

The HEARING OF Faith

LIVING STREAM MINISTRY RADIO NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 20, DECEMBER 1999

"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 New Covenant? Part 2
- 2 Footnotes from Matthew Chapter 1
- 3 Response from Listeners
- 4 The Path of Life—The Way to Deal with the Self

Life-Study of the Bible

W E L C O M E S

PHILADELPHIA, PA
WWDB 860 AM
4:00 P.M. MON-FRI

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK
KTOK 1000 AM
9:00 A.M. SUNDAY

LONDON, ENGLAND
PREMIER CHRISTIAN RADIO
1305 AM, 1332 AM, & 1413 AM
3:30 P.M. SAT & SUN

Dear Life-study Listener,

This is the last issue of *The Hearing of Faith* for this century. To end the twentieth century and begin the twenty-first, we pray the Lord would grant us to be unloaded from the old things so we can receive all the new things He has for us. As we turn the corner into a new millennium, we are reminded of the Lord's word to us in Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens." The footnote in the New Testament Recovery Version says, "To be poor in spirit is not only to be humble but also to be emptied in our spirit, in the depth of our being, not holding on to the things of the old dispensation but unloaded to receive the new things, the things of the kingdom of the heavens." May we all be those who are truly poor in spirit.

There are incredible riches from the Word in *Life-study of Matthew*. We will begin our broadcasts from this book on December 6. We believe it is not a coincidence, but the Lord's sovereign arrangement, that we are covering Matthew with its particular focus on the kingdom of the heavens at such a momentous time in history.

To whet your appetite for the riches in Matthew, we are including in this issue of *The Hearing of Faith* two footnotes from Matthew chapter one in the New Testament Recovery Version. Because the footnotes are especially helpful in understanding the book of Matthew, we have enclosed an order form for the New Testament Recovery Version. If you don't have one yet, we encourage you to order one to help you follow along as we survey the wonderful scenery in *Life-study of Matthew*.

Living Stream Ministry Radio

WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT? PART 2

We have seen that the new covenant enacted in the blood of the Lord Jesus is actually now a testament and a will, containing numerous bequests for our experience and enjoyment of Christ that we may carry out God's New Testament economy. We need to go on to see the contents of this new covenant, this new testament.

The first item of the contents of the new testament, and perhaps the most important, is the imparting of God's laws into the inward parts of our being. Hebrews 8:10, quoting Jeremiah 31, tells us that God will put His laws into us and write them upon us. These laws are not a series of commandments for us to keep. On the contrary, these laws are various aspects of what the Bible calls the law of life, the automatic and spontaneous function of the divine life imparted to our spirit through regeneration (Rom. 8:2). In His covenant, His testament, God has bequeathed to us the law of life, the function of the divine life. As this unique law spreads throughout our inner being, it becomes many laws. The particular goal of the function of this law, which becomes many laws, is that we are conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29).

(continued on page 2)

NEW COVENANT

(continued from page 1)

The second item of the contents of the new covenant is that we have God as our God, and we become God's people (Heb. 8:10). This is not merely to believe in God and belong to God in an objective way. Rather, this is to have God imparted into us, to live in us, and be expressed through us. In this way God becomes our God, the God we enjoy, experience, and live. Also, we become God's people, not simply in the sense of belonging to Him through redemption, but also in the sense of having God constituted into us to become His corporate expression.

Third, through the divine life and through the law of the divine life, we have the capacity to know God inwardly and subjectively (Heb. 8:11). This is why the Scripture says that we will not need someone to teach us outwardly, and neither will we teach others outwardly to know the Lord. Rather, the Bible says, "All will know me from the little one to the great one among them." In this context, to know the Lord is not to know Him in an objective, theological way; it is to know Him inwardly, personally, experientially, and intimately.

The fourth item is a marvelous bequest concerning the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 8:12). We might be inclined to list this item as the first. God, however, caring primarily for His economy and secondarily for our fallen condition, placed this item last. But it is most precious. God has bequeathed to us in His covenant a deep assurance concerning the forgiveness of sins. God says that our sins and iniquities He will by no means remember any more. What a marvelous forgiveness this is! This is a divine forgiveness with a divine forgetfulness. God forgives us to the extent that our history of sins is obliterated, and God has no remembrance of them. We are thoroughly and absolutely forgiven.

Since this is our situation, we should enjoy the spreading of the law of life within us. We should enjoy God and become His people. And we should enjoy the inward capacity in the divine life to know Him personally and experientially. These are the contents of the new covenant and they are great indeed. These contents are worthy of our praise and of our opening to the Lord that we may thoroughly experience them for God's economy.

For further reading on this subject, please see Life-study of Hebrews, messages 63-69; Life-study of Jeremiah, messages 25-26; and The New Covenant, published by Living Stream Ministry.

FOOTNOTES FROM

Matthew

CHAPTER ONE

MATTHEW:
THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM —
PROVING THAT CHRIST IS THE KING-SAVIOR

Matthew 1:1—The book of the generation of ¹Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

¹ The first name and the last name (Rev. 22:21) in the New Testament is Jesus, proving that Jesus Christ is the subject and content of the New Testament.

The Bible is a book of life, and this life is a living person, the wonderful and all-inclusive Christ. The Old Testament gives a portrait, in types and prophecies, of this wonderful person as the Coming One. Now, in the New Testament, this wonderful person has come. The first page of the New Testament, in recommending this wonderful person to us, gives us His genealogy. This genealogy can be considered an abstract of the Old Testament, which in itself is the detailed genealogy of Christ. To understand the genealogy in Matthew, we need to trace the origin and history of every incident.

Christ, as the wonderful center of the entire Bible, is all-inclusive, having many aspects. The New Testament at its beginning presents four biographies to portray the four main aspects of this all-inclusive Christ. The Gospel of Matthew testifies that He is the King, the Christ of God prophesied in the Old Testament, who brings the kingdom of the heavens to the earth. The Gospel of Mark tells us that He is the Servant of God, laboring for God faithfully. Mark's account is most simple, for a servant does not warrant a detailed record. The Gospel of Luke presents a full picture of Him as the only proper and normal man who ever lived on this earth; as such a man, He is the Savior of mankind. The Gospel of John unveils Him as the Son of God, the very God Himself, who is life to God's people. Among the four Gospels, Matthew and Luke have a record of genealogy; Mark and John do not. To testify that Jesus is the King, the Christ of God prophesied in the Old Testament, Matthew needs to show us the antecedents and status of this King, to prove that He is the proper successor to the throne of David. To prove that Jesus is a proper and normal man, Luke needs to show the generations of this man, to attest that He is qualified to be the Savior of mankind. For the record of a servant, Mark does not need to tell us His origin. To unveil that Jesus is the very God, neither does John need to give us His human genealogy; rather, he declares that, as the Word of God, He is the very God in the beginning.

The kingdom, of which Christ is the King, is composed of Abraham's descendants, including both his descendants in the flesh and those in faith. Hence, the genealogy of Christ in Matthew begins with Abraham, the father of the called race, not with Adam, the father of the created race. God's kingdom is not built with the created race of Adam but with the called race of Abraham, which includes both the real Israelites (Rom. 9: 6-8) and the believers in Christ (Gal. 3:7, 9, 29). To prove by relating His genealogy that Jesus is a proper man qualified to be the Savior of mankind, Luke traces His genealogy back to Adam, the first generation of mankind.

Matthew 1:5—And Salmon begot Boaz of ¹Rahab, and Boaz begot Obed of Ruth, and Obed begot Jesse.

¹ Rahab was a prostitute in Jericho (Josh. 2:1), a place cursed by God for eternity (Josh. 6:26). After she turned to God and God's people (Josh. 6:22-23, 25; Heb. 11:31) and married Salmon, a leader of Judah, the leading tribe (1 Chron. 2:10-11), she brought forth Boaz, a godly man, out of whom Christ came. Regardless of our background, if we turn to God and His people and are joined to the proper person among God's people, we will bring forth proper fruit and participate in the enjoyment of the birthright of Christ.

The verses and footnotes above are from the New Testament Recovery Version, published by Living Stream Ministry.