Living Stream Ministry
2431 W. La Palma Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92801

The Holy Bible
Recovery Version

Unveiling the Unsearchable Riches of Christ in the Holy Scriptures

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INTRODUCING THE RECOVERY VERSION HOLY BIBLE
The Recovery Version

“All Scripture is God-breathed…” (2 Timothy 3:16)

The origin of the Bible is God; it was God who breathed His words of revelation through His Spirit into and out of the writers of the Scriptures. What was breathed out was not only words but also spirit.

The content of the Bible is both extensive and inclusive; the two main aspects of this content are truth and life. Truth brings us revelation and knowledge of all the realities in the universe, such as the reality of God, the reality of man, the reality of the universe, the reality of the things of the present age, the coming age, and the eternal age, and in particular, the reality of the Christ appointed by God and the church chosen by Him. Life is God coming to be our life that we may be regenerated, grow, be transformed, and be conformed into the image of Christ, who expresses God, that we may become the expression of God.

The first function of the Bible is to testify concerning Christ. Christ is the subject and content of the Bible, and the Bible is the explanation and expression of Christ. Christ is the living Word of God, and the Bible is His written Word. Without Christ, the living Word, as reality, the written words of the Bible are but empty doctrines and vain letters. Yet without the written word of the Bible as His expression, Christ, the living Word, would be abstract and intangible. Therefore, we must read the Bible if we desire to know Christ.

Witness Lee, Life Lessons, pp. 32-33

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 Holy Bible, 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 translation of the Bible, the determination of the original text, based upon the available manuscripts, forms the basis for the text of the Recovery Version of the Holy Bible. The translation of the Old Testament is based on the current scholarly text of the Hebrew Scriptures, Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS; revised 1990 edition). The New Testament 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 Old and New Testaments. 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 these editions are generally indicated in the footnotes.

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 Hebrew and 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.
2a. The Spirit, the Word, and the Light Coming, the First Day

Verse 1 is a record of God's original creation. The motive of God's creation was to fulfill His further creation, in six days. Genesis is divided into three sections, each beginning with a name. The first section (1:1—2:25), beginning with the name of God, concerns God's creation; the second (3:1—11:32), beginning with the serpent, covers the serpent's corrupting of mankind; and the third (12:1—50:26), beginning with the name Jehovah, concerns Jehovah's calling of fallen man.

2b. The Spirit of God was brooding upon the surface of the waters.

3a. God's Restoration and Further Creation

In the process of God's creation, the heavens and the angels therein were created first, and the earth, probably with some living creatures, was created second (Job 38:4-7 and note 7). In the Bible water signifies death and the land represents Christ (see note 7). God's desire and to satisfy His good pleasure (Eph. 1:5, 9). The purpose of God's creation is to glorify the Son of God (Col. 1:15-19) and to manifest God's purpose.

4a. The entire section from 1:2b—5

4b. The Spirit, the word, and the light were the instruments used by God to generate life for the fulfillment of His purpose. The spirit, the word, and the light are all of one [Heb. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:19], but they are all different. The spirit is the breathing of God (Job 32:8; 1 Cor. 2:11), the word is the speaking of God (John 1:1; 1:14), and the light is the shining of God (John 8:12a; 9:5).

5. In the process of God's creation, the heavens and the angels therein were created first, and the earth, probably with some living creatures, was created second (Job 38:4-7 and note 7).

6. God created the earth in a good order (Job 38:6-7; Isa. 45:18). But here and before, in this verse indicate that something happened to cause God's creation to become ‘waste and emptiness.’ This cataclysmic event was God's judgment on the preadamic universe following Satan's rebellion. This judgment was executed on Satan, on the angels and the preadamic creatures living on the earth who joined Satan in his rebellion, and on the heavens and the earth themselves.

7. The separation of the light from the dark-ness is the sixth requirement for generating life. The atmosphere, the air surrounding the earth.

8. The separating of the waters by producing an expanse between them, signifying, spiritually, the dividing of the heavenly things from the earthly things through the work of the cross (Col. 3:1-3; Heb. 4:12), was the fifth requirement for generating life.

9. At the end of the second day there is no record that God said that the expanse (the air) and the waters were good (cf. vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). This is because in the air there are fallen angels (Eph. 2:2; 6:12), and the water is the dwelling place of the demons (Matt. 12:43 and note).

10. The appearing of the dry land is the sixth requirement for generating life. This took place on the third day, corresponding to the day of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:4). In the Bible the sea represents death and the land represents Christ (see note 7 in Deut. 8) as the generating source of life. After the land appeared, every kind of life—the plant life, the animal life, and even the human life—was produced out of the land (vv. 11-12, 24-27, 2:7). This typifies that the divine life with all its riches comes out of Christ. On the third day Christ came out of death in resurrection to generate life (John 12:24, 1 Pet. 1:3) for the constituting of the church.

11. Dividing the land from the waters signifies separating life from death. From the second day (vv. 6-7) God began to work to confine and limit the waters below the expanse, because God desired to create a place for His created race. What is recorded is not primarily the works of these men but mainly their life, their living, and their way with God. Genesis God uses both the record of creation and the biographies of eight persons to reveal the life that fulfills His purpose.

12. There are five Greek words translated ‘race’ in the New Testament. Although the word ‘race’ is found nowhere in the Old Testament, it means line of descent. The Hebrew root raac means ‘tribe.’ This root is varied in the Old Testament to indicate a group of persons related to one another by blood or marriage, whether homogeneous or not. In the New Testament the word ‘race’ is translated by the Greek word ‘ethnos’ (Gen. 10:15; Exod. 9:6; 1 Pet. 2:9).

13. The motive of God's creation was to fulfill His further creation, in six days. The motive of God's creation was to fulfill God's desire and to satisfy His good pleasure (Eph. 1:5, 9). The purpose of God's creation is to glorify the Son of God (Col. 1:15-19) and to manifest God's purpose.

14. God saw that the light was ‘good’ and God separated the light from the darkness.
I. Introduction
vv. 1-3

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our beloved and fellow worker.
2 And to Apphia the sister and to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church, which is in your house:
3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. A Slave Reborn to Be a Brother
vv. 4-16

4 I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,
5 Hearing of your love and the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and to all the saints,

6 That the fellowship of your faith may become effective in the full knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ.
7 For I had much joy and encouragement over your love, because the inward parts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.
8 Therefore though I have much boldness in Christ to charge you what is fitting,
9 Because of love I rather entreat, being such a one as Paul the aged and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus.
10 I entreat you concerning my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus,
11 Who formerly was useless to you but now is useful both to you and to me.

Their relationship is of love through faith. The apostle appreciated the fellowship of Philemon’s faith (v. 6) and was encouraged by his love (v. 7); thus, he entreated Philemon to receive Onesimus because of this love (v. 9). These two virtues are referred to in combination here; Philemon had both of them, not only toward the Lord but also to all the saints.

I.e., full acknowledgment, full appreciation, and full recognition through experience.

Not natural things (cf. Rom. 7:18) but spiritual and divinely good things, such as the love and the faith that Philemon had toward the Lord Jesus. These good things are in us, the regenerated believers, but are not in natural men.

Some ancient MSS read, us.

Lit., unto, toward. All the spiritual and divinely good things in us are unto Christ, toward Christ, for Christ. The apostle prayed that the fellowship, the communication, the sharing of Philemon’s faith toward all the saints might become effective in them in the element and sphere of the full knowledge, the full realization, of all the good things in us for Christ, causing them to acknowledge, appreciate, and recognize all the spiritual and divinely good things that are in the believers for Christ.

7 For introduces the reason that the apostle prayed for Philemon’s faith to become effective in the saints (v. 6), the reason being that Philemon’s love had refreshed the inward parts of the saints and, hence, had rendered the apostle much joy and encouragement.

11 Or, unserviceable. Referring to Onesimus’s running away from Philemon.

12 Or, serviceable. Because Onesimus had been converted and was willing to return to Philemon.
Philemon 12-17

12 Him I have sent back to you — him, that is, my very heart —
13 Whom I intended to keep with myself that on your behalf he might minister to me in the bonds of the gospel.
14 But without your mind I did not want to do anything, that your goodness would not be as of necessity, but voluntary.
15 For perhaps for this reason he was separated from you for but an hour, that you might fully have him forever,
16 No longer as a slave, but above a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

III. A Brother Recommended for the New Man’s Acceptance vv. 17-22

17 If then you hold me as a partner, receive him as myself.
18 For I have sent him with my own heart and neither with compulsion nor of necessity — because I, too, would like to do everything on the basis of a good will.
19 And I trust in the Lord that I myself also will come quickly (v. 22).
20 So you treat him as you would me, for he is a beloved brother of mine and a fellow worker (v. 24), and a partner (v. 17) in your faith and in Christ Jesus.

Philemon 18-25

18 And if he has wronged you in anything or owes anything, charge that to my account.
19 I, Paul, have written with my own hand: I will repay;
20 Yes, ‘brother, may I have profit from you in the Lord;
21 Having confidence in your obedience, I have written to you, knowing that you will do even beyond the things that I say.
22 And at the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.

IV. Conclusion vv. 23-25

23 Now, therefore, receive him as you would me.
25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

They are all intimate terms, indicating the apostle’s intimate sentiment concerning his relationship with the members in the new man.

16 I.e., in the flesh as a slave and in the Lord as a brother. In the flesh Onesimus was a brother as a slave, and in the Lord he was a slave as a brother.
17 Just as a local church with its elders is in partnership with the Lord, and the Lord entrusts to them the newly saved ones, as the good Samaritan did with the healed one (Luke 10:33-35).
18 This indicates that Onesimus had defrauded his master.
19 In caring for Onesimus, Paul did exactly what the Lord does for us.
20 Just as the Lord pays everything for His redeemed.
21 This indicates that Philemon had been saved through Paul himself.
22 The apostle always greeted the recipients of his Epistles, in both the opening and the conclusion, with the
And God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. (Genesis 1:26)

Let Us...reveals that a council was held among the Three of the Godhead regarding the creation of man. The decision to create man had been made by the Triune God in eternity past, indicating that the creation of man was for the eternal purpose of the Triune God (Eph. 3:9-11). God’s intention in creating man was to carry out His divine economy for the dispensing of Himself into man (1 Tim. 1:4 and note 3, par. 1). This is fully unveiled in the following books of the Bible.

And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel. (Exodus 19:6)

As God’s people remain in His presence, they become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:9). As priests, God’s people live in God’s presence, enjoying Him as their portion, even as He enjoys them as His treasure (v. 5). The mutual enjoyment between God and His people separates His people unto Himself from everything other than Him, making them a holy nation.

The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him. (Zechariah 12:1)

In His creation God made three crucial, equally important items—the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit that he may contact God, receive God, worship God, live God, fulfill God’s purpose for God, and be one with God. In His economy God planned to have Christ as the centrality and universality of His move on earth. For His chosen people, who would care for Him as the Creator and as the Redeemer, there was the need for Him to create a receiving organ so that they would have the capacity to receive all that God had planned for Christ to be. Hence, this book charges us to pay full attention to our human
spirit, that we may receive the Christ revealed in this book and may understand all that is revealed therein concerning Him (Eph. 1:17-18a; 3:5).

Your words were found and I ‘ate them, and your word became to me the gladness and joy of my heart, for I am called by Your name, O Jehovah, God of hosts. (Jeremiah 15:16)

According to the entire revelation in the Holy Bible, God’s words are good for us to eat, and we need to eat them (Psa. 119:103; Matt. 4:4; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2-3). God’s word is the divine supply as food to nourish us. Through the word as our food, God dispenses His riches into our inner being to nourish us that we may be constituted with His element. This is a crucial aspect of God’s economy. When we eat God’s words, His word becomes our heart’s gladness and joy.

But as it is written, “Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man’s heart; things which God has prepared for those who ‘love Him.”’ (1 Corinthians 2:9)

To realize and participate in the deep and hidden things God has ordained and prepared for us requires us not only to believe in Him but also to love Him. To fear God, to worship God, and to believe in God (that is, to receive God) are all inadequate; to love Him is the indispensable requirement. To love God means to set our entire being—spirit, soul, and body, with the heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)—absolutely on Him, that is, to let our entire being be occupied by Him and lost in Him, so that He becomes everything to us and we are one with Him practically in our daily life. In this way we have the closest and most intimate fellowship with God, and we are able to enter into His heart and apprehend all its secrets (Psa. 73:25; 25:14). Thus, we not only realize but also experience, enjoy, and fully participate in these deep and hidden things of God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses every man’s understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God. The peace of God is actually God as peace (v. 9) infused into us through our fellowship with Him by prayer, as the counterpoise to troubles and the antidote to anxiety (John 16:33).

In My Father’s house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and ‘prepare…. (John 14:2-3)

The Lord’s intention in this chapter was to bring man into God for the building of His dwelling place. But between man and God there were many obstacles, such as sin, sins, death, the world, the flesh, the self, the old man, and Satan. For the Lord to bring man into God, He had to solve all these problems. Therefore, He had to go to the cross to accomplish redemption that He might open the way and make a standing for man, that man might enter into God. This standing in God, being enlarged, becomes the standing in the Body of Christ. Anyone who does not have a standing, a place, in God does not have a place in the Body of Christ, which is God’s dwelling place. Hence, the Lord’s going in order to accomplish redemption was to prepare a place in His Body for the disciples.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is ‘spirit. (John 3:6)

The first Spirit mentioned here is the divine Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, and the second spirit is the human spirit, the regenerated spirit of man. Regeneration is accomplished in the human spirit by the Holy Spirit of God with God’s life, the uncreated eternal life. Thus, to be regenerated is to have the divine, eternal life (in addition to the human, natural life) as the new source and new element of a new person.

And He told them this ‘parable, saying, Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? (Luke 15:3-4)

In answering the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes, who condemned Him for eating with sinners, the Savior spoke three parables, unveiling and depicting how the Divine Trinity works to bring sinners back, through the Son by the Spirit, to the Father. The Son came in His humanity as the Shepherd to find the sinner as a lost sheep and bring him back home (vv. 4-7). The Spirit seeks the sinner as a woman carefully seeks a lost coin until she finds it (vv. 8-10). And the Father receives the repenting and returned sinner as the “certain man” here receives his prodigal son (vv. 11-32). The entire Divine Trinity treasures the sinner and participates in bringing him back to God.
19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the brother of the Lord.  
20 Now concerning the things which I am writing to you, behold, before God, I am not lying.  
21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia,  
22 Yet I was still unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which are in Christ.  
23 But they only heard this: He who was formerly persecuting us is now announcing as the gospel the faith which formerly he raved against.  
24 And they glorified God because of me.

CHAPTER 2

1 Then after a period of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus with me also.  
2 And I went up according to revelation, and I laid before them the gospel which I proclaim among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of repute, lest perhaps I should be running or had run, in vain.

19 This indicates that James, the brother of the Lord, and Cephas (v. 18), who was Peter, were at that time the leading ones among the apostles.  
21 Arabia (v. 17), Syria, and Cilicia were all regions of the Gentile world. By mentioning his journeys to all these places, Paul testified that the revelation he received concerning the gospel was not from any men, that is, from any Christians, who at that time were newly in Judea (v. 22).  
22 Paul said this to strengthen the point that he did not receive the gospel from any who were believers in Christ before him.

23 The faith here and in all the verses of reference 23 implies our believing in Christ, taking His person and His redemptive work as the object of our faith. The faith, replacing the law, by which God dealt with people in the Old Testament, became the principle by which God deals with people in the New Testament. This faith characterizes the believers in Christ and distinguishes them from the keepers of law. This is the main emphasis of this book. The law of the Old Testament stresses letters and ordinances, whereas the faith of the New Testament emphasizes the Spirit and life.

1 As recorded in Acts 15, this was after a number of churches had been raised up in the Gentile world through Paul’s ministry (see Acts 13—14). This indicates that Paul’s preaching of the gospel to raise up the Gentile churches had nothing to do with receiving the revelation concerning the gospel.

23 Gal. 1:13; 24 Matt. 9:8; Acts 21:19—26; 1 Cor. 15:2  
1 Gal. 1:12; 2 Acts 15:12; 2 Cor. 3:19 — 26; 1 Cor. 11:13; Gal. 5:7

For example, cross reference b on the word faith in Galatians 1:23 links this verse with other New Testament verses that relate to faith in the objective sense, that is, to the faith as the contents of the complete gospel according to the New Testament revelation.

Here is the list of the verses that are referred to in cross reference 23b in Galatians 1:

Gal. 3:2 This only I wish to learn from you, Did you receive the Spirit out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?  
Gal. 3:5 He therefore who bountifully supplies to you the Spirit and does works of power among you, does He do it out of the works of law or out of the hearing of faith?  
Gal. 3:7 Know then that they who are of faith, these are sons of Abraham.  
Gal. 3:9 So then they who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.  
Gal. 3:23 But before faith came we were guarded under law, being shut up unto the faith which was to be revealed.  
Gal. 5:25 But since faith has come, we are no longer under a child-conductor.  
Gal. 6:10 So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.  
Acts 6:7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.  
Acts 13:8 But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) opposed them, seeking to turn the prosconsul away from the faith.  
Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.  
Rom. 16:26 But has now been manifested, and through the prophetic writings, according to the command of the eternal God, has been made known to all the Gentiles for the obedience of faith.  
1 Cor. 16:13 Watch, stand firm in the faith, be full-grown men, be strong.  
Eph. 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.  
1 Tim. 1:19 Holding faith and a good conscience, concerning which some, thrusting these away, have become shipwrecked regarding the faith.  
1 Tim. 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.  
1 Tim. 3:13 For those who have ministered well obtain for themselves a good standing and much boldness in faith, which is in Christ Jesus.  
1 Tim. 4:1 But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons.  
1 Tim. 4:6 If you lay these things before the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, being nourished in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.  
1 Tim. 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.  
1 Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all evils, because of which some, aspiring after money, have been led away from the faith and pierced themselves through with many pains.  
1 Tim. 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.  
1 Tim. 6:21 Because of which some, professing this, have misaimed regarding the faith. Grace be with you.  
2 Tim. 3:8 And in the manner that Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these also oppose the truth; men corrupted in mind, disapproved concerning the faith.  
2 Tim. 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

TITUS 1:13 This testimony is true; for which cause reprove them severely that they may be healthy in the faith.  
Jude 3 Beloved, while using all diligence to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you and exhort you to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.  
Jude 20 But you, beloved, building up yourselves upon your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

Rev. 14:12 Here is the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.
In Ephesians 3:10 the apostle Paul speaks of God’s economy (from the Greek word \( \text{oikonomia} \)), that is, God’s plan for the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. The content of God’s New Testament economy revolves around the person of the Triune God Himself. God’s economy is His plan to dispense Himself as the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—into all His chosen people. The twenty-seven books of the New Testament are a full revelation of this economy of the Triune God, who has passed through a marvelous process so that the believers may receive and enjoy Him. The Recovery Version New Testament contains a color chart that emphasizes the actions of our Triune God in the three major sections of the New Testament—the Gospels, Acts through Jude, and Revelation—for the accomplishment of His economy.
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2431 W. La Palma Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92801