

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 7, NOVEMBER 1998

"He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit . . . does He do it out of the works of the law or out of the hearing of faith?" Galatians 3:5

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Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

DENVER, CO

KLZ AM 560
9:00 P.M. MON-FRI

SALT LAKE CITY, UT

KWLW AM 700
9:00 A.M. SUNDAY

Dear Listeners,

We hope you have enjoyed hearing *Life-study of Acts with Witness Lee*. We began broadcasting *Life-study of the Bible* in September 1996. So far we have covered five books: John, Genesis, Romans, Hebrews, and Acts (concluding this month). You can hear the broadcasts on these books over the internet at www.lsm.org/radio. Isaiah will be the next book in our eight-year life-study journey.

The book of Isaiah is the vision which Isaiah saw (1:1), the word which Isaiah saw (2:1), and the burden which Isaiah saw (13:1; 15:1). The vision, word, and burden in Isaiah are concerned with God's eternal economy in Christ. The spiritual essence of Isaiah is this: The Christ processed for the divine purposes being the centrality and the universality of the great wheel of the move of the Divine Trinity for the divine dispensing of Himself into His elect. This one-sentence summary of the spiritual essence of Isaiah, though requiring some time to chew, will prepare you for what's coming later this month.

We want to let you know about a few recent events so you can remember us in your prayers. First, the Living Stream Ministry Radio Section is moving into new studios this month! We have been producing the English, Spanish, and Chinese radio programs in a limited working space and now the Lord has provided us with a larger facility to expand His work. If you are in the Anaheim, California area, we invite you to come by and visit us in our new environment. Please call ahead so we can adequately give you a tour.

We also want to let you know of some wonderful meetings that took place over the Labor Day weekend in Tampa, Florida. Because of the positive response to our broadcasts in that area, Chris Wilde and Ron Kangas traveled to Tampa and met with some of our listeners. To fellowship in person with some of you that have been regularly enjoying the program was an encouragement to both Ron and Chris. If you would like to arrange for some meetings in your area, please let us know, and we will prayerfully consider the matter before the Lord.

Living Stream Ministry Radio

WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE?

Several crucial verses in the New Testament speak of God's purpose, especially God's eternal purpose. In Ephesians 3:11 we have this phrase *eternal purpose*. In Romans 8:28 Paul says that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to *His purpose*. In 2 Timothy 1:9 Paul says that God has saved us according to *His own purpose*. If we ponder these verses, and if we have a heart to seek the Lord and the significance of our salvation, we surely will want to understand what God's purpose is.

God's eternal purpose by definition is something eternal. It was conceived by God in Christ in eternity past with the intent to work out something that will remain in eternity future. So God's

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GOD'S PURPOSE

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purpose is the eternal plan of God made in eternity past with a particular intent. It was made in eternity past, it will be carried out in time, and the results will stand forever in eternity future.

God's eternal purpose is closely related to God's will. God's will, simply stated, is what God wants, intends, and desires. God's purpose is God's plan according to His will. God wants something. To attain what He wants, He has a plan that is according to what He wants, according to His will. This plan of God that is according to the will of God is what the Bible calls the eternal purpose of God.

God as a God of purpose is surely determined to fulfill His purpose. God is absolute. When He wills to do something, when He resolves to do something, He will surely do it. God's purpose is God's purposeful determination in His plan.

We see then that God has a good pleasure, which is the desire of His heart. This good pleasure or heart's desire of God is expressed as God's will, God's wish. To fulfill this heart's desire, He needs to have a plan with a purposeful determination. This plan with its purposeful determination is God's eternal purpose. Our God is a God of purpose and His purpose has its source in the desire of His heart. Because God has a heart's desire, He wants something that will fulfill this desire. What He wants is His will. Since God is a God of purpose, He does not act in a random, arbitrary way. On the contrary, God acts according to plan. He has made a detailed, determined plan in eternity past that will stand in its result for eternity future. That plan is His purpose.

God's will is linked to God's economy. God's economy is God's arrangement and administration to fulfill His plan so that He may attain what would satisfy the desire of His heart. God's economy can be traced back to the desire of God's heart. We begin from within the desire of God's heart, then we see God's will as what He wants, and then His plan, which is His purpose. For His purpose to be carried out, God must have an administrative arrangement. That arrangement is God's economy.

For further reading on this subject, please see The Divine Economy, The Divine Dispensing for the Divine Economy, and The Central Line of the Divine Revelation, published by Living Stream Ministry.

Highlights

FROM THE LIFE-STUDY OF ACTS

We will finish broadcasting Life-study of Acts in November. The following is an excerpt from the concluding message of this marvelous life-study.

A PORTRAIT OF PAUL'S LIVING

Chapters twenty-seven and twenty-eight of Acts do not present anything of doctrine. Rather, in these chapters we have a record of a man living Christ to the uttermost. Paul was imprisoned, bound in chains, and surrounded by guards. The sea was very stormy, and the sailing was rough. Furthermore, Paul was away from his homeland and from most of his friends. Although he was in such a difficult situation, he lived like a reigning king.

Paul's living as presented in these two chapters of Acts reminds us of his word written while he was imprisoned in Rome: "I know that for me this shall turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death; for to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:19-21a). This describes Paul's living during the voyage from Caesarea to Rome. Regardless of the situation, Paul magnified Christ in his body.

As we ponder the picture in Acts 27 and 28, we see that Paul was an outstanding witness of Christ. He was the kind of witness the Lord Jesus spoke about in 1:8: "You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the remotest part of the earth."

In 1:6 the Lord's disciples had asked Him if He would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel. The Lord indicated that it was not for them to know times or seasons, which the Father had placed in His own authority. Instead, after they had received power through the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them, they would be His witnesses. Paul was such a witness in Acts 27 and 28. In these chapters Paul was living among Gentiles. There were very few Jews on the ship, if any. Everything on that voyage was Gentile. The food, the environment, and the atmosphere were Gentile. Furthermore, there was nothing Jewish on the island of Malta. Paul was surrounded by Gentiles and the Gentile way of living. But in that situation Paul lived like a king in a palace. I very much appreciate the picture of Paul's living in these chapters.

We all should live Christ in the way Paul did in Acts 27 and 28. If we live Christ only in a situation that is according to our culture, character, constitution, and disposition, our living is not genuine. Here in Acts 27 and 28, Paul lived Christ in a situation that was altogether contrary to his culture and character. Many things were disappointing and discouraging, but Paul nevertheless lived a life of the highest standard. As we have pointed out, in Paul the wonderful, excellent, and mysterious God-man, who lived in the Gospels, continued to live through one of His many members. This was Jesus living again on earth in His divinely enriched humanity. Paul's living, therefore, was a repetition of the living of Jesus.

Life-study of Acts, Msg. 72, pp. 623-624