

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

T H I S
I S S U E

- 1 LETTER FROM LIVING STREAM MINISTRY
- 1 WHAT IS THE MINISTRY?
- 2 HIGHLIGHTS FROM LIFE-STUDY OF JUDE
- 4 THE PATH OF LIFE—THE WAY THE LORD WORKS WITHIN US

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current ministry, please go to
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Dear Life-study Listener,

Next month we start the life-studies of First and Second Peter and Jude. Peter's writings include several unique revelations in the Holy Scriptures. For example, 2 Peter 1:4 says, "Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust." No other writer in the New Testament gives such a clear word about our partaking of the divine nature. So order your copy of the life-study of the Epistles of Peter, and then you will be able to follow along with our broadcasts.

We talk much about the New Testament ministry on the radio and in our writings, but what is the ministry? In this issue we have taken an excerpt from *The Ministry of the New Testament and the Teaching and Fellowship of the Apostles* to help answer that question. Acts 26:16 says, "But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you." The Recovery Version footnote says, "The ministry is related mainly to the work, to what a minister does; a testimony is related to the person, to what a witness is." May the Lord make us all a minister and a witness!

Living Stream Ministry

WHAT IS THE MINISTRY?

No other portion in the Bible shows us the matter of the ministry more clearly than 2 Corinthians 3 and 4. First, in these chapters Paul touches the matter of the ministry based upon God's covenants, the new covenant and the old covenant. Without God's covenant, there is no possibility to have any ministry. A ministry is to carry out what God has covenanted with His

(continued on page 3)

THE MINISTRY (continued from page 1)

people. Without God's covenant, we do not have any work to do. Without God's covenant, whatever we may do cannot be considered a ministry. The ministry is just the service that we render to God to carry out God's covenant. Whatever we may do to carry out our own preference or desires is not a

*There is one new
covenant ministry
of many new
covenant ministers.*

ministry of God but is merely a human work....

The unique ministry of the New Testament comprises all the works (ministries) of all the apostles, the ministers of the new covenant. In 2 Corinthians 3 the plural *ministers* is used clearly in verse 6, and the singular *ministry* is used in verses 8 and 9. Then, in the first verse of chapter four Paul said, "Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart." Here Paul used the plural pronoun *we*. He did not say that he (singular) had this ministry; rather, he said that we (plural) have this ministry (singular). *We* here includes not only Paul but all the New Testament ministers. All this indicates that there is one new covenant ministry of many new covenant ministers.

The first of the new covenant ministers were the twelve apostles. In Acts 1:17 and 25 Peter used the term *this ministry*. That ministry was the ministry of the twelve apostles, who were the first twelve New Testament ministers. The ministry is the service, the work, and the ministers are the persons who serve. The persons who serve

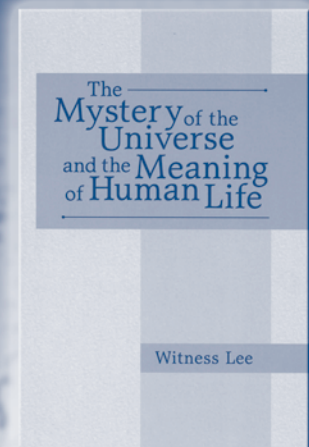
are many. After the twelve apostles, many ministers, including Paul, Barnabas, and many others, entered into the ministry. Although the ministers were many, all these many ministers had only one ministry.

In 2 Corinthians 4:1 Paul used the pronoun *we*, referring to many ministers. Then in 2 Timothy 4:5 Paul charged Timothy to fully accomplish his ministry. In this verse Paul spoke of Timothy's ministry, referring to an individual's ministry. This was Timothy's personal ministry, but this personal ministry was a part of the corporate ministry, "this ministry," the unique ministry of the New Testament. The ministry in 2 Corinthians 4:1 is the corporate ministry of all the New Testament ministers. In this corporate ministry Paul had his portion, Peter had his portion, and Timothy had his portion. All the ministers have their own portion of the ministry. When we add all the portions together, we have "this ministry," which is the New Testament ministry.

The work of the New Testament ministry is to accomplish God's New Testament economy concerning the church (Eph. 3:9-10) in the building up of the Body of Christ. Ephesians 4:12 says that all the saints need to be perfected "unto the work of the ministry." This means that hundreds and even thousands of saints can be perfected unto the work of the ministry. In this verse the term *the ministry* is used. No doubt this refers to the unique ministry of the New Testament to carry out God's eternal purpose, which is contained in the new covenant.

The Ministry of the New Testament and the Teaching and Fellowship of the Apostles, pp. 8-11, by Witness Lee

THE MYSTERY OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE MEANING OF HUMAN LIFE



by Witness Lee
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*But there is a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty
gives them understanding
(Job 32:8)*

"WHEN WE LOOK AT HEAVEN, EARTH, AND OURSELVES, WE CANNOT EXPLAIN THEM. After all, what is heaven, what is earth, and what are human beings? Many astronomers and geologists, and some anthropologists as well, have spent much time on these questions yet have not been able to find the answers. We have to come back to the Bible to look at these questions" (p. 10).

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