

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 8, DECEMBER 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

In

THIS ISSUE

- 1 Letter from Living Stream Ministry Radio
- 1 What Is the Crucified Life?
- 2 Highlights from the Life-study of Isaiah
- 3 Letters from Listeners
- 4 The Path of Life—A Simple Way to Touch the Lord, Part 2

Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

AUGUSTA, GA

WGAC 580 AM
10:00 A.M. SUNDAY

CHAMPLAIN, NY/
MONTREAL, P.Q.

WCHP 760 AM
11:15 A.M. MONDAY-FRIDAY

FERNDAL, WA/
VANCOUVER, B.C.

KCCF 1550 AM
6:30 A.M. MONDAY-FRIDAY
12:00 P.M. MON-FRI, SAT&SUN

SAN ANTONIO, TX

KSLR 630 AM
1:00 P.M. MONDAY-FRIDAY

Dear Listeners,

We hope you have been enjoying *Life-study of Isaiah*. We can see our wonderful Christ and His work throughout every book of the Bible, but in Isaiah we see Christ in a particular way. Not only do we see Christ from His incarnation to the new heaven and new earth in the New Testament, but we see this picture in Isaiah as well. Isaiah shows Christ as God incarnated in humanity to be the Savior of man, the restoration of the God-created, but fallen, universe, and the consummation of the new heaven and new earth for eternity. To develop further this thought of the consummation of the universe, we will dedicate next month's "What Is" article to the New Jerusalem.

As we go through the book of Isaiah, we see, on the one hand, God's chastisement in His love for His people, and on the other hand, His judgment on the nations for the fulfillment of His righteousness. God's chastisement of His people matures them and brings them onward to His ultimate goal of the New Jerusalem; God's judgment of the nations preserves His righteousness.

The message of the cross, the termination of the fallen creation, is prevalent in Isaiah's writing. We want to highlight this matter in this issue of *The Hearing of Faith* by discussing "What Is the Crucified Life?" Since the subject of Isaiah is Jehovah's salvation through the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, ascended, and coming Christ, we want to see how His salvation practically applies to us today. Thank you for being with us and considering this matter according to His Word and in His presence.

Living Stream Ministry Radio

WHAT IS THE CRUCIFIED LIFE?

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." Matthew 16:24

"To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." Philippians 3:10

To deny our self is to forfeit our soul-life, our natural life. The cross is not merely a suffering; it is also a killing. . . . Christ first bore the cross and then was crucified. We, His believers, first were crucified with Him and now bear the cross. To us, to bear the cross is to remain under the killing of the death of Christ for the terminating of our self, our natural life, and our old man. In so doing we deny our self that we may follow the Lord. (Footnotes 24¹ and 24³ of Matthew 16, New Testament Recovery Version)

(continued on page 2)

CRUCIFIED LIFE

(continued from page 1)

[To be conformed to Christ's death is] to take Christ's death as the mold of one's life. Paul lived a crucified life continually, a life under the cross, just as Christ did in His human living. Through such a life the resurrection power of Christ is experienced and expressed. The mold of Christ's death refers to Christ's experience of continually putting to death His human life that He might live by the life of God (John 6:57). Our life should be conformed to such a mold by our dying to our human life to live the divine life. Being conformed to the death of Christ is the condition for knowing and experiencing Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. (Footnote 10⁴ of Philippians 3, New Testament Recovery Version)

In every situation related to our daily living, we need to ask ourselves whether we are living by the divine life or by our natural life. If we do this, quite often we will realize that we are living by our natural life, our self. At such times we need to go to the cross (Luke 9:23). To go to the cross is to be conformed to the death of Christ. Even while eating our meals we need to be conformed to the death of Christ. At times we may be tempted to complain about the kind or quantity of food that we are given to eat. However, to complain is to live by the self, not by God's life. . . . We are those who have been saved, regenerated, and separated to live not by our natural life but by the divine life. It is not a matter of whether we are doing something right or wrong; that is not the issue. The issue is, by what life are we doing it, by our natural life or by the divine life? To deny our natural life is a suffering to us. Every day and in every matter we struggle and fight with others to get what we desire. We like to do things by ourselves. To do something not by our life but by the life of another is a suffering. This is the Christian life. (*The Christian Life*, by Witness Lee, p. 173)

For further reading on this subject, please see *The Christian Life and The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man*, published by Living Stream Ministry.

Highlights

FROM THE LIFE-STUDY OF ISAIAH

"On that day the Shoot of Jehovah will be beauty and glory, and the Fruit of the earth, excellence and splendor, to those of Israel who have escaped." Isaiah 4:2

CHRIST AS THE SHOOT OF JEHOVAH

According to [Isaiah] 4:2, Christ is first the Shoot of Jehovah. The term *the Shoot of Jehovah*, which refers to Christ's deity, denotes the riches and the refreshing of life. A shoot out of any plant indicates that the life of that plant is vigorous, growing, and productive. The principle is the same with Christ as the Shoot of Jehovah. As such a Shoot, He embodies the riches, the refreshing, the vigor, the growth, and the productive power of the divine life.

CHRIST AS THE FRUIT OF THE EARTH

The term *the Fruit of the earth*, which refers to Christ's humanity and indicates that He grew up out of the earth, denotes the produce brought forth, carried out, and expressed in Christ's humanity. Of course, in order for this reproduction to take place, there must be the divine life. However, humanity is also needed. Suppose our Lord did not become a man through incarnation but remained simply in His divinity. What could have been produced out of Him as a fruit? The answer is that there could not have been any fruit. I would emphasize the fact that all of Christ's different kinds of fruits come out of the divine life, which is signified by the Shoot of Jehovah. But without Christ's humanity, it would have been impossible for the divine life to be productive in bringing forth fruit. The four Gospels show us that all the fruit born by Christ came out of the divine life, but it was produced in Christ's humanity. Therefore, the Shoot of Jehovah denotes the divine life in its riches, and the Fruit of the earth denotes the fruit produced by this life in humanity.

GOD AND MAN LIVING TOGETHER

For Christ to be both the Shoot of Jehovah and the Fruit of the earth indicates that He is the God-man. In Him God and man live together as one. The New Testament is a revelation of this very thing: it shows us God and man living together, with God as the life inwardly and man as the fruit outwardly.

As believers in Christ today, we need both the divine life and the human life. If we do not have the divine life, we do not have life. But if we do not have the proper human life to match the divine life, we will have no fruit. The New Testament reveals that, as those chosen and predestinated by God, we need to have the divine life expressed in our human living. If we have this, then in our experience we will have Christ both as the Shoot of Jehovah and as the Fruit of the earth.

Life-study of Isaiah, by Witness Lee, Msg. 5, pp. 32-33