

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

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"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

In

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Dear Life-study Listener,

We have been busy conducting radio seminars. In July we were in Tampa and Jacksonville, Florida. In August there was a seminar in Lagos, Nigeria. On September 21 we will be at the University Plaza Hotel in Seattle, Washington. Then we will travel to London, England for our largest radio seminar ever at Wembley Stadium on October 5. We are also working out details to visit Houston, Texas and to conduct the first seminar in southern California at our offices here in Anaheim. It is always a special treat for us to meet you in person. If you have not attended a seminar, we hope one comes to your area so you can join in. Please pray that enlightenment and inspiration would continue to fill these times.

This month we start *Life-study of 1 & 2 Kings*. These books are not merely storybooks; they contain an intrinsic revelation of God's economy. God's eternal economy focuses on the Person of Christ and His kingdom. Concerning the Person of Christ, Kings shows how His lineage was maintained in the midst of a degraded situation. Concerning His kingdom, we see how the Lord preserved the land in the midst of a Satan usurped earth. The picture at the end of Kings is a tragic one: the blessed kings were unfaithful to their inheritance and caused God's people to be carried away captive into an idol-worshipping world. May this be a warning to all of God's people today that will work out an extraordinary soberness and faithfulness to Him for His economy.

Living Stream Ministry

Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

LAGOS, NIGERIA

METRO 97.6 FM
9:00 P.M. SUNDAY

WHAT IS THE SELF?

To understand what the self is, we must consider the creation and fall of man. God created man with a spirit, a soul, and a body (Gen. 2:7; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12). He made man's spirit with the capacity to contact, receive, and contain God (John 4:24; 3:6; Rom. 8:16). God formed man's soul with the faculties of mind, emotion, and will so he could express Him. God created man's body so he could contact the physical world. God's intention was for

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man to be filled in his spirit with God's divine life to express Him through the organ of his soul. Man's soul would be dependent upon and subordinate to his spirit, which would be his real person. But instead of taking God into his spirit, man took in the enemy of God, Satan. Because of the fall, man's entire being was damaged and rearranged. His spirit was deadened (Eph. 2:1); his soul, saturated with Satan's evil word and thought (Gen. 3:1-5), was corrupted and became the self, independent of God and in oneness with Satan; and his body was transmuted and became the flesh of sin (Rom. 7:18a; 8:3). God

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still needs the faculties of man's soul for His expression, but the independent life of the soul, the self, must be denied (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

Self and *soul-life* are often used interchangeably in the New Testament. For example, in Matthew 16:24-26 the Lord Jesus says, "If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for

My sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul-life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul-life?" (emphasis added). Passages such as this and Luke 9:24-25 indicate that the self and the soul-life are identical. The soul-life is embodied in the self, and the self is just the soul-life.

In our practical experience, we need a further realization: the expression of the self is in human opinion, thoughts, and concepts. Self, soul-life, and human opinion are three sides of one entity. This is illustrated in the exchange between the Lord Jesus and Peter in Matthew 16:21-23. In verse 21 the Lord revealed that He was going to the cross to die according to God's ordination from eternity (Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:19-20). But Peter rebuked the Lord, saying, "God be merciful to You, Lord! This shall by no means happen to You!" (v. 22). Such a word seemed to be a good, sympathetic, and loving expression uttered out of concern for the Lord's well being. But the Lord turned and said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men" (v. 23). Peter's concept, idea, and opinion expressed through his mind were actually Satan. Thus, in the subsequent verses, the Lord spoke of denying the self (v. 24) and of losing the soul-life (v. 25), indicating that Peter's word came from himself, his soul-life. His idea and concept were the expression of himself, and this self was just the soul-life.

For further reading on this subject, please see *Life-study of Matthew*, message 48; *The Conclusion of the New Testament Life-study*, pp. 1620-1621; and *The Experience of Life*, pp. 222-244, by Witness Lee, published by Living Stream Ministry.

*Blessed are
THE PURE IN HEART
FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.*
Matthew 5:8



The pure in heart have a heart so pure that they just want God and nothing other than God. If Christians are willing to allow God to work in them, the first thing they have to do is to turn their heart to God. God does not have the way to work on many people because their heart is not set on Him. We cannot say that they do not want the Lord. They really do want the Lord, but they also want something other than the Lord Himself.... Their inner being is very complicated, but love should be very simple.

Witness Lee
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