

VITAL FACTORS FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE CHURCH LIFE

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

The Factor of Closely Following the Completed Vision of the Age through the Ministry of the Age

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8; 4:1; 5:18-20; 11:2-3; 1 Tim. 1:3-4, 18; Rev. 22:1-2, 14, 17a

I. In every age there is the vision of that age, and since we have the completed vision of the age through the ministry of the age, we need to serve God according to this vision and closely follow it—Acts 26:19; Eph. 1:17; 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:6:

- A. Today we can be in one accord because we have only one vision, an up-to-date, all-inheriting vision, the vision of the eternal economy of God—Eph. 1:17; 3:2, 9; Rev. 21:10; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Acts 26:13-19; Phil. 3:13-14.
- B. The governing vision of the Bible is the heavenly vision of God's eternal economy, which is God's eternal intention with His heart's desire to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity as the Father in the Son by the Spirit into His chosen people to be their life and nature that they may be the same as He is as His duplication, to become an organism, the Body of Christ as the new man for God's fullness, God's expression, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem—Eph. 1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:15-16; 3:19; Rev. 3:12, 21; 21:2, 9-10; Acts 26:19.
- C. "I [W. L.] told Brother Nee, 'Even if one day you do not take this way, I will still take this way. I am not taking this way because of you, and I will not leave this way because of you. I have seen that this is the Lord's way. I have seen the vision'" —*The Vision of the Age*, p. 50.

II. The vision that the Lord has given to us in His present recovery is the all-inclusive vision of God's eternal economy with its ultimate consummation—the vision of the New Jerusalem—Prov. 29:18a; Acts 26:18-19; 22:15; Rev. 21:2, 9-11:

- A. The totality of what the Bible reveals to us is the New Jerusalem; the New Jerusalem is the total composition of the entire revelation of the Bible—Gen. 28:10-22; John 1:1, 14, 29, 32, 42, 51; Rev. 21:3, 22.
- B. Our living out the New Jerusalem is for us to become the New Jerusalem, and our working out the New Jerusalem is for us to build the New Jerusalem by the flowing Triune God—Jer. 2:13; John 4:14b; 7:37-39; Rev. 22:1-2a.
- C. Every local church should be a miniature of the New Jerusalem, and every believer should be "a little New Jerusalem"; whatever is ascribed to the New Jerusalem should be both our corporate and personal experience—21:3, 22-23; 22:1-2, 14, 17; 3:12.
- D. The New Jerusalem is the embodiment of God's complete salvation with its judicial and organic aspects—Rom. 5:10; Rev. 22:14:
 - 1. God's full salvation is a composition of God's righteousness as the base and God's life as the consummation—Rom. 1:16-17; 5:10, 17-18, 21; Luke 15:22-23; cf. Jer. 2:13; 13:23; 17:9; 23:5-6; 31:33.
 - 2. The entire New Jerusalem is a matter of life built on the foundation of righteousness—Rev. 21:14, 19-20; 22:1; cf. Gen. 9:8-17; Ps. 89:14.
- E. As we experience each section of God's organic salvation, we go up level by level until we become beings in the New Jerusalem—Rom. 5:10, 17, 21; 8:10, 6, 11; Rev. 22:1-2; cf. Jer. 18:15; Micah 5:2:
 - 1. We are regenerated by participating in God's life to become God's species, God's children, for God's sonship—John 1:12-13; Rev. 21:7; 22:14b.
 - 2. We are sanctified by participating in God's nature to become as holy as the holy city—1 Thes. 5:23; Eph. 5:26.

3. We are renewed by participating in God's mind to become as new as the New Jerusalem—2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23.
4. We are transformed by participating in God's being to be constituted with the Triune God as gold, silver (pearl), and precious stones—1 Cor. 3:12; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2; Rev. 21:18-21.
5. We are conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God by participating in God's image to have the appearance of the New Jerusalem—Rom. 8:28-29; Rev. 21:11; 4:3.
6. We are glorified by participating in God's glory to be completely permeated with the glory of the New Jerusalem—Rom. 8:21; Phil. 3:21; Rev. 21:11.

III. To live out and work out the New Jerusalem is to live out and work out God's complete salvation according to the intrinsic essence and totality of the unique New Testament ministry, the ministry of the age, for the reality of the Body of Christ and a new revival—Phil. 1:19; 2:13; Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 4:11-12, 16:

- A. The ministry of the Spirit is the ministry of the new covenant to deify us by inscribing our hearts with the Spirit of the living God as the divine and mystical "ink," making us the living letters of Christ—this is the highest peak of the divine revelation—2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8, 18; 4:1; Isa. 42:6; 49:6; Psa. 45:1-2:
 1. By the ministry of the Spirit, we are "Christified" to become the city of life and the bride of Christ; thus, the Spirit as the consummated Triune God marries the bride as the transformed tripartite church to live a life that is the mingling of God and man as one spirit, a life that is superexcellent and that overflows with blessings and joy—Rom. 5:10; Rev. 2:7; 22:1-2, 17a.
 2. In order to be constituted the ministers of the new covenant for the building up of the Body of Christ, we must experience all the aspects of the all-inclusive Spirit in 2 Corinthians—the anointing Spirit, the sealing Spirit, the pledging Spirit (1:21-22; 5:5), the inscribing Spirit (3:3), the life-giving Spirit (v. 6), the ministering Spirit (v. 8), the freeing Spirit (v. 17), the transforming Spirit (v. 18), and the transmitting Spirit (13:14).
- B. The ministry of righteousness is the ministry of Christ as our objective righteousness for our justification and as our subjective righteousness "embroidered" into us by the transforming work of the Spirit for the living out and genuine expression of Christ—this is the God-man living—3:9; Psa. 45:13-14; Rom. 8:4; Psa. 23:3:
 1. By the ministry of righteousness, we receive Christ as our objective righteousness and enjoy Him as our subjective righteousness to become the New Jerusalem as the new creation of righteousness in the new heaven and new earth—1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9; 2 Pet. 3:13; cf. Isa. 33:22.
 2. Objective righteousness (Christ given to us) issues in grace (Christ enjoyed by us), and grace issues in subjective righteousness (Christ lived out of us)—Rom. 5:1-2, 17-18; Luke 15:22-23.
 3. The power of grace operates in us and produces subjective righteousness, making us right with God, with others, and even with ourselves; it not only subdues sin but also overcomes Satan, sin, and death in our being, causing us to reign in life—2 Tim. 2:1; Rom. 5:17, 21.
 4. The righteousness we receive for our justification is objective and enables us to meet the requirements of the righteous God, whereas the righteousnesses of the overcoming saints are subjective and enable them to meet the requirements of the overcoming Christ—Rev. 22:14; 19:7-8.
- C. The ministry of reconciliation is the ministry of reconciling the world to Christ through the forgiveness of sins for their judicial redemption and the reconciling of the believers to Christ that they might be persons who live in the spirit, in the Holy of Holies, for their organic salvation—this is shepherding people according to God—2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 Pet. 5:1-6; Heb. 13:20:

1. The Lord's present recovery is to bring us into the reality of Christ's pneumatic shepherding in Psalm 23 as the issue of His redeeming death and church-producing resurrection in Psalm 22 and as the accomplishing factor of His coming as the King to establish His kingdom in Psalm 24.
2. By the ministry of reconciliation, we are shepherded into God to enjoy Him as the springs of waters of life so that we may become the eternal Zion as the corporate Holy of Holies, the place where God is—Rev. 7:14, 17; 14:1; 21:16, 22; Psa. 20:2; 24:1, 3, 7-10; 48:2; 50:2; 87:2; 125:1; Ezek. 48:35b.
3. The ministry of reconciliation is the apostolic ministry in cooperation with Christ's heavenly ministry to shepherd the flock of God for building up the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem according to God's eternal economy—John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28-29; Rev. 1:12-13.

IV. The Lord's recovery brings us back to the unique ministry of the New Testament; this ministry (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:1) has the following characteristics:

- A. It ministers the healthy teaching of God's economy and wars the good warfare against the different and strange teachings of the dissenters with the strange fire of man's natural enthusiasm, natural affection, natural strength, and natural ability—1 Tim. 1:3-4, 18; Heb. 13:9; 2 Tim. 2:1-15; Lev. 10:1-11.
- B. It produces the local churches as the golden lampstands to be the testimony of Jesus with the same essence, appearance, and expression, and it builds up the one Body of Christ by the one Spirit, perfecting all of us into the oneness of the Triune God—Rev. 1:10-13, 20; John 17:23; Eph. 4:1-4, 11-13; Zech. 4:6.
- C. It prepares the overcomers to be Christ's bride, His "queen," in Himself as the "royal abode" and in the local churches as the "palaces of ivory" to consummate in the New Jerusalem as the "King's palace"; it betroths us to Christ, stirring up our love for Him in the simplicity and the purity toward Christ, to make us His queen—Psa. 45:1-15; Rev. 21:2, 9-10; 2 Cor. 11:2-3.
- D. It strengthens us to follow Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings on the pathway to glory, the way of the cross, for the manifestation and multiplication of life—John 12:24-26; Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 4:10-11, 16-18; 11:23-33.
- E. It dispenses Christ as grace, truth, life, and the Spirit into us for our revelation of Christ, our enjoyment of Christ, and our growth in life that we may be saved in life to reign in life—1:12, 24; Phil. 1:25; Rom. 5:10, 17.
- F. It sanctifies us through the word of the truth and the washing of the water in the word; it also shepherds us with the cherishing and nourishing presence of the pneumatic Christ—John 17:17; Eph. 5:26, 29-30; Rev. 1:12-13.
- G. It tears down hierarchy and blends us into one, making us all brothers of Christ, slaves of Christ, and members of Christ to be the one Body of Christ in reality; it also tears down the high places and exalts Christ alone to make Christ everything in the church—Matt. 23:8-12; 1 Cor. 12:24; Deut. 12:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:5; 10:3-5; Col. 3:10-11.
- H. It brings all of us into function to practice the God-ordained way and leads us to follow the Lamb wherever He may go for the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth—Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:11-12; Rev. 14:4; Matt. 24:14.
- I. It brings us into a new revival of living out the New Jerusalem and working out the New Jerusalem to gain the reality of the Body of Christ as the highest peak in God's economy—2 Cor. 3:6, 8-9; 5:18-20; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:4-6, 16.