

**PROPAGATING THE RESURRECTED,  
ASCENDED, AND ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST  
AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

(Saturday—Evening Session)

Message Nine

**The Divine Commission according to the Heavenly Vision  
for the Continuation of the Book of Acts  
in the Unique Flow of the Divine Stream**

*EM Hymns: 839, 473*

Scripture Reading: Acts 26:18; Psa. 46:4a; Rev. 22:1; 1 Cor. 16:10

- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
- Psa 46:4a There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God, ...
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- 1 Cor 16:10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear; for he is working the work of the Lord, even as I am.

**I. In the Scriptures the concept of the divine stream, the unique flow, is crucial—Gen. 2:10-14; Psa. 46:4a; John 7:37-39; Rev. 22:1:**

- Gen 2:10 And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four branches.
- Gen 2:11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.
- Gen 2:12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.
- Gen 2:13 And the name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Cush.
- Gen 2:14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one that goes east of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.
- Psa 46:4a There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God, ...
- John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
- John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- A. The Bible reveals the flowing Triune God—the Father as the fountain of life, the Son as the spring of life, and the Spirit as the river of life—Jer. 2:13; Psa. 36:9a; John 4:14; 7:37-39.
- Jer 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.
- Psa 36:9a For with You is the fountain of life; ...
- John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.
- John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
- John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

- B. The source of the flow is the throne of God and of the Lamb—Rev. 22:1.  
 Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- C. In the Scriptures there is only one flow, one divine stream (Gen. 2:10-14; Rev. 22:1); since there is only one divine stream and since the flow is uniquely one, we need to keep ourselves in this one flow.  
 Gen 2:10 And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided and became four branches.  
 Gen 2:11 The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.  
 Gen 2:12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.  
 Gen 2:13 And the name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that goes around the whole land of Cush.  
 Gen 2:14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one that goes east of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.  
 Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- D. The divine stream, the unique flow, is the stream of the Lord's work—1 Cor. 16:10:  
 1 Cor 16:10 Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without fear; for he is working the work of the Lord, even as I am.
1. There is a stream, which we may call the stream, the current, of the work; where the stream flows, there is the work of God.
  2. The book of Acts reveals that in the move of the Lord there is only one stream, and we need to keep ourselves in this one stream—cf. 15:35-41.  
 Acts 15:35 And Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and announcing the word of the Lord as the gospel with many others also.  
 Acts 15:36 Now after some days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brothers in every city in which we announced the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.  
 Acts 15:37 And Barnabas intended to take John, who is called Mark, along with them also;  
 Acts 15:38 But Paul did not consider it suitable to take with them this one who withdrew from them in Pamphylia and did not go with them to the work.  
 Acts 15:39 And there was a sharp contention, so that they separated from each other; and Barnabas, taking Mark along, sailed away to Cyprus.  
 Acts 15:40 But Paul chose Silas and went out, having been commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers.  
 Acts 15:41 And he passed through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.
  3. The flowing of the divine life, which started on the day of Pentecost and has been flowing throughout all generations to this day, is just one stream.
  4. The history of the church shows that throughout the generations there has been one stream of the Spirit flowing all the time; many have been working for the Lord, but not all have been in the flowing of that one stream.

**II. The Lord appeared to Paul to bring him into the stream of the Lord's work, making him a minister and a witness both of the things in which Paul had seen Him and of the things in which He would appear to Paul—26:16; cf. 1:8; 23:11; 20:20, 31:**

- Acts 26:16 But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;
- Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- Acts 23:11 But in the night following, the Lord stood by him and said, Take courage, for as you have solemnly testified to the things concerning Me in Jerusalem, so also you must testify in Rome.

- Acts 20:20 How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring them to you and by not teaching you publicly and from house to house,
- Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.
- A. Paul was not disobedient to the heavenly vision of man as a vessel to contain, be filled with, and express the processed and consummated Triune God, of Christ as the mystery of God, and of the church as the Body of Christ, the mystery of Christ—26:19; 9:4-5, 15; Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4; 5:32.
- Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
- Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?
- Acts 9:5 And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.
- Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before both the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;
- Rom 9:21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?
- Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
- 2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- 2 Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.
- Col 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,
- Eph 3:4 By which, in reading it, you can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ,
- Eph 5:32 This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.
- B. Once you have seen a vision of God's plan and have been converted from everything to Christ Himself, there will be something within you energizing you to carry out God's plan; this vision will become your burden as you live and labor in the continuation of the book of Acts—Gal. 1:15-16; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 15:10.
- Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,
- Gal 1:16 To reveal His Son in me that I might announce Him as the gospel among the Gentiles, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood,
- Rom 15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Cor 15:10 But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace unto me did not turn out to be in vain, but, on the contrary, I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I but the grace of God which is with me.

### **III. Acts 26:18 reveals the work that we must do today for the increase and building up of the Body of Christ in the continuation of the book of Acts; this verse unveils the all-inclusive contents of our divine commission:**

- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
- A. This is to carry out the fulfillment of God's jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord, proclaimed by the Lord Jesus in Luke 4:18-21 according to God's New Testament economy.
- Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to announce the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away in release those who are oppressed,
- Luke 4:19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of jubilee."

- Luke 4:20 And when He rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant, He sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.
- Luke 4:21 And He began to say to them, Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.
- B. We need to pray over the contents of our divine commission in Acts 26:18, asking the Lord to make them our experience and reality so that we can bring others into this experience and reality—Eph. 3:8:
- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
1. “To open their eyes”:
    - a. We need to continually pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation to understand and to see more and more of Christ, the Body of Christ, and the divine dispensing for the divine economy—1:17; 3:5; cf. Rev. 4:6; 3:17; Matt. 6:6.
 

Eph 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

Eph 3:5 Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in spirit,

Rev 4:6 And before the throne there was as it were a glassy sea like crystal; and in the midst of the throne and around the throne, there were four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

Rev 3:17 Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,

Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
    - b. We cannot go on without new knowledge of the Lord and a new vision of Him—Acts 26:16; Phil. 3:8b, 10a, 13; cf. Deut. 4:25.
 

Acts 26:16 But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;

Phil 3:8b ... on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Phil 3:10a To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, ...

Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,

Deut 4:25 When you have brought forth children and grandchildren and have languished in the land, and you have spoiled yourselves by making an idol, the form of anything, and have done that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah your God so as to anger Him;
    - c. Being a minister and a witness is not a matter of teaching and knowledge but of appearing and vision; the things in which we have seen the Lord and the things in which the Lord will appear to us are the things that we must minister to others—Acts 22:14-15.
 

Acts 22:14 And he said, The God of our fathers has previously appointed you to know His will and to see the righteous One and to hear the voice from His mouth;

Acts 22:15 For you will be a witness to Him unto all men of the things which you have seen and heard.
    - d. Our commission is to “enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is”—Eph. 3:9.
 

Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

2. “To turn them from darkness to light”:
- a. Light is the presence of God—Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:5.
    - Isa 2:5 House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah.
    - 1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
  - b. We need to be people who are full of light—Luke 11:34-36.
    - Luke 11:34 The lamp of the body is your eye. When your eye is single, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, your body also is dark.
    - Luke 11:35 Watch out therefore that the light which is in you is not darkness.
    - Luke 11:36 If therefore your whole body is full of light and does not have any dark part, the whole will be full of light as when the lamp with its rays illuminates you.
  - c. The enjoyment of Christ as our God-given portion is “in the light”—Col. 1:12; John 8:12; 1:4; Psa. 119:105, 130; Matt. 5:14; Rev. 1:20.
    - Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
    - John 8:12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
    - John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
    - Psa 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet / And a light to my path.
    - Psa 119:130 The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple.
    - Matt 5:14 You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city situated upon a mountain to be hidden.
    - Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.
  - d. We need to be luminaries in the world, holding forth the word of life—Phil. 2:14-16.
    - Phil 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and reasonings
    - Phil 2:15 That you may be blameless and guileless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as luminaries in the world,
    - Phil 2:16 Holding forth the word of life, so that I may have a boast in the day of Christ that I did not run in vain nor labor in vain.
  - e. We need to tell out the virtues of the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light—1 Pet. 2:9.
    - 1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
3. “To turn them...from the authority of Satan to God”:
- a. The highest point in our spiritual experience is to have a clear sky with the throne above it—Ezek. 1:22, 26:
    - Ezek 1:22 And over the heads of the living creature there was the likeness of an expanse, like the sight of awesome crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.
    - Ezek 1:26 And above the expanse that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was One in appearance like a man, above it.
  - 1) To have the throne above a clear sky is to give the Lord the preeminence in our being and the highest and most prominent position in our life—Col. 1:18; cf. Ezek. 14:3.
    - Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

- Ezek 14:3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I be inquired of at all by them?
- 2) The clearer our sky is, the more we are under the throne, under God's authority—Acts 24:16.  
Acts 24:16 Because of this I also exercise myself to always have a conscience without offense toward God and men.
- 3) For God to have the throne in us means that He has the position to reign in us—cf. Rom. 5:17.  
Rom 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- 4) If we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, genuine authority will be with us to bring others under God's authority—2 Cor. 10:4-5, 8; 13:3, 10.  
2 Cor 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds,  
2 Cor 10:5 As we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.  
2 Cor 10:8 For even if I should boast somewhat more abundantly concerning our authority, which the Lord has given for building you up and not for overthrowing you, I will not be put to shame.  
2 Cor 13:3 Since you seek a proof of the Christ who is speaking in me, who is not weak unto you but is powerful in you.  
2 Cor 13:10 Therefore I write these things while being absent in order that when present I would not have to use severity, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for building up and not for overthrowing.
- b. Our uttermost love for the Lord qualifies, perfects, and equips us to speak for the Lord with His authority—cf. John 21:15, 17.  
John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.  
John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
4. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins":
- a. We need to go to the Lord to receive a thorough forgiveness of all our sins—1 John 1:7, 9.  
1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.  
1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- b. David begged God to blot out his transgressions, wash him thoroughly from his iniquity, cleanse him from his sin, and purge his sin with hyssop—Psa. 51:1-2, 7, 9:  
Psa 51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; / According to the greatness of Your compassions blot out my transgressions.  
Psa 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, / And from my sin cleanse me.  
Psa 51:7 Purge my sin with hyssop, and I will be clean; / Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.  
Psa 51:9 Hide Your face from my sins, / And blot out all my iniquities.
- 1) Hyssop typifies Christ in His humble and humiliated human nature (1 Kings 4:33a; Exo. 12:22a), implying Christ as our Mediator and sacrifice (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 10:9).  
1 Kings 4:33a And he discoursed about trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that shoots forth out of the wall; ...

- Exo 12:22a And you shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and you shall apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts; ...
- Heb 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry inasmuch as He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises.
- Heb 9:15 And because of this He is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that, death having taken place for redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, those who have been called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
- Heb 10:9 He then has said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first that He may establish the second,
- 2) Like David, we need to stay in the presence of God to have a thorough and genuine repentance and confession to receive a full forgiveness from God.
  - 3) If we confess our sins to receive God's forgiveness, we will have the gladness of God's salvation and be sustained with a willing spirit; then we can teach transgressors His ways, and sinners will turn back to Him—Psa. 51:12-13.
 

Psa 51:12 Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation, / And sustain me with a willing spirit.

Psa 51:13 I will teach transgressors Your ways, / And sinners will turn back to You.
5. "That they may receive...an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me":
- a. This inheritance is the Triune God Himself with all He has, all He has done, and all He will do for His redeemed people.
  - b. The Triune God is embodied in the all-inclusive Christ, who is the portion allotted to the saints as their inheritance—Col. 2:9; 1:12.
 

Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,

Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
  - c. We enjoy the pneumatic Christ as the pledge of our inheritance (Eph. 1:14) "among those," that is, in the church life—cf. 2 Tim. 2:22.
 

Eph 1:14 Who is the pledge of our inheritance unto the redemption of the acquired possession, to the praise of His glory.

2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
  - d. We need to bring people into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ in the church life so that they may enjoy Christ as we do and be sanctified dispositionally with the holy nature of God through the exercise of their spirit—Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 4:13.
 

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Heb 2:11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

1 Cor 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

2 Cor 4:13 And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,

#### **IV. If we would be in the continuation of the book of Acts, we need to continue to live in the divine history by having an upper-room consecration—1:13-14:**

Acts 1:13 And when they entered, they went up to the upper room where they were residing, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the brother of James.

- Acts 1:14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
- A. At the seashore Peter gave up his job to follow the Lord Jesus, but in the upper room he gave up much more—Matt. 4:18-20; Acts 1:13-14:
- Matt 4:18 And while He was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.
- Matt 4:19 And He said to them, Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men.
- Matt 4:20 And immediately leaving the nets, they followed Him.
- Acts 1:13 And when they entered, they went up to the upper room where they were residing, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the brother of James.
- Acts 1:14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
1. He stood with the heavenly vision to give up the religion of his forefathers.
  2. He gave up his country, his relationship with his neighbors and friends, and his relatives, and he was willing to risk his life.
- B. The kind of consecration that we need today is an upper-room consecration, a consecration in which we pay the price to have our whole being “married” to the heavenly vision—26:19; 1:8; 20:24.
- Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
- Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- Acts 20:24 But I consider my life of no account as if precious to myself, in order that I may finish my course and the ministry which I have received from the Lord Jesus to solemnly testify of the gospel of the grace of God.
- C. If we pay the price for the heavenly vision, we will “burn the bridges behind us” and will have no way to go backward.
- D. Whether we have seen the heavenly vision or not depends on whether we are willing to pay the price to buy the anointing Spirit as the eyesalve—Rev. 3:18.
- Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.
- E. To take the way of the Lord’s recovery is not cheap; this way is expensive and requires a costly consecration.
- F. We are not here for a movement but for the Lord’s recovery, and the recovery can be carried out only by the specific and extraordinary consecration in the upper room.
- G. The one hundred twenty in the upper room all became a burnt offering; they were burning for the Lord in spirit, and they burned others with the divine fire of the divine life—Luke 12:49-50; Acts 2:3-4; Rom. 12:11.
- Luke 12:49 I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!
- Luke 12:50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!
- Acts 2:3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which were distributed; and it sat on each one of them;
- Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, even as the Spirit gave to them to speak forth.
- Rom 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
- H. When the Lord Jesus was on the earth, great crowds followed Him, but they did not afford Him anything for His move; His move was with those in the upper room, with those whose eyes had been opened and whose hearts had been touched—Acts 17:6b.
- Acts 17:6b ... they dragged Jason and some brothers before the city officials, shouting, These men who have upset the world have come here also,



- I. It is a small number who will turn the world and change the age; if we would be in the upper room, we need to pray in a specific way and say, “Lord, I am willing to be in the upper room for the recovery of Your testimony.”

## **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

### **THE FULL GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEAVENLY VISION**

We all must see a heavenly vision. We need God’s unique vision. In Acts 26:19 Paul said, “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” As we shall see, the background of this heavenly vision was the Jewish religion.

### **THE REVELATION OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH**

This background was present in Matthew 16, where we have a revelation of Christ and the church. The Lord Jesus did not come to the heathen, pagan world. He came to God’s people, a people who had the Holy Scriptures, who worshipped in God’s temple, and who offered the sacrifices according to God’s divine regulations. These people were very scriptural. None of the first followers of the Lord Jesus were pagans. They all were religious people who had a background in the Scriptures, in the worship of God, in God’s law, and in the general knowledge of God. Suddenly, the Lord Jesus appeared and called some of them, and they followed Him. One day the Lord took His disciples “into the parts of Caesarea Philippi” (v. 13), far away from the temple and the holy city, to the border of the Holy Land. After bringing them there, He asked them a question: “Who do men say that the Son of Man is?” (v. 13). After the disciples gave some answers, the Lord said, “But you, who do you say that I am?” (v. 15). Why did the Lord ask them this question in “the parts of Caesarea Philippi”? The fact that the Lord took His disciples there strongly implies and indicates that He is absolutely different from the typical religion. The Lord Jesus is the living Christ, the living Son of the living God. He is not a part of dead religion; He is altogether different from religion and stands outside of it. The revelation of Christ as the Son of the living God was not given in the sphere, in the realm, of the Jewish religion. The Lord brought the disciples away from everything “holy”—away from the Holy Land, the holy city, and the holy temple. The Lord seemed to be saying, “You may think that all these things are holy, but I shall forsake them all. Those who want to follow Me must come away from the background of religion.”

With this as the background, Peter answered the Lord’s question by saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 16). This word was not a teaching or a tradition. It was a direct revelation from the heavenly Father. It did not derive from the Jewish religion, the holy temple, or the holy city but was something fresh and new. It did not originate with human thought or religious concepts; it came directly from the living God. After Peter spoke these words, the Lord said, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (v. 18). Here we see Christ, the Son of the living God, and the church built upon Him as the rock. Hence, in this chapter we have Christ and the church. Although it is wonderful to see Christ, this is not adequate. We also must see the church. Christ is only the rock, but the church is the building.

Verse 18 says that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against the church, and in verse 19 the Lord said, “I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens.” Here we see the gates of Hades on the negative side and the kingdom of the heavens on the positive side. Christ and the church will bring in the kingdom of God and will cast down and defeat the gates of Hades, the authority of Satan. This is the heavenly vision concerning Christ and the church. The vision that Christ and the church will bring in God’s kingdom and defeat the kingdom of Satan is given outside of religion. It is not a matter of culture, ethics, or morality. Rather, it is the very Christ, the Son of the living God, with the church to bring in the kingdom of the heavens and to subdue the gates of Hades. We all must see this.

## THE LORD'S APPEARING MAKING SAUL A WITNESS

Acts 26 is also set against the background of the Jewish religion. In verse 17 the Lord said that He would deliver Saul from the people to whom He would send him. The word *people* in this verse does not refer to mankind but to the Jewish people, the religious people. In the Jewish religion there was a young man named Saul who had a strong will and who was faithful to that traditional religion. He was very zealous for the religion and tradition of his forefathers. While he was on the way to damage the church, doing his best to persecute it, the Lord Jesus appeared to him and knocked him to the ground. Saul asked, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you persecute" (v. 15). The background here is not that of paganism but of the typical religion. Saul was zealous for God according to the traditional religion, but he was persecuting the church of Christ and opposing God's economy. Although he was so zealous for God, he did not realize that he was part of the greatest deviation from the central line of God's revelation.

After Saul had been knocked down, the Lord called him, saying, "Rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you" (v. 16). Often the Lord knocks us down and then tells us to rise up. At these times the Lord may say, "Don't lie there—rise up. If you rise up, I will make you a minister and a witness, not a religionist. I will make you a witness of what you have seen." The Lord seemed to be telling Saul, "You have seen Me speaking to you from the heavens. Now go and witness to people of this. Witness to the priests, the elders, and the scribes. Formerly, you said that I was killed and buried, but now you must witness to the fact that I have been resurrected and am now living in the heavens."

In verse 16 the Lord told Saul that he would be a witness both of the things in which he had seen Him and of the things in which the Lord would appear to him. The Lord said that He would reveal other things to Saul, not in the way of teaching but by means of His appearing. In whatever the Lord appeared to Saul, Saul was to witness of that to the people. This is not a teaching, a doctrine, or a religion; it is absolutely a revelation of Jesus. All that the apostle Paul later ministered was something in which the Lord had appeared to him. He was not taught by the Lord; rather, he had revelation that came from the Lord's appearing. After his experience on the way to Damascus, Saul could say, "I have seen the living Jesus in the heavens. I will go tell people what I have seen. My seeing comes from the appearing of this living Lord. He charged me to minister those things in which He has ministered to me, and He even promised to appear to me again and again. Every time He appears, I see something. Then I go out and witness to people about what I have seen." Being a witness is not a matter of teaching and knowledge but of appearing and vision. The things in which the Lord appears to us are the things that we must minister to others.

## THE LORD'S CHARGE

In Acts 26:18 the Lord charged Saul "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." This is the work that you young people should do today. Do not preach the traditional gospel of Christianity. Rather, open the eyes of this generation that they may turn from darkness to light. The first thing we must do is to help others to see. In order to do this, we ourselves must have the vision and see the heavenly things. We must see the things concerning Christ, not by being taught but by having Christ appear to us. After you have seen the vision, you need to contact people, telling them that Jesus has appeared to you and that you have seen Him. Do not preach the low, traditional gospel. Many who have received this poor gospel are still blind and in darkness. Do not teach people religion—open their eyes that they may turn from darkness and Satan to light and God. By turning in this way, they will be released from the evil power of darkness, which is the authority of Satan, to God. As a result, they will receive forgiveness of sins and a portion among those who are sanctified. All the saved and forgiven ones are saints, and all the saints

have a portion (Col. 1:12). According to Colossians, the portion of the saints is simply Christ Himself. Christ has been allotted to us, and we all share a portion in Him. What is our portion? It is neither the heavens nor the earth but Christ. Thus, Christ is the common portion of all the saints. Unbelievers do not have a positive portion. Their portion—the lake of fire—is negative. Our portion—Christ—will consummate in the New Jerusalem. Those who turn from Satan to God will not have a portion individually but corporately and collectively with all the saints. This means that they will have a portion among those who are members of the church life. We cannot have such a portion alone; we can only have it among the saints, among those who are sanctified by faith.

### **THE FULL GOSPEL**

In Acts 26:18 the full gospel is presented. The complete, perfect, whole gospel is found here: to open people's eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, be sanctified by faith, and enjoy the common portion of the saints to have the church life. In this one verse there are seven points: (1) to open people's eyes, (2) to turn them from darkness to light, (3) to turn them from the authority of Satan to God, (4) to help them receive forgiveness of sins, (5) to help them to be sanctified by faith, (6) that they may have a common portion among the saints, and (7) be in the church life. Have you ever heard such a gospel? This is the gospel that the young people must preach to this generation. Do not preach the poor gospel about going to heaven—preach the uplifted gospel revealed in Acts 26:18.

### **THE NEED FOR PRAYER**

It is quite easy to point out all the seven facets of the gospel found in this verse. But now you need to go to the Lord and pray, saying, "Lord, open my eyes. I don't need knowledge, Lord. I need my eyes to be opened. Lord, turn me from anything dark. I don't want to remain in darkness. Lord, turn me from darkness to light." This is spiritual reality. When we are in it, people will realize it when we contact them. You also need to pray, "Lord, turn me from the authority, the dominion, of Satan to Yourself. I must be a person who is absolutely in God. God is my sphere, my realm, my kingdom. I must be in God." If you pray like this, you will become another person. I can assure you that you will be different. If necessary, even fast and pray about these matters, saying, "Lord, I want to have my eyes opened like they have never been opened before. I don't want to be opaque. I want to have eyes like the four living creatures in the book of Revelation." The living creatures have eyes everywhere, without and within. We need to be like this. Then when we contact people, they will realize that we are crystal clear. We are not opaque like others are. Others may be good, ethical, religious, moral, and even scriptural, but they are opaque. When people contact us, they must immediately sense that we are crystal clear. This is not preaching—this is witnessing. We must be this kind of person.

We also need to pray, "Lord, grant me a full and thorough forgiveness of all my sins. I want to have a clearance of sins from the top to the bottom. I would leave nothing that has not been dealt with. Lord, I also want to be fully sanctified. I don't want to be merely a forgiven person but also a sanctified person. Then I will be able to enjoy my portion, the all-inclusive Christ." Day by day we enjoy Christ as our portion, not in an individualistic way but by enjoying Him among the saints. Who and where are the saints? They are those who are sanctified in the church. The saints are the church. When we get into the church, we get among the saints. Oh, how we must pray over these seven matters! Pray desperately to the Lord, saying, "Lord, I want to experience the gospel that You revealed to Paul as mentioned in Acts 26:18. I want to experience this full, complete, perfect, and thorough gospel." This gospel covers not only God's kingdom but also Satan's kingdom. It includes the rich Christ as our portion and all the saints as the corporate Body, the church of Christ. How we need to experience this gospel!

If we experience the whole gospel, we shall not merely be a preacher—we shall be a witness. I can guarantee you that whenever you pray this way, the Lord Jesus will appear to you, and His

appearing will give you a vision. Then you will see certain things. In all these chapters we need to see a vision. I cannot give you anything. We all must touch the throne of grace. Does the Lord still need to knock you down? Are you that stubborn? There is no need to be so stubborn. Rather, we should say, "Lord, I'm here. You don't need to knock me down. Lord, I'm here touching Your throne of grace. Open my eyes and turn me thoroughly from all darkness to light. Turn me from the authority of Satan to God, and grant me a thorough forgiveness of all my sinfulness. O Lord, sanctify me that I may enjoy You as my portion among the saints in the local churches."

### **PAUL'S RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND AND THE LORD'S APPEARING**

In Galatians 1:11-16 we also see the religious background of the revelation of Christ in Paul's experience. In Galatians 1:13 and 14 Paul says that he persecuted the church of God and advanced in Judaism, being more abundantly a zealot for the traditions of his fathers. In these verses Paul seems to be saying, "You know of my conduct. I was exceedingly zealous in the religion of my fathers, surpassing many of my equals. As far as religion was concerned, I was on top. I even persecuted the church, doing my best to lay it waste and to oppose God's economy. But one day the very God who separated me from my mother's womb was pleased to reveal His Son in me." All we need is this revelation, this vision.

I am concerned for many of you because our situation today is exactly the same as that in the ancient times. We all have been influenced by the background of Christianity. I am fearful that as you do a work among the young people, you may carry it out in a religious way. When you preach, you may preach the traditional gospel of Christianity. In these days we all must see something. We should no longer bring old traditional Christianity into our gospel preaching. Rather, we must cast away the old things and say, "Lord, show me something by appearing to me. Lord, You appeared to Paul, and he saw something, and You told him that You would show him more through Your appearing to him. Lord, appear to me so that in Your appearing I may see something and then tell people of what I have seen." It is not adequate simply to read this chapter. You must pray to the Lord. I can assure you that if you go to Him, He will be open. He is in the heavens, but to Him heaven is the same as earth, for He is everywhere. While Saul of Tarsus was going his way, the Lord Jesus, who was in the heavens, appeared to him. Today the Lord is open to us all. Simply come to Him, saying, "Lord, I have never heard such a gospel before. Lord, open my eyes and turn me from all other things to Yourself." I assure you that if you pray this way, He will appear to you immediately. In His appearing, you will see something. This appearing will make you a witness. Then, as you contact other young people, you will not merely be a preacher but a witness.

You will be a witness telling people of what you have seen in the presence of the living Lord. It pleased God to reveal His Son to us that we might preach Him. Our preaching must be the issue of what we have seen. We do not preach doctrine; we minister and witness of what we have seen in His appearing.

### **GRACE GIVEN TO LESS THAN THE LEAST**

In Ephesians 3:8 Paul says, "To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel." Probably we all hold the concept that the apostle Paul was a specially selected one. But here he says that he was less than the least of all saints. If one who is less than the least can have such a vision, then certainly all of us can have the same thing. Do not say, "I am not an apostle, especially not the apostle Paul. Thus, I could never see as much as he did." Paul said that he was less than all of us. Paul said this because he had opposed God's economy. In Paul's understanding, the one who opposed the most was the smallest and the least. Since he was the most opposing, he became even less than the least. Peter, John, Andrew, and Matthew were with the Lord Jesus, but Paul was far away. No one else opposed Christ and the church as much as Paul did. Therefore, this one who was the farthest away and the most opposing

became the least and smallest one. In Ephesians 3 Paul seemed to be saying, “Dear brothers in Ephesus, don’t you realize that I was once far, far away? None of you was as far away from Christ as I was. Because I was the farthest away, I am less than the least of all the saints.”

Anyone who is closer to Christ than Paul was is greater than he. Since we are all close to Christ, we are more than qualified to receive the vision and get the revelation. If the one farthest away from Christ could receive the revelation of Jesus Christ, then why could we not receive it also? We should be encouraged by this. Do not be disappointed. I am familiar with the subtlety of the enemy. When I was young, I excused myself, saying that the verses in Ephesians 3 were wonderful, but they were only for the apostle Paul, not for me. Since I did not care for these verses, I missed the grace. But one day I woke up and saw Ephesians 3:8, and I believed it. I jumped up, shouting, “Hallelujah! I am bigger than Paul. To one less than I, grace was given. If he could receive this grace, then why can’t I? I’m more qualified than he was.” I can testify that since that day the vision has always been with me. If we saw this, we would all be like the apostle Paul. I am not saying that you should presume to claim your apostleship. No, what I mean is that as far as qualification goes, we all are greater than Paul. Thus, we must pray, “Lord, whether I understand it or not, Ephesians 3:8 says that Paul was less than I am. If grace was given to him, then, Lord, You must also give this grace to me. Standing on Ephesians 3:8, I claim the grace.”

We need this grace in order to see and enjoy all the riches of Christ. We must go to the Lord, the source of the heavenly vision, and see something. There is no other way except to pray. If you pray, you will be different, and the Lord will have a way. Many eyes will be opened, and many young people will turn from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God and will enjoy forgiveness, sanctification, and the common portion among all the saints in the proper church life. Ephesians 3 indicates that the riches of Christ are for the producing of the church. Therefore, in this portion of the Word we have Christ with all His riches and the church as God’s instrument to shame His enemies, the principalities and powers, and through which God will make known the manifold wisdom of His economy. Pray-read all the verses mentioned in this chapter in a serious, weighty way. Say, “Lord, I mean business with You. You have given grace to one who is less than I, and now You must give grace to me. Lord, I mean it. Lord, cause us all to experience the riches of the unlimited Christ and to have the church life that comes out of this enjoyment.” If you pray like this, something will happen. The Lord is real, living, present, practical, and available. If you mean business with Him, He will mean business with you. I know what I am talking about.

Do not follow the trend of today’s Christianity. Rather, forget about it. We have a new, heavenly trend. In Revelation we have the seven local churches. If you will pray-read all these verses and live in them and witness according to them, the issue will be the local churches. In the local churches we have the practical church life. The enemy, Satan, hates the Spirit because the Spirit is the reality of Christ. Today Christ is realized as the Spirit, but some are fighting against this, saying that it is heresy to teach that Christ is the Spirit. Moreover, Satan also hates the local church and causes some to rise up against it. Most Christians only care for the universal church, but to have only the universal church is to have a vanity fair. While most Christians care for the universal church, they insist on perpetuating the denominations and free groups. Due to this, there is no local church. Instead, there is the vanity fair of the so-called universal church and all the denominations and groups. Where is the church? It can exist only when the saints realize that all Christians in a particular locality must be one. This is the local church.

Are you young people burning today? If you are, then I challenge you to pray with all these verses. If you pray, something will come out, and you will see the vision of the full gospel and become a witness of what you see of the Lord to today’s young generation. You all must fellowship about this chapter and pray about it both individually and corporately until you are transfused by the Lord with such a heavenly vision and are burdened for the Lord’s move among today’s young generation to bring a number of them into the Lord’s testimony. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1975–1976*, vol. 3, “Young People’s Training,” pp. 307-316)