

THE CHURCH IN BOSTON PERFECTING TRAINING

GROWING IN LIFE

Session Five

Bible Reading (2)

Scripture Reading: Matt. 28:19; Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:16;
Eph. 1:17; Acts 26:19; 1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9

I. Ascertaining the facts:

- A. The facts require our prayerful reading and careful study; they are primarily ascertained by means of a trained and sober mind.
- B. Ascertaining the facts depends upon our ability and training to understand the text.
- C. The more we are equipped to understand the text, the better we will be at ascertaining the facts.
- D. We should be careful never to confuse ascertaining the facts with receiving the revelations or with seeing the visions:
 - 1. We should not be satisfied with merely ascertaining the facts.
 - 2. We ascertain the facts in order to receive the revelations and ultimately to see the visions in the Scriptures.

II. Receiving the revelations:

- A. The revelations related to the spiritual significance of the Scriptures are to be received from the Lord through His Spirit in our regenerated spirit.
- B. Receiving the revelations depends upon the Lord Spirit's unveiling the spiritual significance in the Scriptures.
- C. While the revelations are given through the Lord's Spirit, we, for our part, need to exercise our regenerated spirit to contact the Lord through pray-reading.

III. Seeing the visions:

- A. The visions are mostly concerning God's move and hence involve God's economy.
- B. Seeing the visions depends upon the divine light and our spiritual sight.
 - 1. The divine light must shine on the revelation we receive so that the revelation may become a vision to us.
 - 2. We must contact the Lord in our spirit and review with Him again and again the divine revelation we have received.
 - 3. We must also have the spiritual sight to see the visions; this spiritual ability to see the visions is something within us but given by the Lord and perfected through our exercise.

Ministry Excerpts:

THE TRIUNE GOD

The Triune God Being the Source of the Divine Revelation

The Triune God is the source of the divine revelation. With Him there is no beginning, but He is the beginning of all things. The Triune God is self-existing and ever-existing.

Revealed as the Triune God in the Divine Revelation throughout the Entire Scriptures

This self-existing and ever-existing God is revealed as the Triune God. This was a great discovery of the church fathers. Although the Bible does not use the word triune, the church fathers saw the fact that God is triune in the divine revelation throughout the entire Scriptures. In Matthew 28:19 the Lord Jesus said, "Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." After the Lord's speaking in many books, from Genesis to Matthew, He suddenly spoke of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If we had been there, we would have been shocked. We might have asked, "Lord, I never heard about these three. Who is the Father? Who is the Son? Who is the Spirit?" They are the composition of the Triune God. God is triune; He is three, yet one.

The first verse of Genesis says that in the beginning God created. The word for God here is in the plural. Then in Genesis 1:26 God said something to Himself. He said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." At the end of chapter 3 God said, "The man has become like one of Us" (v. 22). The word Us shows that God is plural. He is one but three; He is triune. The Lord told us at the end of Matthew that we are to baptize people into the name (singular) of the three (plural). There is one name for the Triune God.

THE TRIUNE GOD'S WORD

This Triune God is so great and purposeful. He has His purpose and His desire. According to His desire, He made a plan, an eternal economy. In the New Testament, especially in the Epistles of Paul, this economy is strongly stressed. Paul in 1 Timothy 1:3-4 told Timothy to charge certain ones not to teach different things but only the economy of God. There is an economy of God in the universe. In order to carry out His economy, God has to speak.

The Speaking God

The Triune God is a speaking God (Heb. 1:1-2). What if there were no speaking of God in the universe? If God had not spoken, we would not exist. The Bible says that every created thing came

out of the word of God. In Hebrews 1:1-2 Paul says that our God is a speaking God. He spoke through the prophets in different ways, and now He is still speaking through His Son. His Son, Jesus Christ, is the Word of God. When someone is ministering the word of God in the Spirit, apparently it is he who is speaking, but actually it is Christ, the Son of God, speaking. This minister of the word is nothing, but out of his lips something comes from One who is everything. God is still speaking today.

The Triune God's Speaking Becoming His Written Word—the Holy Scriptures

Second Timothy 3:16 says that all Scripture is God's breathing. God is breathing, exhaling. His spoken word was taken down to be the written word, which is the Holy Scriptures. God's word was not only spoken but also written. Thank God that for nearly twenty centuries this spoken and written word has also been interpreted, taught, to God's people.

THE TRIUNE GOD'S REVELATION

The Triune God's Word Containing and Conveying His Divine Revelation

Outside of the Holy Scriptures, there is no further revelation of God. God's revelation, from the beginning to the end, is contained in His Word and conveyed to us through His Word. If you are going to have God's revelation, you have to come to the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. Thus, the end of the book of Revelation warns us not to add anything or cut off anything from the words of God (22:18-19). This is blasphemy, a big sin. The Holy Scriptures have been completed. The Mormons' founder, Joseph Smith, claimed that he received some revelation in addition to the Bible. That is demonic. Anyone who claims to have a revelation other than the Bible's revelation is blasphemous to God.

Through His Spirit

The word of God becomes the revelation of God through His Spirit (Eph. 1:17). The Bible has been printed in many different languages. The content is the same to everyone, but how can we receive revelation from the Bible? A late Chinese philosopher who was an ambassador to the United States read the Bible, but he received only the letter of the written word. Many Christians have done the same thing. This is wrong.

When we come to the Bible, we have to prepare ourselves. We are getting ourselves prepared to read the Word of God, not a newspaper or any secular book. First, we should come to God, saying, "God, I am sinful; forgive me. I am mistaken; forgive me. I do not love You; forgive me. Even I do not fear You; forgive me." We have to make a thorough confession of our sins. Then right away we enter into fellowship with God, and that fellowship is nothing less than God the Spirit. God's fellowship is God's Spirit. When we are in the Spirit of God, we are in fellowship with God. When we are outside the Spirit of God, we are not in the fellowship.

We must confess all our sins to make ourselves pure and clean, without any hindering thing between us and God. Then we are in God's fellowship. At that time we are in the Spirit of God, and when we come to the Bible, it is different. This is what we have learned—to study the Bible in the Spirit, in God's fellowship.

Then we have to pray-read, not just read, the Word. As we read Genesis 1:1, we should pray, "God, thank You. In the beginning You created the heavens. O created the heavens! Created the heavens!" Learn to pray-read. Throughout the centuries all the devoted lovers of the Lord and students of the Bible practiced pray-reading in fact, though they did not have the term pray-reading. Some in the past pointed out that we have to read the Bible prayerfully. To read the Bible prayerfully is to pray-read.

We teach the practice of pray-reading based upon Ephesians 6:17-18. We receive the word of God by means of all prayer, by different prayers—by shouting, by quietness, by singing, etc. I cannot tell you the tremendous amount of benefit I have received from pray-reading. In Ephesians 3 Paul says, "I bow my knees unto the Father...that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, that Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith...that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God" (vv. 14-19). When I read these verses long ago, I could understand only a little. Eventually, I realized that Christ's making His home in our hearts is His building. Without building, how could there be a home? The only way through which I could get the help to understand these verses was by pray-reading them. There is much truth concerning these verses in the Life-study of Ephesians, and today I can give many more messages on them. A lot of verses in the Bible are beyond our understanding. We must pray-read the Word in order to enter into their spiritual significance.

When we pray-read the Word, the Spirit gives us the revelation (1:17). Through our reading the Word prayerfully, the Spirit makes the word a revelation.

THE TRIUNE GOD'S VISION

Now we need to see how the Triune God's vision can come to us.

By the Divine Light Shining over the Divine Revelation

When the divine light shines over the divine revelation, the divine revelation becomes the divine vision (Acts 26:19). A vision is a view whereby we may see something. If a person's eyes are covered by a thick veil, there may be some wonderful scenery in front of him, but he is not able to see it. He cannot see because he has no vision, but when the veil is taken away, he can see.

Many Christians read the Bible with a veil. This is why Paul says that we should look unto Christ with an unveiled face (2 Cor. 3:18). In 2 Corinthians 3 Paul says that when the sons of Israel read the books of Moses, they have a veil upon them and see nothing (vv. 13-15). Paul then says that

whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away and that wherever the Spirit is, there is freedom (vv. 16-17). This means that when we are veiled, we are bound; we are imprisoned; we do not have freedom. When the veil is gone, we are released. This freedom comes from the Spirit of God. It is by the Spirit of God that we look unto the Lord with an unveiled face to be transformed into His image through the Lord Spirit.

We need to learn to come to the Bible every day by coming to God. We should confess our sins to make a clear situation so that we can have fellowship with God in the Spirit. Then we should read His Word by pray-reading. Every day we will receive revelation; the Spirit will also shine over the revelation, and we will receive a vision. There is a progression from the Word to revelation and from revelation to vision.

**The Spirit of Revelation
Giving Us the Sight to See the Vision
and Understand It with His Wisdom**

In Ephesians 1:17 Paul asked the Lord to grant us a spirit of wisdom and revelation. When the Spirit shines over the revelation, the vision is here. Without the light we cannot receive the vision, even if the veil is taken away. The veil should be gone, and the light should come. Furthermore, we need the sight. If we are blind, we will not be able to see anything, even if the veil is removed and the light is here. We need the revelation, the light, the vision through the light, and the sight. Then the veil is gone, the vision is here, and we have the light with the sight. We also have the understanding of the vision through the Spirit's wisdom.

THE TRIUNE GOD'S MOVE

**The Triune God Moving in His Divine Revelation
and according to His Divine Revelation**

God moves all the time in and according to His divine revelation. In the age of Noah, God told Noah to build an ark to save him and his family. Noah spent his days working on that ark. No doubt, at that time there were many who mocked what Noah was doing (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3-6). Noah could have told them, "God told me that the whole earth will be flooded, so we need an ark to save us." The people would not believe him. Eventually, only eight members of Noah's family entered into the ark. All the others were destroyed by the flood. In Noah's age the move of God was to make an ark according to God's revelation.

Then at Abraham's time God told him to come out of his father's land and immigrate to the good land. God's word was for Abraham to stay in the good land, which would be his inheritance. At Moses' time God revealed to him that he should bring the law of God to God's people and build up the tabernacle. These are examples in the Old Testament of the Triune God moving in and according to His divine revelation.

Now consider the New Testament. Peter was a fisherman whom the Lord called and attracted. Then the Lord gradually gave him revelation so that he came to know what the Lord would do in the New Testament age. It was the same with the apostle Paul. What the Lord wants to do in the New Testament age is to save many sinners who were chosen by God to be the members of Christ, to have the church built, and to have the Body of Christ produced from the building up of the churches. This Body of Christ will consummate in the New Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem will be God's eternal enlargement, expansion, and expression forever. This is the revelation of the entire New Testament.

Today we are at the end of the New Testament age. We should do what God is doing according to His revelation. He is moving and working in His revelation. This is why we have to know the Bible. Millions of Christians read the Bible, but they do not have the revelation or the vision. They do not know what God is doing today, so they establish things that are not in and according to the revelation of God. Thus, what they are doing is not in the move of God. Today we thank the Lord that we have seen the vision of God's revelation, and we know how God is moving. We must be in His move.

For the Accomplishment of His Eternal Economy

The Triune God's move is for the accomplishment of His eternal economy (1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9).

The Triune God's Revelation and His Move, CWWL, 1994–1997, vol. 3, Ch. 1