

## Topic Three

### **THE HOLY BIBLE RECOVERY VERSION**

#### **Workshop on Studying the Holy Bible Recovery Version (English) Using the Cross References, Footnotes, and Life-study Messages**

##### **SECTION 1: KNOWING THE HOLY BIBLE RECOVERY VERSION:**

- A. From the “Introduction” to the Holy Bible Recovery Version:
1. The publication of the Recovery Version of the Holy Bible with accompanying outlines, footnotes, and marginal cross-references culminates nearly three decades of labor on God’s holy Word.
  2. This work followed the ongoing life-study of the Bible, which Witness Lee commenced in April 1974 with simultaneous studies of Genesis and Matthew and concluded in 1995 with a study of the Song of Songs.
  3. This complete study is published in the seventeen volumes of the Life-study of the New Testament and the fifteen volumes of the Life-study of the Old Testament. In anticipation of the life-study of each book of the Bible, a new translation from Greek or Hebrew was produced.
  4. In addition, for the books of the New Testament, Witness Lee wrote extensive footnotes and provided outlines and cross-references.
  5. In 1991, after extensive revision, augmentation, and improvement, the Recovery Version of the New Testament was published. In 1994, before the life-study of the Old Testament was completed, Witness Lee asked the editorial section of the Living Stream Ministry to undertake a revision of the translation of the Old Testament and to compile footnotes from his published life-study and provide a body of marginal cross-references for the Old Testament. This work was in progress when Witness Lee went to be with the Lord on June 9, 1997.
  6. The revised text of the Old Testament along with the text of the New Testament was published in one volume in 1999. This text-only edition included the extensive outlines of every book of the Bible that were either written directly by Witness Lee or taken from his published life-study.
- B. The following is Brother Lee’s brief explanation that prefaced the Recovery Version of the New Testament. It was included in the “Introduction” to the Holy Bible:

##### **A BRIEF EXPLANATION**

Throughout the centuries, translations of the Bible have steadily improved. In general, each new translation inherits from previous ones and opens the way for later ones. While a new translation derives help from its predecessors, it should go further. The Recovery Version of the New Testament, following the precedent set by the major authoritative English versions and taking these versions as reference, not only incorporates lessons learned from an examination of others’ practices but also attempts to avoid biases and inaccurate judgments. This version, frequently guided by other versions, attempts to provide the best utterance for the revelation in the divine Word, that it may be expressed in the English language with the greatest accuracy.

Translating the Bible depends not only on an adequate comprehension of the original language but also on a proper understanding of the divine revelation in the

holy Word. Throughout the centuries the understanding of the divine revelation possessed by the saints has always been based upon the light they received, and this understanding has progressed steadily. The consummation of this understanding forms the basis of this translation and its footnotes. Hence, this translation and the accompanying footnotes could be called the “crystallization” of the understanding of the divine revelation which the saints everywhere have attained to in the past two thousand years. It is our hope that the Recovery Version will carry on the heritage that it has received and will pave the way for future generations.

As with any New Testament translation, the determination of the original Greek text, based upon the available manuscripts, forms the basis for the text of the Recovery Version of the New Testament. The Recovery Version follows, for the most part, the Nestle-Aland Greek text as found in *Novum Testamentum Graece* (26th edition). However, in determining the original form of any verse, the translators of the Recovery Version gave careful consideration to the larger context of chapter and book and to similar portions of the New Testament. The most recently discovered manuscripts or the manuscripts of oldest date are not necessarily the most accurate or reliable; hence, the determination of the text for this version was based largely upon the principle stated above. Departures from the Nestle-Aland text are sometimes indicated in the footnotes. Italicized words in the verses indicate supplied words, not found in the Greek text. Quotation marks are used to indicate close quotation from the Old Testament.

The Recovery Version embodies extensive research into the meaning of the original text and attempts to express this meaning with English that is to the point, easy to understand, and readable. In those places where it is difficult to express the exact meaning of the original Greek, explanatory footnotes have been supplied.

The subject provided at the beginning of each book and the outline of each book take the historical facts as their base and express the spiritual meaning in each book. The footnotes stress the revelation of the truth, the spiritual light, and the supply of life more than history, geography, and persons. The cross-references lead not only to other verses with the same expressions and facts but also to other matters related to the spiritual revelation in the divine Word.

Witness Lee and  
the editorial section  
August 1, 1991  
Anaheim, California

C. The following is the concluding portion of the “Introduction” in the Holy Bible Recovery Version:

The reader will quickly note the use of the name Jehovah in this translation. In spite of the historical linguistic arguments against its use, no other rendering of the Tetragrammaton has the same heritage that Jehovah has in classic English literature. While our forebears in translation, based on a faulty understanding of the Hebrew vowel pointing, might have mistakenly transliterated the divine name, their great influence has firmly embedded the name Jehovah into the English language, as evidenced by its inclusion in our modern dictionaries. Our employing of the name Jehovah is motivated not by linguistic considerations but by a recognition of the heritage of the English language and, more importantly, by a desire to be true to our convictions as translators that the name of God, revealed and delivered to His saints

(Exo. 3:16; 20:7), should be deliberately rendered in the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Deference to ancient religion and confusion from modern sectarians are no reasons to shrink back from the use and enjoyment of God's personal and revealed name.

With these words of introduction we put forward this Recovery Version of the Holy Bible and pray earnestly that through it the Holy Spirit will shine in the hearts of all its readers "to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

The editorial section  
August 1, 2003  
Anaheim, California

## **SECTION 2: EXPLORING AND USING THE RECOVERY VERSION BIBLE:**

Please use your copy and review the features of the Recovery Version:

1. Table of Content
2. Instructions for the Digital Version
3. Biblical Text:
  - a. Accurate
  - b. Modern
  - c. Faithful
4. Historical Introduction:
  - a. Authorship
  - b. Time of Writing
  - c. Place of Writing
  - d. Time Period Covered
5. Subject of each book
6. Outline
7. Cross References
8. Footnotes
9. Charts and Maps:
  - a. The Ancient Near East in Old Testament Times
  - b. Israel in Old Testament Times
  - c. The Holy Land in New Testament Times
  - d. The Journeys of Paul
  - e. God's New Testament Economy
  - f. The Seventy Weeks and the Coming of Christ, with the Rapture of the Saints

### **SECTION 3: A SEVEN-STEP STUDY OF A VERSE USING THE HOLY BIBLE RECOVERY VERSION**

The following is an example of how to use the Recovery Version with all the study tools to know the truth and to apply the truth with a goal to compose a prophecy for the building up of the church in the church meetings. This exercise in principle can be used to dive into any verse or passage from the Bible.

#### **Step 1: Praying Over the Word of God to Open Your Heart:**

Pray-read and recite these verses. Exercise to focus on the word and to pray. Try NOT to read footnotes while pray-reading; rather, enter into each word that is prayed by those in your group

First Peter 2:2-3 says, “As newborn babes, long for the guileless milk of the word in order that by it you may grow unto salvation, if you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

#### **Step 2: Studying the Footnotes to Deepen Your Understanding:**

1. First Peter 2:2<sup>1</sup> *newborn* – Footnote 1
2. First Peter 2:2<sup>2</sup> *guileless* – Footnote 2
3. First Peter 2:2<sup>3</sup> *of the word* – Footnote 3
4. First Peter 2:2<sup>4</sup> *unto* – Footnote 4

#### **Step 3: Studying the Cross References to Broaden Your Scope**

First Peter 2:2<sup>a</sup> *babes* – Heb. 5:13; 1 Cor. 3:1

Compare Peter’s use of the phrase *newborn babes* and Paul’s use of the word *infants*. What is the common thought of both Peter and Paul when comparing these verses?

What is the common goal of the growth in life seen in the context of both Peter and Paul’s letters?

First Peter 2:2<sup>b</sup> *milk* – 1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12-13; Isa. 55:1; 28:9

Consider how these verses reveal the true nature of the word of God.

Look at Heb. 5:13<sup>a</sup> and the cross reference on *word*. Notice the “c.f.” before the list of references. Read each reference, comparing the use and function of the word in each respective reference, and confer with your group.

After the cross references notice “See note 13<sup>1</sup>.” Now go to this footnote and read it to get a better understanding of the divine thought revealed in the foregoing cross references.

#### **Step 4: Muse Upon, Fellowship, and Consider the Word for Your Experience**

Please review the following questions and try to speak the answers:

1. How can the study of the word become the milk for your soul?
2. What will be the end result of the word becoming milk to your soul?
3. How does this verse reveal the central revelation of the Bible?

How does the study of this verse with the cross references and footnotes apply to your Christian life?

## **Step 5. Review and Contextualize the Verse Using the Outline of 1 Peter**

Take note of and consider the position of 1 Peter 2:2 in the outline of this book. Try to answer the questions supplied at the end of the outline below.

- I. Introduction—to the Pilgrims in Dispersion under the Operation of the Triune God (1:1-2)**
- II. Full Salvation of the Triune God and Its Issues (1:3-25)**
  - A. The Father's Regeneration unto a Living Hope, an Inheritance Kept in the Heavens and Ready to Be Revealed at the Last Time (1:3-9)
  - B. The Spirit's Application through the Prophets' Prophesying and the Apostles' Preaching (1:10-12)
  - C. Christ's Redemption unto a Holy Life by the Holy Nature, and Brotherly Love through Purification by the Sanctifying Truth, Based on Regeneration of the Incorruptible Seed through the Living Word of God (1:13-25)
- III. Growth in Life and Its Results (2:1-10)**
  - A. Growing by Feeding on the Milk of the Word unto Full Salvation (2:1-3)
  - B. Transformed unto the Building Up of a Spiritual House for God's Dwelling, a Holy Priesthood for God's Service (2:4-8)
  - C. To Tell Out the Virtues of the Calling One (2:9-10)
- IV. Christian Life and Its Sufferings (2:11—4:19)**
  - A. A Life in an Excellent Manner toward All Men in All Concerns (2:11—3:13)
    - 1. As Pilgrims among the Nations (2:11-12)
    - 2. Toward Human Institution (2:13-17)
    - 3. Servants toward Masters (2:18-20)
    - 4. The Model of Christ (2:21-25)
    - 5. In Marriage Life (3:1-7)
    - 6. In Common Life (3:8-13)
  - B. Suffering for Righteousness by the Will of God as Christ Did (3:14-22)
  - C. Arming Themselves with the Mind of Christ for Suffering (4:1-6)
  - D. Ministering as Good Stewards of the Varied Grace of God (4:7-11)
  - E. Rejoicing in Sharing the Sufferings of Christ (4:12-19)
- V. The Elders' Shepherding and Its Reward (5:1-4)**
  - A. The Shepherding Patterns (5:1-3)
  - B. The Chief Shepherd's Reward (5:4)
- VI. The Mighty Hand of God and Its Goal (5:5-11)**
  - A. Humbled under God's Mighty Hand (5:5-9)
  - B. Perfected and Grounded by the God of All Grace (5:10-11)
- VII. Conclusion (5:12-14)**
  - A. Testimony of the True Grace of God (5:12)
  - B. Greetings (5:13-14)

1. When looking at the structure of the entire letter of Peter, what is the context of the speaking concerning the growth in life of the believers? What precedes the growth? What follows the growth? What is the result of the growth?
2. Consider and fellowship with the other members of your group how the sufferings in the Christian life accompany the growth in life and result in the maturity for the building of God.
3. The Life-study of 1 Peter has 34 messages. Compare the titles of the messages to the major points of the outline. Notice and review how the Life-studies open up the understanding of the major points in the book and help us to see the central revelation of the Bible in each book of the Bible.

## Step 6. Using the Life Study for Apprehension and Application

Read the excerpts corporately and fellowship how the verse in 1 Peter is applied to you.  
Excerpt from the *Life-study of 1 Peter*, Message 15:

### LONGING FOR THE GUILLESS MILK OF THE WORD

....In 2:1 and 2, Peter indicates that, as newborn babes, we need to practice putting away all guile, and we also need to desire the guileless milk of the word. The purpose of putting away the evil root of malice is that we may long for, desire, the milk of the word. I believe that Peter wrote this not according to doctrine, but according to his spiritual experiences. If we do not have adequate experience, we shall not be able to understand what Peter is saying.

If you are full of malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, and evil speaking, you will not have any appetite for the Word. You will not be hungry or thirsty for the Word of God. You will not have the longing, the desire, to drink the pure milk of the Word. If you want to hunger and thirst after God's word, that [127] is, if you want to desire the drinking of the milk in the word, you need to hate your malice and abstain from speaking evil things about others.

Suppose for quite a long period of time, perhaps more than a year, a particular brother has been filled with malice. Certain brothers, especially the elders, he does not like. Because he is full of malice and also full of guile, hypocrisies, and envyings, spontaneously he begins to speak negatively about others. He may speak evil concerning both brothers and sisters, both older ones and younger ones. This evil speaking has its source in the malice within him. To be sure, a brother in that condition will not have any appetite for the Word. From experience I know that he would neither hunger nor thirst for the nourishment in the Word of God.

However, let us suppose that this particular brother receives the mercy of the Lord one day to realize his sinfulness. Realizing his need of Christ as the sin offering and the trespass offering, he repents, confesses his sins, and prays, "O Lord, forgive me. For a long time, I have been filled with malice, and I have spoken in an evil way about others. Lord, this shows me that sin is within me. Lord, even though I have been regenerated, I still have sin in me, for my fallen nature is sinful. O Lord, I need You as my sin offering. I take You and apply You as my sin offering. Oh, may the blood of the sin offering cleanse me, Lord! I realize that my evil speaking concerning the brothers and sisters is an offense, a trespass. Lord, I am full of trespasses! Forgive me and cleanse me. I take You not only as my sin offering, but also as my trespass offering. All day long, Lord, I want to enjoy You."

If the brother prays in this way, soon he will begin to have an appetite for the milk of the word. He will desire to come to the Word for nourishment. He will come to the Bible not to gain the knowledge of doctrine, but to drink nourishing milk. Spontaneously as he is reading the Bible, he will be drinking the guileless milk of God's word. Eventually, this milk will get into his inward being and function as an antibiotic to kill the germ of malice. Furthermore, this brother will begin to love all the saints. He may say, "Oh, I love the brothers and the [128] sisters. I love all the elders. All the saints are good, and all of them are better than I am."

### AN EXPERIENTIAL UNDERSTANDING

This understanding of verses 1 and 2 comes from experience. Peter wrote these verses according to his experience. It was also through experience that I have come to understand Peter's writing. More than fifty years ago, when I read this portion of the Word, I could not understand it, because I did not have adequate experience. But through the years I have had much more spiritual experience, and now I understand what Peter is saying. I believe that many saints also have this understanding of 2:1 and 2 according to their experience.

We should never read the Word in a natural way or in a careless manner. However, many Christians read the Bible in a natural way and take it for granted. But if we get into the depths of

the Word, we shall be enlightened. Then we shall have a lot of inner feeling and also have the utterance to speak what we see.

### GENUINE GROWTH

According to Peter's word in verse 2, we should long for the guileless milk of the word so that by it we may grow. To grow is a matter of life and in life. We received the divine life through regeneration, and we need to grow in this life and with this life by being nourished with the milk conveyed in the Word of God.

We should desire the guileless milk of the word not only to have a spiritual antibiotic, but also to receive nourishment so that we may grow. The guileless milk of the word nourishes us, and by this nourishment we grow.

Many Christians think that to grow is to gain more knowledge. After a new believer has been baptized, others may encourage him to attend some kind of Bible class. He may be encouraged to get more knowledge. However, he may not hear a word that helps him to realize that through regeneration he has received the divine life and that now his need is to grow in life. He may only be helped to learn the stories in the Gospels and then the stories in the Old Testament. Gradually, [129] he may pick up more Bible knowledge, and some may regard this as growth. This concept of growth, however, is altogether contrary to that in the New Testament. According to the New Testament, growth is the genuine increase in the measure of life. Knowledge does not help us to increase in the measure of life.

How do children grow? They grow by receiving nourishment. If an infant has a healthy diet and daily is given nourishing food, gradually he will grow. This growth is the increase from all the food taken into him. Eventually, as a full-grown adult, this one will be a composition of what he has eaten. Perhaps at birth he weighed only six pounds. But when he is full-grown, he may be a man weighing one hundred eighty pounds. He has experienced the real growth in life, the growth that comes from eating healthy food, digesting it, and assimilating it into his cells so that it becomes the very fibers of his being. This is an illustration of genuine growth in life.

We need to desire the guileless milk of the word so that by it we may have real growth in life. True growth is the increase of the measure of life. If we are growing in life, the life element within us will increase, and there will be an increase in our spiritual stature (Eph. 4:13).

#### **Step 7. Writing a Prophecy**

Please compose a short prophecy of what you have seen from this exercise. Write down two thoughts or points and give one or two supporting verses for your speaking. The entire speaking should be less than 2 minutes.