? Only on earth can we find human life.

## **THE MYSTERY OF MAN**

Now we need to consider the mystery of man. According to the Bible, the meaning of the universe is man. When the Bible speaks of man, it always includes woman because woman is a part of man. Without woman, man is imperfect. The Bible reveals that the woman is the perfection and completion of man. In the first two chapters of Genesis, we are told of the creation of man. However, the Bible does not say that man and woman were created. For example, Genesis 1:26 does not say, "Let Us make man and woman." No, it says, "Let Us make man." As we all know, woman came into existence by being made from a part of man. Because woman is the completion and perfection of man, man and woman are one.

Man is truly a mystery. Do you understand yourself? Not even a doctor or psychiatrist can help you understand yourself fully. You are not a mere animal. You are a wonderful entity, even a mystery. Although man is so small, man is nonetheless the meaning of the universe. According to the Bible, the heaven is for the earth, and the earth is for man.

The Bible has hundreds of verses concerning man and presents a full description of him. The Bible has much to say about our ears and our tongue. It also speaks about our eyes, nose, and hands. Moreover, the Bible reveals the true condition of our heart. In fact, we have two hearts, a physical heart and a psychological heart. Although our physical heart may be healthy, our psychological heart is evil. It is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9). No other book gives us such a complete picture of our mind, will, emotion, conscience, and soul. The Bible is a complete revelation of ourselves. If you want to know yourself, study the Bible, paying attention to what it says about every aspect of man. If an unbeliever would read the Bible in this way, considering only what it says about man, he would be saved. When he comes to Isaiah 6, he will see that he is a man of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips, and thus he would repent.

The real picture of man is found in the Bible. A picture taken of us by a photographer is nice only in the outward appearance, but the Bible shows us how ugly and evil we are inwardly. Our eyes, ears, and nose are evil, and our heart is a dunghill. Beelzebul, the lord of the dunghill, is in our heart. In our heart is a host of evil flies ruled by the lord of the flies. Furthermore, our hands are evil; they are used again and again for stealing things. With your hands you may have stolen from your parents, from your school, or from your place of employment. You may have stolen pencils or stationery from your office. This reveals the kind of stealing hands you have.

None of us is an exception to the photograph of man presented in the Bible. By reading the Bible we come to realize how pitiful we are. We have no ground to be proud about anything. Our mind is a beehive of evil thoughts. Countless evil bees proceed out of our mind toward others, even toward the ones closest to us.

Praise the Lord that the Bible reveals not only the negative side of man but also the glorious side! The Bible says that we are the image of God. Although we are evil and corrupt, full of rotten thoughts, we nonetheless are the image of God. Moreover, we are God's vessel to contain Him. Our ears can listen to God's word, our eyes can behold His revelation, and our tongue can utter something for Him. Hallelujah, we are the image of God and the vessel of God! Our heart can think about God, and our spirit can touch Him. This is the mystery of man.

God has not only transferred us but is also transforming us. For example, He has transferred our ears from one realm to another. Then day by day the process of transformation continues. Although my ears may be ninety-five percent transformed, they are still not yet fully transformed. If they were, I would have been raptured already. It is the same with my tongue. Although my tongue speaks for God, at times bitter things still proceed from it. This indicates that I am not yet fully transformed.

## **THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST**

One day a wonderful person named Jesus Christ appeared on earth. He was a mystery to everyone, not only to those who were close to Him at that time but to all of human society for the nearly two thousand years since. Presently, some Jewish scholars are studying the case of Jesus, and some Jewish lawyers are considering whether or not Jesus was fairly tried and sentenced. Jesus Christ is a wonderful person. Throughout the centuries there have been many emperors, caesars, and czars, but today the entire world uses Christ's calendar, not the calendar of Alexander the Great, Hitler, or any other world leader. Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? Why did He come to live on earth? This is all a mystery.

Is Christ still a mystery to you? For those who use their mind to understand the Lord Jesus, He remains a mystery. The Bible says that Christ is the mystery of God (Col. 2:2). If you know Christ, you know God, but if you do not know Christ, you do not have the key to understand God. Furthermore, if you do not know Christ, you do not know yourself, for Christ is the key both to you and to the universe. Without Christ, you do not have the way to "get inside" yourself. The unbelievers and sinners are all "outside" themselves. But when we received Christ, we received the key that opens ourselves up. Now we have a way to enter into ourselves. Also, by receiving Christ we have found the key to understand the universe. I do not care how vast the universe is; I have the key to the universe, and I can communicate directly with the One who dwells in the center of the galaxies. I can make a "long distance call" from my home to that unique center, no matter how far away it is. When I speak, the One who dwells in the center of the galaxies directs me. Many times as I am ministering, I hear Him tell me to stop and not to touch a certain matter. I receive instructions from Him directly from the unique center of the universe.

As we have seen, Christ is the key to get into God. When you have Christ, God is open to you. Christ is the mystery of God. He is the explanation, interpretation, and definition of God. If you know Him, you know God. If you are in Him, you are in God. How wonderful!

## **THE MYSTERY OF THE SPIRIT**

Another mystery is the mystery of the Spirit. Who can say what the Spirit is and who the Spirit is? No one can see the Spirit or touch the Spirit, yet this mysterious Spirit is with us. The Spirit is the reality of Christ.

As Christians, we have wonderful times of either weeping or laughing. Sometimes it seems that you weep or laugh without understanding the reason for it. Every real Christian should have times when he is beside himself with joy in the Lord. If you have not had such experiences, it is an indication that you have not prayed sufficiently. When you pray sufficiently, you will be like a bouncing ball. You will be excited and filled with joy because you will be filled with the Spirit. In order to be filled with the Spirit, there is no need to speak in tongues. I have experienced the filling of the Spirit many times without speaking in tongues.

To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the pneumatic, the air. Sometimes we are so full of the heavenly air that we cannot contain it. When we are in this condition, we are afraid of being seen by others, afraid that they will not understand what is happening to us. When we are filled with the Spirit, we may spontaneously repent for condemning others and ask the Lord to forgive us. By being filled with the air, we have holiness and victory over sin. Because of the filling of the Spirit, we are beside ourselves in the Lord. This is mysterious. I have been experiencing this mystery for years. I cannot teach it to you or explain it to you. You must breathe in the air yourself.

This mystery of the Spirit can change people's lives in a moment. One minute a person may be a thief; the next minute he may be a saint. However, when he is no longer filled with the Spirit, he may be just as bad as he was before. When we are deflated, we are the worst ones, even as bad as Satan, but when we are filled with the Spirit, we are truly saints. Sometimes when Satan sees that we are full of the heavenly air, he deflates us. When this happens, the most holy saint becomes like Satan. The pneumatic, the holiness, and the life all disappear. This is the experience of the mystery of the Spirit. No one

can define this mystery. The real biography of the saints is the record of this mysterious Spirit.

## **THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH**

The church also is a mystery. Are we the church? How can we be the church when we are sometimes as bad as Satan? How can we be the church when we argue with our husbands or wives? The church is holy, pure, righteous, spiritual, and heavenly. The church has rejected the soul-life to the uttermost. How can we who are full of self say that we are the church? Moreover, the church has nothing to do with the world. So how can we, who are still so worldly, claim to be the church?

Regarding the church, there are a number of questions we need to ask: Who is the church? What is the church? Where is the church? Why is the church? How is the church? As you endeavor to answer these questions, it may seem that there is no church at all. The church is mysterious. If you say that you are the church, I will say that you are not, but if you say that you are not the church, I will say that you are. We may be the church to a certain degree. For example, some may be fifty-five percent the church. This is the case because the church is a mystery. No one can measure the church. Like the air, the church is mysterious and immeasurable.

## **THE MYSTERY OF THE FUTURE**

Now we come to the last mystery, the mystery of the future. Both the origin of the universe and the future of the universe are a mystery. None of the scientists knows what the future of the universe will be. They do not even know what the next day or the next hour will bring. Hallelujah, we know the mystery of the future! This mystery is the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and the new earth. Although no scientist or scholar understands this, we know it because the Bible reveals it to us. The Bible opens with, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). But the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, says, “I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away” (21:1). In the new heaven and the new earth, the New Jerusalem will be God’s tabernacle among men. This is the future.

The New Jerusalem is an eternal reflection of the church today. If you want to see what the church is, look at this eternal reflection. The New Testament does not give us a full definition of the church, but we see a complete picture of the church in the New Jerusalem. If you want to know the church, look at this eternal reflection. What we are doing in the church today is reflected there.

These seven mysteries cover the entire Bible. The span of these mysteries is vast, extending from eternity past to eternity future. In the coming chapters we will consider these mysteries in detail, especially the mysteries of man, Christ, the Spirit, and the church.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE DIVINE REVELATION**

In the previous chapter we considered seven mysteries. Now in this chapter we come to the matter of the divine revelation.

#### **MAZES AND INFERENCES**

Without revelation, every mystery is a maze. Even human history is a maze. For this reason, scholars, scientists, and religious leaders have continually studied the universe and the human race. Through their study they have discovered many things. Most discoveries and inventions have come by way of inference, by inferring the unknown from the known.

When we were young, we wondered about the meaning of the universe and about the human race. We also questioned the meaning of our life. As the years have passed, these questions have become more and more serious. When I was a teenager, the young people were not as thoughtful as they are today. We were uncomplicated and simply followed the older generation, accepting whatever our parents and teachers told us. During the past fifty years a great change has taken place among the young people. Today they are very thoughtful and questioning. They question the traditions and the old way of life. It was the thoughtfulness of the young people that gave rise to the hippie movement in the 1960s. In their questioning of the traditions, the young people are eager for something new. I sympathize with the young people in this desire. Their desire for something new causes them to make further inferences and discoveries.

Without revelation, the whole universe is a mystery and is filled with mysteries. Furthermore, humanity is a gigantic maze. During the time of Cain and Abel, humanity was not a maze because there had not been any inventions or discoveries. However, throughout the history of mankind there has been one invention and discovery after another. Every discovery and invention has paved a new way. Thus, human society today is a complex crisscross of various ways. For this reason people are easily lost.

Suppose there were just one street in the whole United States. If this were the situation, no one could get lost. Because in the New Jerusalem there will be only one street, no one will be able to get lost in that city. After anyone gets on the street, the street will guide him where he needs to go. How much different is today's human society! There are many ways not only in science and philosophy but also in religion.

## **THE SOURCE OF RELIGION**

In religion there are many different ways but just one source. Religion is a matter of teaching people according to your belief in God. Without God there can be no religion, because God is the source of religion. For example, Buddhism is not a proper religion. It does not have any God; rather, it teaches people that eventually they can become Buddhas. Because Buddhism is nonsensical and superstitious, it cannot be considered a genuine religion.

What about Taoism and the teachings of Confucius? Developed by thoughtful Chinese, Taoism teaches vanity; it has nothing solid. Not only does Taoism have no God; it has nothing substantial. Hence, it is not a religion. Likewise, the teachings of Confucius should not be regarded as a religion, because Confucius did not teach people to worship God. Confucius did mention God a few times in his writings, calling Him the King of the heavens, or even the heavens. Even though Confucius mentioned God, his teachings are ethical, not religious. Therefore, Buddhism is nonsensical, Taoism is vain, and the teachings of Confucius are ethical. Christianity, coming out of Judaism and including Catholicism and Protestantism, is a genuine religion, for it has the unique God. God is the source of Christianity. Islam is a religion also. The Koran is an imitation of the Bible, particularly of the Old Testament. The Koran even speaks of Jesus, saying that as He was being crucified, He was taken away by angels. Islam's God is the same as the One revealed in the Old Testament. Thus, God is the source of religion. God is uniquely one. No one can discover or infer the existence of another God. For this reason there is just one source for all religions.

Although Christianity is a typical religion, it also has become a maze. Thus, not only human society is a maze, but even the religion of Christianity is a maze. In Christianity there are many sects, divisions, denominations, and groups. Moreover, there are numerous ways and practices. This is the reason

many people have become confused by Christianity. They simply do not know which way to take or which of the so-called churches to attend.

## **REVELATION, NOT INFERENCES**

We have pointed out that everything in the universe is a mystery. God, creation, man, Christ, the Spirit, the church, and the future are mysteries. Even we ourselves are mysterious; we cannot fully understand ourselves. Because there are so many mysteries, there are many philosophies, inventions, and discoveries. As we have seen, every discovery, invention, religion, and philosophy is an inference. However, if we have the divine revelation, we do not need inferences.

Suppose I give a bottle of medicine to a chemist. The chemist may analyze the medicine to find out its elements. However, the one who made this medicine knows the formula, and he may say to the chemist, "There is no need for you to study or analyze the medicine. Simply take the formula, which is a revelation of what is contained in the medicine." We have the divine formula for the whole universe. Thus, there is no need for us to guess, study, or discover. We simply need to see the revelation.

## **THE DEFINITION OF REVELATION**

The basic revelation in the Scriptures is that God in eternity past had an eternal purpose to have a church to express Christ so that God Himself might be expressed for eternity through His chosen people. For this purpose He created the universe and, particularly, He created man. For this purpose He accomplished redemption for fallen man and regenerated the redeemed man. For this purpose He imparted Himself in Christ into the reborn believers. For this purpose He sanctifies them, saturates them with His divine element, transforms them into the image of Christ, and glorifies them with His glory. For this purpose He gathers them in localities to be local expressions of the universal church. Both the universal church and the local church are uniquely one. Christ, the very embodiment of God, is the content and reality of the church, and the church is the expression of Christ. Here there is no division but one God, one Christ, one Spirit, and one church, one Body. This is the basic revelation. All the rest of the teachings in the Scriptures are doctrines related directly or indirectly to this basic revelation. If we isolate any of these doctrines from the basic revelation, the isolated doctrine will become an issue.

Furthermore, this issue will become a legality that causes division among the believers. That kind of doctrine should not be considered the basic revelation.

## **DISCOVERIES, ISSUES, LEGALITIES, AND DIVISIONS**

Christianity has become a maze because it has deviated from the formula, from the basic divine revelation. Instead of trusting in the revelation, many Christians rely on their study, inferences, and discoveries.

After certain discoveries have been made, Christians have often made issues of them. For example, the Baptist Church has discovered the matter of immersion and has made an issue out of it. The result is that for the Baptists immersion is a matter of legality. This legality causes division. With this insight we can see that every denomination is a legality produced by those who made an issue of a particular discovery. Based upon this principle, we can say that every denomination is a legality and a division. All these divisions were produced by the discovery of certain things in the Bible. We in the Lord's recovery, however, do not agree with any legality, and we are not making issues of discoveries.

Human society and Christianity have become a maze because both have left the heavenly, divine revelation and turned to study, inventions, and discoveries. An issue has been made out of each discovery, and every issue has become a legality. Take the example of speaking in tongues. Some Christians have made speaking in tongues a legality. Yes, speaking in tongues is mentioned in the Bible, but this does not mean that you should make an issue of it. If you make an issue of speaking in tongues, this issue will become a legality that controls you and governs you. It will affect the destiny of your Christian life and cause you to care primarily for speaking in tongues. In the churches we do not make issues of anything. We practice immersion because it is found in the Bible. However, we do not make immersion a legality. We practice it without making it an issue.

At one time the question of long hair for sisters was made a legality. More than fifty years ago I worked for a company that sold hairnets. For a long time we sold only large hairnets. Suddenly, orders began to come in for small hairnets. I wondered about the reason for this change. Then I learned that American women had begun to wear their hair short. According to the legality that insists that sisters have long hair, sisters with short hair may not be

allowed to come to Christian meetings. Those who insist on this legality use 1 Corinthians 11 as their basis. This, however, is not a revelation but a legality made out of a teaching.

## **BACK TO THE HEAVENLY REVELATION**

Among today's Christians there is one legality after another. All this legality results in division. The reason for this legality and division is that many have left the heavenly revelation. The Lord's recovery is to bring us back to the heavenly revelation, to the heavenly formula. Because we have come back to the revelation, in the recovery there is no need for inferences, inventions, or discoveries. We do not need to guess about anything. Instead, we simply need to open our eyes to see the revelation. When we do this, we have the vision. We are not in a maze but on a highway under a clear sky, and we are directed by the heavenly revelation.

## **THE NEED FOR EYES AND LIGHT**

In order to see this directing revelation, we need two things. First, we need eyes. Suppose the heavenly revelation is before us, but we do not have the eyes to see it. If this is the situation, nothing will happen. Thank the Lord that we have eyes. Second, we need light. If we are in darkness, we cannot see the heavenly revelation even if we have eyes. In such a case we would have the revelation, the unveiling, but not the vision. In order to have the vision we need the revelation, the eyes, and the light. Praise the Lord that we are not in religion, a maze, or darkness but in a vision!

## **THE EXAMPLE OF SAUL OF TARSUS**

Consider the example of Saul of Tarsus. Although he was religious and very zealous for God, he was in the complex maze of Judaism. Judaism contained certain things that had been revealed by God, but the Judaizers made issues out of them and caused them to become legalities. Revelation is of God, but legality is always made by man. Because Judaism had become a legality, this legality had become a maze. Those who are in this legality have found themselves in a maze and lost. Often we get lost when we are driving a car, although we are confident that we are right. This was the case of Saul of Tarsus. Although he was lost, he thought he was right. One day on the way to Damascus, he was knocked down by the heavenly vision. From that time

onward he was delivered from the religious maze, and he began to travel on the highway of the heavenly vision. Eventually, he could tell King Agrippa, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19). This vision had become his directory, the controlling element of his walk on earth.

### **NOT IN A MAZE BUT ON THE HIGHWAY**

We need such a heavenly directory today. Today the whole human race and all of Christianity is a maze. All around us is a maze of inventions, discoveries, and philosophies. If we do not have the heavenly vision, it means that we are already lost. All the young people today are lost. They have nothing to direct their lives. They do not know where they are going or what kind of life they should have. Not only the young people but people of all ages are lost in a maze of human inventions, discoveries, and religions. No one knows where he is going. However, we in the Lord’s recovery are not in a maze. I can boast in the Lord that I am not in a maze but on the highway. I have a definite direction, I am under the heavenly directing, and I know where I am going. How about you?

The messages of this basic training are nothing other than the direction of the heavens. In chapter after chapter we shall see aspects of this directing revelation. Under the light of the heavenly vision, everything is clear. Nothing is covered, opaque, or veiled, but although everything has been unveiled, we still need the eyes and the light. When we have the revelation, the eyes, and the light, we can see everything. This is the Lord’s recovery. When you were in Christianity, were you clear about the vision? Please answer this question in a fair, sober, objective, and honest way. When you were in Christianity, were you in the vision with a clear sky and a definite direction, or were you in a maze not knowing where you were going? Here in the Lord’s recovery we are no longer in a maze; we are in the vision. We do not care for issues or legalities; we care only for the vision. Hallelujah, we have the assurance that we are not in a division but in the vision!

### **A MAZE OR A VISION?**

In the past some dear saints have argued with me about the church. Some said that they were not the church and that we were not the church either. Others said that if we were the church, then they were the church also. Arguments and debates do not bring us anywhere. The more you argue, the

more you will find yourself in a maze. How can we tell who is the church and where the church is? There is a basic principle, which is to ask whether we are in a maze or in the vision. If this is the church, then upon entering into it, you will find yourself in the vision. However, if it is not the church, then upon entering into it, you will find yourself in a maze. There is no need for argument. After you come in, simply ask whether you are in a maze or a vision. Are you in the vision under a clear sky with a definite direction, or are you still in a maze? This is the governing principle. The Lord's recovery is to bring us out of the maze back to the heavenly vision.

Now that we are in the Lord's recovery, I would like to ask you what you see. If you say that you see Christ and the church, I would reply that this is too general. It takes time to tell people all that we see in the Lord's recovery. When we are in the vision, everything is clear, and nothing is hidden or veiled. I have been in this country since 1962. Sometimes people have asked me why my messages are never exhausted. They want to know where I get so many things to speak on. All the speaking comes from the vision. Because the vision is inexhaustible, I cannot stop giving messages. The Bible is an open book to me. We are in a vision under a clear sky with the heavenly directory in front of us. Thus, we know where we are going.

## **A GENERAL VIEW**

The best way to present the vision to others is first to give them a general view, then the details. For example, we may say that we see Christ, the church, and the genuine oneness. Then we would point out that among us there are no issues, choices, or preferences. We may go on to speak of the human spirit and the indwelling of the human spirit by the Holy Spirit, an indwelling that causes these two spirits to work together. We see these two spirits walking, living, fellowshiping, and even talking together. After this, we may point out that we live in the mingled spirit and that the mingled spirit controls and directs us day by day. Furthermore, the mingled spirit sanctifies us, transforms us, and maintains the genuine oneness.

We are not in human society, in a maze, in a legality, or in any issue. We are in the Lord's recovery. Being in the Lord's recovery, we have been brought back to the Lord's vision. The greatest difference between Christianity and the Lord's recovery is this matter of vision. If we are in the Lord's recovery, then we are in the vision, but whenever we are out of the vision, we are out of the

recovery. Whether or not we are in the Lord's recovery depends upon whether or not we are in the vision. If we are in the Lord's recovery, everything is clear.

If we have the vision, we will have a general view. We will not see just a few particular things. For example, after I had surgery on my right eye, the retina became detached, although I did not realize it at first. One day as I looked out the window, I saw only half of a car. But when my wife looked out the window, she saw the whole car and said that there must be something wrong with my eye. Although I was still able to see, when I looked at things, it appeared as though everything had been cut in half. Immediately I was taken to the ophthalmologist, who told me that the retina had begun to be detached and that it required emergency surgery. Sometimes our spiritual vision is like this. We cannot see the whole situation but only a small part, perhaps just ten percent. When this happens, we need to go to the "eye doctor" in order to have our full vision restored. To repeat, we need to have a vision. If we are in the recovery, we will be in the vision.

### **THE BIBLE BEING AN OPEN BOOK**

If we are in the vision, the Bible will no longer be closed to us. I can testify that in the Lord's recovery the Bible is an open book, not simply a book of black and white letters. When we are in the vision and open up the Bible, something will be unveiled, shining, and enlightening. Many of us can testify that before we came into the Lord's recovery, the Bible was a closed book. We read certain portions again and again and again without seeing anything in them. There was no light and no shining until we came into the Lord's recovery and received a general view. Now when we come to the Bible, there is always something shining, enlightening, and speaking. To us, the Bible is a living book. If the Bible is living, shining, and speaking to you, it is a strong proof that you are in the vision. It indicates that you know what you are doing and where you are going. You are certain of your direction because the heavenly directory is in your hands. You not only have the Bible as a printed book, but the heavenly vision is shining upon you, enlightening you within, and even speaking deeply to your heart and spirit. As a result, nothing remains a mystery.

For us in the Lord's recovery, nothing is a mystery. Rather, everything is unveiled; everything is a revelation. Before we came into the Lord's recovery, nearly everything was veiled, but when we turned to the Lord's recovery, the

veil was removed. Now instead of being in a maze, we are in a vision. How glad I am to be in this vision! I am not in the maze of human history, religion, or denominations. I am in the Lord's recovery with the vision. There is no veiling, but everything is unveiled. Therefore, everything is clear. We are under the clear sky, the heavenly light is shining, and we are on a highway following the heavenly direction. We do not have to wait to be in the New Jerusalem to have just one way, for in the Lord's recovery today we have the one way. Thus, because we are in the recovery with the one way, the one life, the one river, the one tree, the one throne, and the one God, no one can get lost. Hallelujah, we are not in a maze but in the vision! We are not in human history but in the Lord's recovery. We are not in religion but in the church under the direction of the heavenly revelation. I believe that a great many of us can testify of this. Are you not in the revelation? Are you not in the vision? Are you not under a clear sky? Are you not following the direction of the heavenly revelation? We all can boldly proclaim, "Hallelujah, we are in the Lord's recovery, and we are in the vision!" This is a strong confirmation that we know that we are on the right way, that we are not in a maze, and that we are in the heavenly vision.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE DIVINE PURPOSE

Romans 16:25 says, “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel, that is, the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which has been kept in silence in the times of the ages.” In the foregoing chapters we have covered seven mysteries and the divine revelation. Here in this verse we have a phrase that combines the mystery and the revelation. This phrase is *the revelation of the mystery*. In the New Testament the word *revelation* is used mainly with respect to the mystery of God. It does not refer to the ordinary things of human life.

### RELATED TO THE CENTRAL FOCUS

The Bible contains many doctrines, teachings, histories, and stories. All these things are related to the basic revelation either directly or indirectly. Take a large painting as an example. The painting has a focal point, the central figure, and all the other items in the painting are related to the central figure either directly or indirectly. To isolate any item from the focus is to cause it to be meaningless. The same is true with our physical body. The body is the focus. Although the fingers, the feet, and the toes are not the focus, they are related to the focus. If you isolate these parts from the body, they will become meaningless. The arms are directly related to the focus, but the thumbs are indirectly related to it. If you cut off your thumbs, they will be isolated from the focus and become meaningless and useless.

Often when we meet one another, we shake hands. Suppose you cut off your right hand and present it to me. How horrible that would be! When the right hand is properly related to the body, it is lovely, but when it is detached from the body, it becomes grotesque and frightening. In like manner, to detach any doctrine, history, or story from the focus in the Bible is to render it ugly and terrible. Nevertheless, this is exactly what is taking place among Christians today.

Some Christians have isolated foot-washing from the basic revelation in the Bible. No doubt, foot-washing was taught and practiced by the Lord Jesus Himself, for He washed the feet of the disciples as an example for them.

Foot-washing is related to the basic revelation, but if you isolate it from the basic revelation, it is like cutting off your feet. When the feet are attached to the body, they are lovable, but when they are detached from it, they are horrible. Likewise, when foot-washing is related to the basic revelation, we can appreciate it, but when it is detached from the basic revelation, we cannot appreciate it.

The same is true regarding head covering. The matter of head covering is taught in 1 Corinthians 11, a chapter related to the headship of Christ. Paul says that God is the head of Christ, that Christ is the head of the man, and that the man is the head of the woman. Therefore, it is important to care for the matter of head covering because it is related to the headship of Christ. However, to separate head covering from the basic revelation in the Bible is like cutting off your head and handing it to someone. Today many Christians separate the matters of foot-washing and head covering from the basic revelation. In doing this, they do not care for the Body.

The basic revelation in the Bible is the unveiling of God's mystery. For this reason the Bible speaks of the revelation of the mystery. The revelation of the mystery is the unveiling, the opening up, the bringing to light, of God's mystery so that we may see the central focus. This central focus is nothing less than Christ and His Body, the church.

A number of times I have been questioned by those who have detached certain doctrines and practices from the focus of the basic revelation. In 1963, after a certain meeting, a brother said to me, "Brother Lee, according to your ministry, it is apparent that you fully believe in the Bible. Since you care so much for the Bible, why do you not follow a certain matter that is clearly revealed in 1 Corinthians 14? Your sisters are very active in the meetings. This indicates that you do not follow the teaching of 1 Corinthians 14 that women ought to be silent in the meetings." I told him that I had known these verses for many years and that I had ministered on them many times. Then I asked him, "Does your group have meetings?" When he said that they did, I replied, "Don't your sisters sing hymns in the meetings and don't they pray?" When he acknowledged that they did, I said, "Then in your meetings the sisters are not silent either. This is altogether a matter of different interpretations and practices." This illustrates the fact that if we neglect the focus, the central figure of God's revelation, we will find ourselves in difficulty. However, if we direct our sight on the center of God's revelation, we will have no problem.

The focal point of God's revelation is not a matter of whether or not women should be silent in the meetings of the church.

Some have made an issue concerning whether we should be noisy or quiet in the meetings. To be either noisy or quiet does not mean anything. We do not care for silence, and we do not care for noise. I have received a bad name for advocating shouting in the meeting. However, I have been very careful not to isolate the matter of shouting from the focus of God's revelation.

There is no doubt that the body needs the thumbs. However, to cut off the thumbs is not as serious as cutting out the heart or the liver. This illustrates that certain things in the body are crucial. Likewise, what is crucial in the Bible is the focus, the basic revelation of God's mystery, not the doctrines of foot-washing or head covering or the way of meeting.

## **THE BASIC REVELATION BEING THE DIVINE PURPOSE**

In this chapter we need to consider what is the basic revelation of the mystery of God. This basic revelation is the divine purpose. The divine purpose, of course, is not foot-washing or head covering. It is not any type of teaching, including the teaching of the Lord's second coming. God's purpose is to have the Body of Christ. In the past we have used the term *the eternal purpose of God* but not the term *the divine purpose*. The divine purpose is the eternal purpose of God.

## **REVEALED IN EPHESIANS AND ROMANS**

It is quite difficult to say exactly what the divine purpose is. God's purpose is revealed mainly in the books of Ephesians and Romans. No other books present the revelation of God's mystery as clearly as these books do. In Colossians we find the word *mystery* but not the word *revelation*. In Galatians we read of revelation but not of the mystery. Although the word *mystery* is used in 1 Corinthians, we find nothing there concerning the revelation of the mystery. Only two books, Ephesians and Romans, present both the mystery of God and the revelation of God. We have seen that Romans 16:25 speaks of the revelation of the mystery. In Ephesians 3:3-5 we have both the mystery and revelation. According to Ephesians 3:5, the mystery has been revealed to the apostles and prophets in spirit. The fact that

Romans and Ephesians both speak of the revelation and the mystery gives us the ground to say that the divine purpose is contained completely in these two books alone.

Nevertheless, there is a difference between Romans and Ephesians. Romans speaks from us to God, from earth to heaven, from sinners to saints. Ephesians speaks from God to us, from heaven to earth. Romans speaks from our fallen condition, but Ephesians speaks from eternity, revealing God's purpose and the desire of God's heart in eternity. Thus, Ephesians is related to eternity, and Romans is related to time.

### **CHOSEN TO BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH**

Now we need to see four main things included in the divine purpose. Ephesians 1:4 says, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love." God selected us in eternity past, before the foundation of the world and the beginning of time, that we might be holy and without blemish. The words *holy and without blemish* in this verse have been misused and misunderstood. As a result, their significance has been diminished. Most Christians think that to be holy is to be sinlessly perfect. Some so-called churches are even called holiness churches. However, to be holy is not to be sinless or perfect. The significance of being holy is very deep, far beyond our concept.

### **THE SAME AS GOD IN NATURE**

In this universe only God is holy. All Bible students realize that holiness refers to God's nature and that righteousness refers to God's activities. What God does is righteous, but God's very being is holy. Therefore, holiness refers to God's being, not to His doings; it is God's nature. Therefore, to be made holy means to be made the same as God in nature. Holiness does not denote the appearance of God. The appearance of God is glory. We need to differentiate between righteousness, holiness, and glory. Righteousness refers to God's doings, holiness to God's being, and glory to God's expression. To repeat, to be holy means to be the same as God is in His nature.

Man was not created by God with the divine nature. Rather, he was made from dust (Gen. 2:7). The nature of God is holiness, but the nature of man is dust. God is holy, but man is dusty. Are you not dusty? To be dusty is different

from being dirty. Before the fall Adam was sinless, but he was still dusty. He was not holy, and nothing of God's nature had been wrought into him.

## **THE WAY TO BECOME HOLY**

Now we need to find out how dusty man can be holy, how man with the nature of dust can be the same as God in His holy nature. The only way this can take place is for God to work Himself into man's nature. For this reason, 2 Peter 1:4 tells us that we are partakers of the divine nature. After God created man, He placed him in front of the tree of life in order that His holy nature could enter into man through man's eating of the fruit of this tree. As we all know, the tree of life denotes God Himself. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, God is likened to food. Only food is able to get into us and into our nature. All the foodstuffs you eat day by day become part of your nature. Eventually, they become you. Thus, we are the constitution of the various foodstuffs produced in this country. But this does not mean that if all these foodstuffs are put together, they automatically become us. No, in order for them to become us, we must take them into us and digest them. After we eat and digest them, they will become our fibers and even become us.

The Bible contains the basic concept that God is edible, that God is good for food. As the tree of life, God is to be eaten, not merely to be seen. Coming as the bread of life, Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35); He also said, "He who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (v. 57). Hallelujah, we can eat God!

Dietitians often tell us that we are what we eat. What we eat is constituted into us and becomes us. Some people even smell like the food they eat. For example, those who eat a great deal of garlic or fish may have the odor of garlic or fish. The only way for God's holy nature to be wrought into our nature is by eating. God is edible, and eating Jesus is the unique way for us to have the holy nature of God.

## **THE NEED FOR REGENERATION**

Years ago I gave a message in a certain place in which I said that even if we were not fallen, we would still need to be regenerated. This message offended a certain preacher. He said, "No! How could one who has not fallen still need to be regenerated?" This question comes from the influence of his traditional

Christian teachings, which say that because we are fallen and corrupted and because we are incurable, hopeless cases, we need to be reborn. But the truth is that even if we were Adam in the garden of Eden, we would still need regeneration. No matter how perfect or sinless we might be, we would still be only good, not holy. We might be perfect, but we are not holy. Unless we have the holy nature of God, we cannot be holy. As we have pointed out, holiness is God's nature. We may be clean, perfect, and sinless, but we are still dusty; we are not yet holy.

Ephesians 1:4 reveals God's intention before the fall of man, before sin came in. It was not because God foreknew that man would become sinful that He determined to rescue us from our sinfulness and to make us perfect. No, according to His divine purpose, God decided in eternity past to choose us to be made holy. God chose us for the purpose that we might become holy. In other words, He chose us to become divine through our partaking of the divine nature. He wants to make the dusty man divine. This is what it means to be holy.

### **NO MIXTURE**

Now we need to consider what is meant by *blemish*. This word is used for a foreign substance sometimes found in precious stones. Suppose we have a diamond, but in the diamond there is some kind of foreign substance. A blemish denotes the mixture caused by the presence of a foreign substance. This substance may not be dirty or sinful. On the contrary, it may be perfect and sinless. However, it is different in nature. God's intention is to make us thoroughly the same as He is in His nature. If there is still a foreign substance within us, we still have a blemish; that is, there is a mixture in our being. But God's intention is to make us thoroughly holy and divine without any mixture. What a high standard this is! Every part of our disposition is a "blemish" simply because it is not the nature of God. Anything other than the nature of God is a blemish. Suppose someone has a lovable, gentle, humble disposition. Even such a lovable disposition is a blemish in God's holiness. In God's holiness there is nothing except His being. Anything of our being, no matter how good and lovable it may be, is a mixture and hence a blemish. The first item of God's eternal purpose is to make us the same as He is in nature without any mixture. This is to become holy and without blemish.

### **PREDESTINATED UNTO SONSHIP**

In Ephesians 1:5 Paul says, “Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” God has not only selected us but also marked us out beforehand. Before the foundation of the world, in eternity past, we were marked out for the purpose of sonship.

We have seen that the only way for us to be holy is for God to come into our being. This is related to sonship. Every son has been born of a father. All that the father is issues in the son. Hence, a son is the issue of the father’s life. Some versions render the Greek word for *sonship* in Ephesians 1:5 as “adoption.” Although this rendering is not wrong, it is easily misunderstood. We have not been adopted by God; we have been born of Him. I am not an adopted son but a born son, one that is the issue of the Father’s life. I have never seen a Caucasian brother who has brought forth a Chinese son. In the same principle, I have never seen a Chinese brother who has brought forth a Caucasian son. A son is always the issue of the father.

First, we were created by God. But at the time we believed in the Lord Jesus, we were born of God. Thus, we each have two stories, the story of our creation and the story of our rebirth. By creation we are not sons of God. Rather, we are merely the creatures of God. But by rebirth, by regeneration, we became the sons of God.

## **THE MEANING OF SONSHIP**

As the Son of God, Christ is the expression of God. No one has ever seen God, but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared Him (John 1:18). Thus, the meaning or significance of the Son is that He expresses the Father. The Son is the issue of the life of the Father and the expression of the Father.

We have pointed out that in order for us to become holy, we need to be born of God and thereby have the life of God. When God’s life enters into us and becomes our life, we become sons of God. A son has both the life and the position of a son. The position of a son is a matter of heritage. As sons of God, we will inherit all that God is. We have been born of God, and now we have the position to inherit whatever God is. This is the meaning of sonship.

All Christians need a vision of the significance of regeneration. Regeneration means that we have the life of God and the position to inherit all

that God is. In the new heaven and the new earth we will realize that whatever God is has become our inheritance. This is sonship. Some may accuse us of teaching that we will become God. No, we are not becoming God, but we are becoming divine. We have the life of God, we have the position to inherit whatever God is, and we are becoming divine.

The first aspect of the divine purpose is that we are being made holy, and the second is that we have been marked out for sonship, that is, to have the life of God, to express God, to have the position to inherit whatever God is, and to become divine as the Father is divine. The Son of God said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (14:9). The day is coming when we will be able to say, “He who has seen us has seen God, because we are the sons of God.” In the New Testament the term *sons* always denotes the expression of the father. Before we were saved, we were sons of disobedience expressing Satan, the evil father. Today we are sons of God expressing God, not by our deeds or behavior but by having His life with His nature within us. Day by day He is working Himself into our being so that we may become His expression. Eventually, we will inherit all that He is.

## **THE SONS COMPOSING THE BODY**

The divine purpose is also to have a Body for Christ. According to the books of Ephesians and Romans, the Body of Christ is composed of the sons of God. For this reason, in both Ephesians and Romans we find sonship first and then the Body. We read in Ephesians 1:5 of the sonship and in Ephesians 1:22 and 23 of the Body. In Romans the sonship is mentioned in chapter 8 and the Body in chapter 12. This indicates that sonship is for the Body.

Although many Christians today are talking about the Body, they have not seen that the Body depends upon the sons. If you do not have the life of a son of God, you cannot be a proper member of the Body. In order to have the Body life, we need the full experience of Romans 8. Without the experience of Romans 8, it is difficult to have the practice of the Body life revealed in Romans 12. Between Romans 8 and 12 there are three parenthetical chapters—chapters 9, 10, and 11. Thus, Romans 12 is the continuation of Romans 8. This means that the practice of the Body is the issue of the sonship. If we live the life of a son to express God, then we become a proper member of the Body. The Body is constituted of members who are sons of God living by God’s life and expressing God.

Today the universe is groaning, eagerly expecting the manifestation of the sons of God. The time of this manifestation will be the time of the redemption of our body. The life and nature of a son are within us, but this life and this nature are concealed within our physical body. But the day is coming when even our physical body will be swallowed up by the inner life. Our body will be saturated by the divine life and will be a manifestation of that life. This manifestation of the inner life is the redemption of our body. This is the revelation, the manifestation, of the sons of God.

## **THE UNIQUE DESIRE OF GOD**

Holiness is for sonship, and sonship is for the Body. The unique desire of God is to have the Body. If we have seen the divine purpose, we will realize that the Body is God's unique desire and that we must be in it and take care of it. Everything we do must be out of a concern for the Body. If we are separate from the Body or alienated from the Body, we become meaningless. God's purpose is to have the Body. For this, there is the need of sonship, and for sonship there is the need of holiness. Thus, God's eternal purpose is not a matter of foot-washing or head covering; it is to have a Body constituted of sons who share the holy nature of God.

## **HEADING UP ALL THINGS IN CHRIST**

When God has the Body, He will have the opportunity to head up all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Today the universe is a mess, but the time is coming when everything in the universe will be headed up. God is in the process of heading up all things in Christ through the church. If God cannot head us up, how can He head up all things? The church must take the lead to be headed up by God. Eventually, through the church God will head up all things in Christ.

If we have seen the vision of the divine purpose, we will never be distracted, misled, or isolated by anything, no matter how good it may be. Anything isolated from the central focus is meaningless. I thank the Lord that by this unique vision I have been kept in the center lane for nearly fifty years. Now I have the burden to pass on this fellowship to you so that you also may be kept by the vision. As Romans 16:25 says, we need to be established according to the revelation of the mystery. As we have seen, the revelation of the mystery is the divine purpose. This means that God establishes us according to the

divine purpose. If we see this vision, we will be established, guarded, preserved, and kept in the center lane.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SONSHIP FOR THE BODY**

In this chapter we will cover the matter of sonship for the Body. Ephesians 1:5 says that God predestinated “us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” God predestinated us for sonship; His predestination results in sonship. Therefore, sonship is according to God’s predestination. Before the foundation of the world God marked us out for sonship. We were not saved by accident but according to God’s predestination.

### **A CONSTITUTION OF THE SONS OF GOD**

Ephesians 1 does not end with sonship, for the last verse of this chapter (v. 23) speaks of the Body. The Body is the result of the sonship. God predestinated us for sonship so that the Body may come into existence. If you read Ephesians 1 carefully and thoroughly, you will see that the Body is constituted of the sons of God. The Body is not composed of Americans, Chinese, and various other nationalities. All these nationalities are the sons of men, and sons of men cannot compose the Body of Christ.

Many Christians think that the Body is simply the coming together of groups of believers. Such a gathering may be an organization or a society, but it is not the Body of Christ. The Body of Christ is not composed of sons of man, for they are not qualified to be the Body of Christ. Only the sons of God are qualified to be constituted into the living organism known as the Body of Christ. From now on we should no longer consider the Body as simply a group of Christians. We need to ask whether these Christians are meeting as sons of God or merely as sons of man. We all have a dual status. On the one hand, we are still sons of man; on the other hand, we are sons of God. If I were in the status of a son of man, I would not be able to speak for the Lord. When I speak for Him, I speak as a son of God.

After we become sons of God, we need to live like sons of God. How about your living? Do you live like a son of God? When you deal with your wife or husband, are you a son of man or a son of God? If we still live like sons of man, we are not the Body of Christ in reality. Apparently, we are the Body of Christ;

actually, all the demons know that we are not the Body of Christ but simply a gathering of sons of man. Moreover, the angels will say that because we still live like sons of man, they do not recognize us as sons of God. In order to claim the standing of the Body of Christ, we must live like the sons of God. Then we have the ground to declare to all the universe, “We are the sons of God. Angels, don’t you see that we are living here as the sons of God? Demons, none of us are living like the sons of man. Hallelujah, we have been chosen and predestinated to be sons of God in order to be constituted into the Body of Christ!”

### **A SON DENOTING LIFE FOR OUR LIVING**

In the Bible a son has two crucial significances. First, a son denotes life. First John 5:12 says, “He who has the Son has the life.” Thus, if you do not have the Son, you do not have life. A son of man denotes the human life, and the Son of God denotes the divine life. Although we were born with the human life, through regeneration we have received the divine life. By this divine life with the divine nature, we are no longer merely sons of man but also sons of God. Fifty years ago I thought that to have life through having the Son meant only that we were saved. Yes, when we have eternal life by having the Son, we are saved. Life, however, is not mainly for salvation; it is for our living. The divine life we have through receiving the Son of God is for our living. Are you living like a divine person? Even the teenagers among us need to realize that because they have the Son of God, the divine life is in them. This divine life is for living, and they need to live like divine persons. We need to say, “O Lord Jesus, have mercy on me. Although I have the divine life, I am not living like a divine person.” It is abnormal to have the divine life and not to live like a divine person.

### **A SON EXPRESSING THE FATHER**

The second significance of a son in the Bible is that a son expresses the father. Thus, the Son of God is the expression of the Father. John 1:18 says, “No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” In John 14:9 the Lord Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” The Son does the Father’s will (6:38) and speaks the Father’s word (12:49-50). Thus, the Son’s word is the expression of the Father. When the Son speaks, the Father does His work (14:10). The Son’s life is for the expression of the Father.

A basic concept in the Bible is that the invisible God desires a visible expression. This was the reason that God created man in His own image. We are the visible expression of God. Compare the sons of man sitting in a theater with the sons of God sitting in a church meeting, and see what a difference there is in the expression on their faces. We are here not to express Americans or Chinese but God the Father. Notice that we do not express God the Creator, but we express God the Father. Ephesians 1:3 and 4 indicate that God the Father, not God the Creator, has chosen us. We need to do the will of our heavenly Father. To do His will is to express Him. When we do the will of our earthly father, what we do is an expression of his desire. Likewise, when we do the will of the heavenly Father, we express His desire. Thus, as sons of God, we have the divine life for the purpose of expressing the heavenly Father.

What a shame it is to express our nationality, culture, or anything that is not our Father! Since we are sons of the Father, others should be able to see the Father expressed in us. The reason we love each other is that we are brothers born of the same Father. I see the Father in you, and you see the Father in me. Our Father is the source not only of our life but also of our love. It is this kind of life and expression that constitutes us into that organism known as the Body of Christ.

### **THE BODY FUNCTIONING BY THE DIVINE LIFE**

This brings us to the significance of the Body. According to the New Testament, the Body is for function. If you read Ephesians 4, Romans 12, and 1 Corinthians 12, you will see that in these chapters the Body is for function. In order to function, however, we must have life. If there is no life in our body, the body cannot function. The body functions with life. The life by which the Body functions is the life of the sons of God, the divine life for the divine expression.

Throughout the years we have spoken a great deal about function, but we have not pointed out that our function must be by the life of the sons of God. It is possible to function in the church life by the life of the sons of man. Many times we have functioned by the wrong life, not by the life of the sons of God but by the life of the sons of man. This may be true, for example, in the arranging of chairs. As we arrange chairs, we may function by the life of a son of man or by the life of a son of God. The content of the life of the son of man is self. It is I, me, my, and myself. If we function by this life, we may say,

“Every Sunday morning I arrange the chairs myself. Lord, no one else helps me. I use my time and energy to do this alone. But look at the good job I have done! Every chair is exactly in place. Whenever I do something, I do it thoroughly.” This is the life of the son of man, a son of Adam. However, it is also possible to arrange chairs by the life of a son of God. In such a case, it is not I but Christ who arranges the chairs. In all that we do, we need to live by the life of the sons of God. If not, we cannot be the Body of Christ, because the Body functions by the life of the sons of God.

In this life of the sons of God, there is no self. In this life Christ is everything. The first life, the life of the sons of man, does not produce the Body of Christ. Instead, it produces only the self. It is the second life, the life of the sons of God, that constitutes the Body of Christ, because Christ is the content of this life. In fact, this life is nothing but Christ Himself. Therefore, for the proper Body life, we need the proper sonship. We need to be sons of God.

### **THE SPIRIT OF SONSHIP**

At this point, we need to consider Romans 8. Many Christian teachers have spoken a great deal about Romans 8, often pointing out that it is a chapter on the Spirit. However, few Christians realize that the goal of Romans 8 is not the Spirit but the sonship. In this chapter the Spirit is related to sonship. Thus, the Spirit in Romans 8 is for sonship. For example, Romans 8:14 says, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God,” and verse 15 says, “You have not received a spirit of slavery bringing you into fear again, but you have received a spirit of sonship in which we cry, Abba, Father!” Because we have a spirit of sonship, we spontaneously call, “Abba, Father.” What a sweet feeling we have whenever we cry out this way! How comforting to cry, “Abba, Father!” This sweetness comes from the Spirit that is for sonship. From now on, we need to devote more attention to the matter of sonship in Romans 8 than to the matter of the Spirit.

### **THE COMPLETION OF SONSHIP**

Today we are in the process of the completion of the sonship. Although we have the sonship, it has not been fully wrought into our being. For example, Philippians 3 says that our body is a body of humiliation (v. 21). Do you regard your body as beautiful? Many times as I have looked at myself in the

mirror, I have hated my body because it is so vile. The sonship has not yet been wrought into our body. But it has been wrought into our spirit and even into our attitude, giving us an attitude that expresses the Father. This indicates that the sonship has not only been wrought into our spirit but also, at least in part, into our psychological being. However, it has not yet been wrought into our physical being.

A number of times doctors have said in a mocking way, “Mr. Lee, since you are so religious, why do you still have stomach trouble? Why don’t you go to your God instead of coming to me?” Sometimes when doctors have spoken to me in this way, I have said nothing. At other times I have said, “Yes, today my body is the same as yours, and it requires a physical examination and medical care. But I have something in my spirit that you don’t have.” There is at least one part of our being, our physical body, into which the sonship has not yet been wrought. As to our psychological being, the sonship has been wrought into us in varying degrees. However, it is difficult to believe that anyone among us has had the sonship wrought into his soul to the full extent.

Because the sonship has not yet been wrought into our physical being, Romans 8:19 says that the creation “eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.” This revelation is the redemption of our body, the completion of our sonship. At that time, the sonship will be wrought into our physical being. When the Lord Jesus comes back, our body will be transfigured into a glorious body in the twinkling of an eye. Our body will become glorious in the divine sonship. Then, as far as we are concerned, doctors will become jobless. Never again will we need to consult a physician.

I am waiting for this completion of the sonship. As an elderly person, I easily get tired. There are times when my physical body simply does not want to carry out my wishes. When I want to work until late at night, it wants to lie down. But we expect that one day our body will be transfigured into the complete sonship. Then the Body of Christ will fully express Christ.

## **THE NEED FOR ALL THINGS**

For the completion of sonship, we need not only the Spirit but also the “all things” spoken of in Romans 8:28. This verse says, “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Although we have the sonship in our spirit, we do

not yet have very much sonship in our soul, that is, in our mind, emotion, and will. For the sonship to be wrought into our soul, we need “all things.”

Philippians 2:12 tells us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. This refers not to eternal salvation but to a specific salvation that needs to be worked out by us. Verse 14 says to do all things without murmurings and reasonings. Murmurings represent the emotions, and reasonings represent the mind. In the church the sisters are accustomed to murmuring and the brothers to reasoning. As long as we still have murmurings and reasonings, we are still in the soul. Thus, we need a salvation to save us, to rescue us, from the soul, particularly from murmurings and reasonings. Our murmurings and reasonings are not easily overcome. Not even the Holy Spirit of God can overcome us without the help of “all things.” However, do not be disappointed at this word.

Recently, three young brothers told me that because they are in Christ, they are sinless. They said that because they are dead with Him, they could no longer sin. After listening to them, I told them that they were still young and did not have very much experience. I also told them about a group of Christians who said that because they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit, they were holy and could no longer sin. The men and the women began to live together, and the result was fornication. This illustrates the fact that the flesh and sin were still with them. The brothers were shocked. Then I told them that if they were unhappy with the way I was speaking to them, that was an indication that they still have the sinful temper. Nevertheless, I did not want to discourage them. So I told them to go ahead to experience Christ.

### **THE PROCESS OF BEING “SONIZED”**

Romans 8 mentions Christ and the Spirit; it also mentions “all things.” Along with Christ and the Spirit, we need “all things” to work together for us so that we may be “sonized.” We are not easily “sonized.” Being “sonized” is not the result of a mushrooming development. It is easy for our spirit to become a spirit of sonship. We do this by saying, “Lord Jesus, I repent. I am a sinner. Thank You, Lord, for dying on the cross for me. I take You as my Savior.” If you pray like this, the Spirit of sonship will come into you immediately. But it is a far more difficult matter to “sonize” our whole being.

In order to be “sonized,” we need “all things,” which include different kinds of brothers, both wild brothers and mild brothers. We need to listen to brothers who are eloquent and to brothers who speak in a staggering way. Those who speak haltingly, not eloquently, are the ones who expose us. Even in spiritual things we are still so much in ourselves, but those who speak in a staggering way expose where we are. Even such speakers are included in the all things mentioned in Romans 8:28. Without such halting speakers, how could we be “sonized”?

I have been in the process of being “sonized” for over fifty years, and I am still not completely “sonized.” The more we are “sonized,” the more sonship we have. My wife and so many brothers have helped to “sonize” me. Those who contact me daily have helped me the most in this matter. I am happy to be under the “sonizing” hands of so many people. Day after day I am under the “sonizing” hand of my wife and the brothers. No matter how kind they may be to me, they have unconsciously performed a “sonizing” work on me. I thank the Lord for all those who are helping to “sonize” me. I confess that I have needed everything and everyone for this process.

### **“SONIZED” FOR THE BODY LIFE**

Having the Body life depends upon how much “sonizing” work we have passed through. If we have little sonship, we cannot have very much of the Body life, for the Body life comes out of the sonship. Romans 8 tells us that we are being conformed to the image of God’s Son. This conformity is not accomplished mainly by the Spirit but by the “all things.”

Romans 9, 10, and 11 are a parenthesis. This means that chapter 12 is the direct continuation of chapter 8. In Romans 12 we have the Body. After so much “sonizing,” we are qualified to discern what the will of God is. The will of God is to have the Body. Nothing is as precious to God as the Body of Christ. This is what is most on His heart. The Body of Christ is not only God’s will but also His good pleasure. God wants a Body through which His Son can express Himself. This is the desire of His heart. After experiencing the sonship in Romans 8, we can realize that the good pleasure of God’s eternal will is to have the Body life.

Sonship is for the Body. Without sonship there can be no Body. When we do not live in the divine life, the life of God, we are through with the church.

We may come to the meetings, but we are through with the practical Body life. However, when we live by the life of the sons of God, we are daily practicing the Body life.

Today there is much talk about the Body life. When I came to this country in 1962, I was invited to visit a number of places. During my first five years in this country, I traveled through many states and met all kinds of Christians. In not even one place did I find the practical Body life. Instead, I found groups of people merely meeting together. The reason there was no Body life was that very few Christians lived by the life of the sons of God.

How I worship the Lord that by His mercy and through His grace many of us are living not by our natural life, the life of the sons of man, but by the divine life, the life of the sons of God! Although we are very complicated, the Father is arranging all things to work together for our good so that we may be thoroughly “sonized,” that the sonship allotted to us in eternity past may be wrought into our whole being. This sonship will be wrought not only into our spiritual being but also into our psychological being and consummately into our physical being.

### **NO MORE MURMURINGS OR REASONINGS**

Because the sonship is being wrought into our soul, the book of Philippians says that we can be one both in spirit and in soul. After we have been “sonized” through the working of all things, the murmurings and the reasonings will be gone. I can testify that even during the time we have been in Anaheim, the murmurings and reasonings have diminished. This is the Lord’s doing. As long as we are here in the Lord’s recovery and mean business with Him, He will mean business with us. Sometimes it seems that we let Him go. At those times He says, “You have let Me go, but I will never let you go.” We all have signed a contract with God. Because we have signed this contract, even though we let Him go, He will not let us go.

We are in the process of being “sonized” so that we may gradually partake of more of the sonship. As we partake of more of the sonship, the Body life grows among us day by day. I am very happy about the church here, for the practical Body life is much higher now than it was four years ago. Those who look upon the outward appearance may not believe this. But I look at the inward situation, and I do believe it. I have seen the growth, and I have

noticed the diminishing of the murmurings and the reasonings. After a period of time, all the murmurings and reasonings will disappear. The day is coming when we will be tired of murmurings. Even if someone offered to pay us to murmur, we would have no interest in doing so. Eventually, we all will say, “I have no interest in murmurings or in reasonings. Christ is my life. I just like to praise the Lord and love Him.” In Philippians 1:21 Paul says that to live is Christ. I like these four words: *to live is Christ*. The day is coming when we all will be able to say this. The “sonizing” work is increasing, and we are receiving more of the sonship.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE FOCUS OF THE DIVINE ECONOMY**

In this chapter we come to the divine economy. Many of us have been Christians for years, but we have never heard a message on God's economy. It is difficult to find a book in Christian bookstores with the word *economy* in the title. Nevertheless, this word *economy* is the focal point of the divine revelation in the New Testament. Although not many Christians know this, the demons and evil spirits realize it and would try to keep this matter veiled.

### **THE DEFINITION OF GOD'S ECONOMY**

*Economy* is an anglicized form of a Greek word that is rich in meaning. In the King James Version this word is translated "dispensation" (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; 3:2; and Col. 1:25), "fellowship" (Eph. 3:9), "stewardship" (Luke 16:2-4), and "edifying" (1 Tim. 1:4). The Greek word first means a dispensation. God's economy is His dispensation. God desires to dispense Himself into us, His chosen vessels. Second, in the Bible, *economy* denotes household management. God's economy is His household management. Third, the word *economy* means a stewardship. In the ancient times there was a steward in the royal family who had a service called the stewardship. Hence, God's economy is God's stewardship. Peter, John, James, Andrew, and Paul were among God's stewards. In 1 Corinthians 9:17 Paul says that a stewardship had been entrusted to him. This stewardship is to carry out God's household management. Fourth, *economy* refers to administration. The divine economy is God's administration. God has a purpose, a plan with a goal. In order to accomplish this purpose, He has an economy to dispense Himself and a household management with His stewardship so that He may administrate this universe. This is the definition of God's economy.

In this chapter we are concerned with the focus of the divine economy. God's economy is universally vast, and its scope is unlimited. We simply cannot know the full extent of God's economy. It is sufficient for us to understand the focus of the divine economy. In the focus of the divine economy there are two elements—the divine Spirit and the human spirit.

### **THE SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT YET TO BE**

John 4:24 says that God is Spirit. Just as a ring may be gold in nature, so God is altogether Spirit. But John 7:39 says that “the Spirit was not yet.” What does it mean to say that God is Spirit but that the Spirit is not yet? Is not the Spirit in John 4:24 the Spirit in John 7:39? Certainly it is. God is Spirit, and this Spirit has existed from eternity. Apparently, then, there seems to be a contradiction between John 4:24 and John 7:39. The illustration of making tea may help us to resolve this apparent contradiction. Suppose you order a cup of tea in a restaurant. However, the waitress brings you a cup of hot water and a tea bag. At that time, you may say that the tea is not yet. But after the tea bag has been placed into the water and remains there for a while, you will have tea. Likewise, on the one hand, God is Spirit, but on the other hand, the Spirit was not yet. The words *not yet* indicate that something was about to happen to the existing Spirit. God was the existing Spirit, but the Spirit was not yet. This indicates that something was about to be added to the existing Spirit to cause it to become the Spirit.

### **THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT**

In Matthew 28:19 the Lord Jesus spoke of baptizing people into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. How can we explain the fact that God is Spirit and yet He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Since God is Spirit and the Father is God Himself, the Father must be Spirit. The same is true of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all Spirit. Nevertheless, there is just one Spirit. It might have been simpler if the Lord had said to baptize the nations into the Spirit. However, the Lord spoke of baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is just one name here, not three. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all for God’s dispensation and indicate God’s dispensation with His riches. God is not simple but very rich. In the Godhead we have the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. This not only indicates His dispensation but also implies His richness.

If you read the Bible carefully and are not influenced by traditional theology, you will realize that the Father is embodied in the Son and that the Son is realized in the Spirit. Otherwise, how could the three have just one name? In order for us to be baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the three must be one. To be baptized into the Spirit is to be baptized

also into the Son (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3), and to be baptized into the Son is to be baptized also into the Father. The Father and the Son are both realized in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in the Holy Spirit we have all the riches of the Godhead.

Neither the Father nor the Son was clearly revealed in the Old Testament. But when the Lord Jesus came, He spoke a great deal about His Father and about the heavenly Father. This indicates that the Father was revealed in the Son. After the resurrection of Christ, the Son was manifested, the Father was revealed further, and the Spirit became the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Therefore, after His resurrection Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize the nations into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST**

First Corinthians 15:45 says that the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. This Spirit must refer to the Spirit of God, for besides the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, there is not another Spirit who gives life. In the universe there is just one unique divine Spirit who gives life. The divine Spirit first is God Himself, for God is Spirit. But, as we have seen, John 7:39 says that the Spirit was not yet. This Spirit is the reality of the Son with the Father. The Father and the Son are realized in the Spirit. The last Adam is included in the life-giving Spirit because the last Adam has become such a Spirit. Philippians 1:19 speaks of the bountiful supply, not of the Spirit of God but of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The phrase *the Spirit of Jesus Christ* includes both Jesus, the Nazarene, and Christ, God's Messiah, the anointed One. Thus, the Spirit is no longer merely the Spirit of God; the Spirit of God now is both the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7) and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9).

When the Spirit was the Spirit of God, He was the realization of God. God was in Him. But now He has become the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This surely implies that Jesus and Christ are realized in this Spirit. In the Spirit we now have not only the element of God but also the element of Jesus and the element of Christ. Before Jesus was crucified and resurrected, the Spirit of Jesus Christ was not yet, although the Spirit of God was there already. But after Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, the Spirit of God became the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This Spirit is the life-giving Spirit in 1 Corinthians 15:45.

## **THE SEVEN SPIRITS**

The last book of the Bible, Revelation, speaks of the seven Spirits of God (5:6). Recently, I heard someone say that these seven Spirits of God are the seven angels of the seven churches. Revelation 1:20 says that the seven stars are the seven angels, or messengers, of the seven churches, and in Revelation 3:1 the Lord referred to Himself as the One who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. How then can we say that the seven Spirits of God are the seven angels? This is like saying that a person's eyes are the same as his feet. There is no doubt that the seven Spirits are the Spirit of God.

Notice that in Revelation 5:6 the seven Spirits of God are the seven eyes of the Lamb. According to the traditional teaching of the Trinity, the Father is separate from the Son, and the Son is separate from the Spirit. But Revelation 5:6 says that the seven Spirits (the Spirit) are the eyes of the Lamb (the Son). Traditional theology speaks of the three persons of the Godhead, but according to the book of Revelation, the third is the eyes of the second. How ridiculous it is to separate the third from the second, making Them two separate persons! Some Christians have said, in writing, that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three separate persons, but the Bible reveals that the third is the eyes of the second. Are not the seven Spirits of God the Holy Spirit? Then how can the Holy Spirit, the third of the Godhead, be the eyes of the Lamb, the second of the Godhead?

Many of those who argue on behalf of the traditional understanding of the Trinity appeal to the Nicene Creed formulated in A.D. 325 at the Council of Nicaea. But at the time of that council, seven books of the New Testament, including Revelation, were not yet recognized by the church. These seven books were recognized at the Council of Carthage in North Africa in A.D. 397. When the Nicene Creed was formulated, the book of Revelation had not been recognized as authoritative. Thus, this creed says nothing about the seven Spirits of God. This proves that the creed adopted by the Catholic Church and so many denominations is not complete.

## **THE FIRST MENTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Do you know the first time that the title *Holy Spirit* is used? This title cannot be found in the Old Testament. In fact, the word *holy* is not to be found in the book of Genesis. The first time *holy* is used is in relation to the

calling of Moses in Exodus 3. God told Moses to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground (v. 5). In Psalm 51:11 and in Isaiah 63:10-11 the King James Version mistakenly uses the term *Holy Spirit*. Instead, these verses speak of “the Spirit of Your holiness” and “His Spirit of holiness.” Only in the New Testament do we find mention of the Holy Spirit. The title *Holy Spirit* is first used when Mary was about to conceive the Lord Jesus (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35). Thus, the term *the Holy Spirit* is first used regarding the incarnation of Christ.

## **THE RICHES IN THE SPIRIT**

God is Spirit, yet this God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This means that the Son with the Father is realized in the Holy Spirit. This Spirit eventually became the Spirit of Jesus Christ as the life-giving Spirit. Before Christ was crucified and resurrected, such a Spirit was not yet. It became such a Spirit only after Christ’s resurrection. This Spirit, the third of the Godhead, is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, and the life-giving Spirit. Not only God Himself but also all the riches of the Godhead are in this Spirit. The fact that this Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ indicates that Jesus and Christ are realized in this Spirit. Today our Jesus is realized in this Spirit. Therefore, God, the Father, the Son, Jesus, and Christ are all realized in the Spirit. Because Jesus is a man, humanity is also included in this Spirit. Since this man has passed through crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, all these are now included in the Spirit. Moreover, this wonderful Spirit has become intensified sevenfold. This is the Spirit revealed in the Bible, the first aspect of the focus of God’s economy.

Whatever God is, is in this Spirit. The Father, the Son, Jesus, Christ, humanity, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension are all implied in this wonderful Spirit that has been intensified to become the seven Spirits of God. We all need such a full definition of the Spirit. We need to accept the vision of this Spirit found in the Bible and then pray ourselves into the realization of this Spirit.

Because this Spirit is so rich and bountiful, Philippians 1:19 speaks of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The reason the supply of this Spirit is bountiful is that the Spirit includes God, the riches of the Father and the Son, the element of Jesus’ humanity, and the element of Christ, the anointed One of God. This Spirit also includes crucifixion, resurrection, and

ascension. All this is found in the Spirit. This Spirit is not merely a power but a person. This wonderful Spirit has been intensified sevenfold to become the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth (Rev. 5:6). Today the very Spirit we have received into us is such a Spirit. May we all have a thorough and rich revelation of this Spirit.

## **THE DIVINE SPIRIT MINGLED WITH THE HUMAN SPIRIT**

The divine Spirit is in our human spirit. Romans 8:16 says that the Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God. Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 6:17 says that he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Now we have not only the divine Spirit in our spirit but also the mingling of the divine Spirit with our spirit. Thus, the two spirits are one. Some are opposed to the concept of mingling. Those who oppose this wonder how it is possible for the divine Spirit to be mingled with our spirit. If the divine Spirit and the human spirit can be one spirit, then why can they not be mingled? Without mingling, how could the two spirits become one? Praise the Lord that these two spirits have been mingled into one spirit! This is the reason that in the verses concerning our walk in the spirit, it is difficult for the translators to determine whether to render *pneumatic* as “Spirit” or as “spirit.” Actually, to walk according to the spirit means to walk according to both the divine Spirit and the human spirit, according to the two spirits mingled as one. The two spirits are mingled not in the heavens or outside of us but within us. This is the focus of the divine economy. Whatever God intends to do or accomplish is related to this focus. If we would have certain basic spiritual experiences, we must have a clear understanding that the focus of God’s economy is the mingled spirit, the divine Spirit mingled with the human spirit.

## **LIVING ACCORDING TO THE MINGLED SPIRIT**

Those who live according to the flesh and the lusts of the flesh are the lowest type of people. Those who live according to the mind and the will are somewhat higher. Humanly speaking, those who live according to the conscience, which is part of man’s spirit, may be considered the highest type of people. But we are even higher than this, for we live not only according to the conscience but according to the mingled spirit. Therefore, we are on the highest level. Here, on this level, we have the Christian life and also the church life. This is the focus of God’s economy. We should walk according to

this, that is, according to the mingled spirit. We should be a person in such a spirit as was the apostle John in Revelation (1:10).