

**HWMR: LIVING AND SERVING ACCORDING TO GOD’S ECONOMY CONCERNING THE CHURCH,
(Week 1)**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:4-5; 3:2, 9; 5:26-27; Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Thes. 5:23; Acts 26:18-19

Living and Serving according to the Heavenly Vision of God’s Economy

1 Timothy 1:3	Even as I exhorted you, when I was going into Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things
1 Timothy 1:4	Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God’s economy, which is in faith.
Ephesians 1:4	Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
Ephesians 1:5	Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
Ephesians 3:2	If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,
Ephesians 3:9	And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
Ephesians 5:26	That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
Ephesians 5:27	That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.
Hebrews 2:10	For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
Hebrews 2:11	For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,
1 Thessalonians 5:23	And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Acts 26:18	To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
Acts 26:19	Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

Day 1

John 1:12-13 - But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name, Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

2 Peter 1:4 - 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.

I. The one thing, the unique thing, that should be focused on, stressed, and ministered in the Lord’s recovery is the **heavenly vision of the eternal economy of God; the central subject of the Bible is the economy of God, and the entire Bible is concerned with the economy of God—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 1:10; 3:2, 8-9, 16-19; Acts 26:18-19:**

A. “God’s economy and plan is to make Himself man and to make us, His created beings, ‘God’ so that He is ‘**manized**’ and we are ‘**Godized**’” (*A Deeper Study of the Divine Dispensing*, pp. 51-52).

- B. God's eternal economy is for Him to become man that **man might become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead** for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—John 1:1, 14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 21:2, 10-11.
- C. Today we can be in one accord because we have only **one vision**, the vision of the eternal economy of God—Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 1:9-10; Jer. 32:39.

In Acts 26:19 Paul says, “*Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.*” After Paul was caught by the Lord, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Paul speaks not only of a vision but of a vision from the heavens, a **heavenly vision**. In his defense of himself and his ministry before King Agrippa, he indicated that he had earlier received a vision from the earth, an earthly vision. This was the vision of the law. Paul had been fully caught by that vision, but while he was so vigorously carrying out that vision, he was caught by One from the heavens who gave him another vision. This other vision is mainly described in verse 18: “*To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.*” **Forgiveness of sins is the initial grace** and the base of all the blessings of the New Testament jubilee, while the inheritance is the main object of this heavenly vision. For us to see what this inheritance is requires much unveiling. Actually, Paul's fourteen Epistles are the development and the description of this inheritance. If you would read and study his fourteen Epistles thoroughly, you could see that this inheritance is nothing less than the **processed Triune God** who is consummated in the all-inclusive, compound Spirit. This inheritance is the **very Triune God in His divinity dispensed into us for our enjoyment**. The forgiveness of sins is an initiation into the enjoyment of such an inheritance. This heavenly vision is not like the earthly vision concerning the law. The law does not give life or bring any kind of enjoyment. There is no inheritance with the law. The law is full of requirements, and the law only demands. (*Elders' Training, Book 5: Fellowship concerning the Lord's Up-to-date Move, chapter 1*)

Day 2

Ephesians 1:4-5 - Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love, Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

II. Our becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead was initiated by God the Father in eternity past by His **choosing us to be holy, predestinating us unto sonship; the divine sanctification for the divine sonship is the center of the divine economy and the central thought of the revelation in the New Testament—Eph. 1:4-5:**

- A. To be sanctified is to be made holy, which is to be **separated unto God** and **saturated with God** as the Holy One, the One who is different, distinct, from everything that is common—1 Pet. 1:15-16; Eph. 1:4-5.
- B. He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy in order for us to become God in nature (v. 4); God is the only One who is holy; for us to be holy we need God in His holy nature dispensed into us, and this holy nature becomes the holy element with which the Holy Spirit sanctifies us (2 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 12:14).
- C. He predestinated us unto sonship even before we were created in order for us to become God in life (Eph. 1:5); for us to become sons of God, we must be born of God by the dispensing of God's life into our being (John 1:12-13; 3:6; 1 John 5:11-12):
 1. Ephesians 1:4-5 reveals that God chose us to be holy for the purpose of our being made sons of God; to be made **holy** is the **process**, the **procedure**, whereas to be **sons of God** is the **aim**, the **goal**, so that our whole being, including our body (Rom. 8:23), may be “sonized” by God (Rev. 21:2, 9-11).

Day 3

Hebrews 2:11 - For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brothers,

1 Thessalonians 5:23 - And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Hebrews 2:10-11 reveals that the resurrected Christ as the **Captain**, the **Author**, of God's salvation is **leading** many sons into glory by sanctifying them.
3. The **divine sanctification** is the holding line in the carrying out of the divine economy to sonize us divinely, making us sons of God that we may become the same as God in His life and in His nature (but not in His Godhead), so that we may be God's expression; hence, God's sanctification is the divine sonizing.
4. We say that sanctification is the holding line because **every step of God's work with us is to make us holy**; the carrying out of the eternal economy of God is by the Spirit's sanctification—1 Thes. 5:23; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:11; 12:3b; Heb. 12:4-14; Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19; Rev. 2:7a; Psa. 73:16-17, 25-26; Rev. 21:2, 10.

This is fully shown in Ephesians 1:4-5. In verse 4 we are told that God chose us to be holy. Then verse 5 says that in His choosing He predestinated us, marked us out, unto sonship. The word unto can be translated "for." God predestinated us for sonship. Thus, **sanctification is a preparing step to make us sons of God**. It is very much related to God's economy and to God's sonship. Sanctification does not stand alone. It is involved with God's economy from eternity and then with God's sonship in time. From the time we were called, the sanctifying Spirit started to work for God's "sonizing," for God's sonship. **This sanctifying, this sonizing, is still going on**. It has been going on for about twenty centuries, and it is still not finished. We are being sanctified from within every day. We are being sonized. Sanctification is not sinless perfection, nor is it merely a positional matter. It is something that goes on and on continually to sonize God's chosen people.

What is sanctification? **Sanctification is God's sonizing**. When you are sanctified, you are **sonized**. This is based upon Ephesians 1:4-5. It is even more strongly based upon Hebrews 2:10-11, which says, "*It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One.*" Verse 10 speaks of bringing many sons into glory, and verse 11 speaks of the Sanctifier and the ones being sanctified. This shows that **sonship is greatly dependent upon sanctification**. God brings His many sons into glory by Christ's **sanctifying us dispositionally**, beginning from our regeneration throughout the full course of our Christian life. Sanctification is still going on because we have not yet entered into glory in full. One day we will be fully in glory. That fullness of entering into glory will be the fullness of God's sanctification. (*The Spirit with Our Spirit, chapter 11*)

Day 4

Ephesians 5:26-27 - That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word, That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

III. The divine, dispositional sanctification is carried out by Christ as the life-giving, sanctifying, and speaking Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 1 Thes. 5:23; Eph. 5:26:

- A. Christ as the **life-giving Spirit** sanctifies the church by cleansing her according to the **washing of the water in the word**; according to the divine concept, water in Ephesians 5:26 refers to the flowing life of God, typified by flowing water (Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4; John 7:37-39; Rev. 7:17; 21:6; 22:1, 17); we are now in such a washing process in order that the church may be holy and without blemish.
- B. The Greek word for *washing* in Ephesians 5:26 is literally “laver”; in the Old Testament the priests used the laver to wash away their earthly defilement (Exo. 30:18-21); day by day, morning and evening, we need to come to the Bible and be cleansed by the laver of the water in the word.
- C. Paul uses the Greek word *rhema* when he speaks of the word with its washing process (Eph. 5:26); **logos** is God’s Word **objectively** recorded in the Bible; **rhema** is the word of God spoken to us on a **specific occasion** (Mark 14:72; Luke 1:35-38; 5:5; 24:1-8).
- D. As the life-giving Spirit, Christ is the speaking Spirit; whatever He speaks is the word that **washes us**; this does not refer to *logos*, the constant word, but to *rhema*, which denotes an **instant word**, the word that the Lord **presently** speaks to us—Matt. 4:4; John 6:63; Rev. 2:7; 22:17a; cf. Isa. 6:9-10; Matt. 13:14-15; Acts 28:25-31.
- E. The rhema reveals something to us **personally and directly**; it shows us what we need to deal with and what we need to be cleansed from (the laver of bronze was a mirror that could reflect and expose—Exo. 38:8); the important thing for each one of us is this—is God speaking His word to me today?—Rev. 2:7; 1 Sam. 3:1, 21; Amos 3:7.
- F. One thing that we always treasure is that the Lord still speaks to us personally and directly today; **true growth in life depends upon our receiving the word directly from God**; only His speaking in us has true spiritual value—Heb. 3:7-11, 15; 4:7; Psa. 95:7-8.
- G. The central point of our prayers should be our **longing for the Lord’s speaking**, which enables us to fulfill the goal of His eternal economy according to His heart’s desire to have His divine sonship—Luke 1:38; 10:38-42; Eph. 1:5.
- H. In a very practical sense, the Lord’s presence is one with His speaking; whenever He speaks, we realize His presence within us; Christ’s speaking is the **very presence** of the life-giving Spirit—cf. Exo. 33:12-17; Heb. 11:8.
- I. The speaking of the indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit within us is the cleansing water that **deposits a new element** into us to **replace the old element** in our nature and disposition; this metabolic cleansing causes a genuine and inward change in life, which is the reality of dispositional sanctification and transformation.

How does God cleanse us? He does it with His **life through His own word**. Many times we do not know in which aspect we need to be cleansed. But one day the life within us will not let us go. Before long His rhema comes into us, indicating what must be dealt with. On the one hand, it is the **life that touches us**, and on the other hand, it is the **word that tells us**. Sometimes we are engaged in something which seems quite good according to doctrine, and our reason for doing it is also quite right, but within there is something which keeps touching us and will not let us go. Eventually, the Lord speaks to us; rhema comes, the mighty word of the Lord. It tells us that a certain matter must be dealt with and cleansed. On the one hand, this is the life, and on the other hand, it is the word of the Lord. By this we are cleansed. Sometimes the order is changed. At the beginning we do not feel anything while we are engaged in a certain matter; in fact, we feel that everything is fine. But when rhema comes, the word of the Lord speaks to us first, telling us that this particular matter is wrong, and then the life within us demands that we deal with it. This is our daily life. Either the life of the Lord does not allow us to do something, and the word comes; or first the word comes, and then the life follows, demanding that we deal with it. But it is always the **cleansing of the water in the word to sanctify us**. (*The Glorious Church, chapter 3*)

Day 5

Acts 26:16-19 - 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; Delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you, To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

IV. Acts 26:18 reveals the contents of our divine commission to serve according to the heavenly vision of God's economy; we need to **pray** over these contents, asking the Lord to make them our **experience** and **reality** so that we can bring others into this experience and reality:

- A. "To open their eyes"—v. 18:
1. We need to continually pray for a **spirit of wisdom and revelation** to understand and to see more and more of Christ, the Body of Christ, and the divine dispensing for the divine economy—Eph. 1:17; 3:5; cf. Rev. 4:6; 3:17; Matt. 6:6.
 2. We cannot go on without **new knowledge** of the **Lord** and a **new vision** of **Him**—Acts 26:16; Phil. 3:8b, 10a, 13; cf. Deut. 4:25.
 3. Our commission is to "**enlighten all** that they may see what the economy of the mystery is"—Eph. 3:9.
- B. "To turn them from darkness to light"—Acts 26:18:
1. Light is the presence of God; we need to be people who are **full of light**—Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:5; Luke 11:34-36.
 2. The **enjoyment** of Christ as our God-given portion is "**in the light**"—Col. 1:12; John 8:12; 1:4; Psa. 119:105, 130; Matt. 5:14; Rev. 1:20.
 3. We need to be **luminaries in the world**, holding forth the word of life (Phil. 2:14-16); we need to tell out the virtues of the One who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9).
- C. "To turn them...from the authority of Satan to God"—Acts 26:18:
1. The highest point in our spiritual experience is to have a **clear sky with the throne above it**; to have the throne above a clear sky is to give the Lord the preeminence in our being and the highest and most prominent position in our life—Ezek. 1:22, 26; Col. 1:18; cf. Ezek. 14:3.
 2. If we are under a clear sky with the throne above it, genuine authority will be with us to **bring others under God's authority**—2 Cor. 10:4-5, 8; 13:3, 10.
 3. Our **utmost love for the Lord** qualifies, perfects, and equips us to speak for the Lord with His authority—cf. John 21:15, 17.
- D. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins"—Acts 26:18:
1. We need to go to the Lord to **receive a thorough forgiveness** of all our sins—1 John 1:7, 9.
 2. David begged God to blot out his transgressions, wash him thoroughly from his iniquity, and cleanse him from his sin—Psa. 51:1-2, 7, 9:
 - a. Like David we need to **stay in the presence of God** to have a thorough and genuine repentance and confession to receive a full forgiveness from God.
 - b. If we confess our sins to receive God's forgiveness, we will have the **gladness of God's salvation and be sustained with a willing spirit**; then we can teach transgressors His ways, and sinners will turn back to Him—vv. 12-13.

Day 6

Colossians 1:12 - Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;

Acts 26:18 - To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

E. “That they may receive...an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me”; this inheritance is the **Triune God Himself** with all He has, all He has done, and all He will do for His redeemed people—Acts 26:18:

1. The Triune God is embodied in the all-inclusive Christ, who is the **portion allotted to the saints as their inheritance**—Col. 2:9; 1:12.
2. We enjoy the pneumatic Christ as the **pledge of our inheritance** (Eph. 1:14) “among those,” that is, among those in the church life (cf. 2 Tim. 2:22).
3. We need to **bring people into the enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ** in the church life so that they may enjoy Christ as we do and be sanctified dispositionally with the holy nature of God through the exercise of their spirit—Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 4:13.

V. Our being sanctified for the divine sonship ultimately consummates in the New Jerusalem as the holy city (Rev. 21:2, 10) and the aggregate of the divine sonship (v. 7); this is the ultimate consummation of God becoming a man in the flesh that man might become God in the Spirit to gain a great, corporate God-man (vv. 3, 22) for the corporate expression, the glory, of the Triune God (vv. 11, 23).

In Acts 26:18 the Lord charged Saul “to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” This is the work that you young people should do today. Do not preach the traditional gospel of Christianity. Rather, open the eyes of this generation that they may turn from darkness to light. The first thing we must do is to **help others to see**. In order to do this, **we ourselves must have the vision and see the heavenly things**. We must see the things concerning Christ, not by being taught but by having Christ appear to us. After you have seen the vision, you need to **contact people**, telling them that Jesus has appeared to you and that you have seen Him. Do not preach the low, traditional gospel. Many who have received this poor gospel are still blind and in darkness. Do not teach people religion—open their eyes that they may turn from darkness and Satan to light and God. By turning in this way, they will be released from the evil power of darkness, which is the authority of Satan, to God. As a result, they will receive forgiveness of sins and a portion among those who are sanctified. All the saved and forgiven ones are saints, and **all the saints have a portion**. According to Colossians, the portion of the saints is simply Christ Himself. Christ has been allotted to us, and we all share a portion in Him. What is our portion? It is neither the heavens nor the earth but Christ. Thus, Christ is the common portion of all the saints. Unbelievers do not have a positive portion. Their portion—the lake of fire—is negative. Our portion—Christ—will consummate in the New Jerusalem. Those who turn from Satan to God will not have a portion individually but **corporately and collectively with all the saints**. This means that they will have a portion among those who are members of the church life. We cannot have such a portion alone; we can only have it among the saints, among those who are sanctified by faith. (*Young People’s Training, chapter 1*)