

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, THE CHURCH LIFE,
THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE, AND THE COMING OF THE LORD**

(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message One

The Consummation of the Age—the Age of Mystery

Scripture Reading: Matt. 28:20; Rev. 10:7; 1 Tim. 1:4; 3:9; Eph. 3:9; 5:32; Heb. 11:6

I. “I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age”—Matt. 28:20:

- A. The word *consummation* means that there is a process that will be brought to completion or fulfillment—24:3.
- B. The consummation of the age and the end of the age refer to the same thing.
- C. In Matthew 28:20 *the consummation of the age* indicates the end of the church age, which is the age of grace—John 1:14, 16-17; Rev. 22:10.
- D. The consummation of the age will be the three and a half years of the great tribulation—Dan. 12:4, 6-7, 9.

II. The present age—the age of grace, the age of the church—is the age of mystery—Eph. 5:32:

- A. Revelation 10:7 says, “The mystery of God is finished”; to finish the mystery of God is to close the age of mystery—Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:3, 5; 5:32.
- B. In the dispensations from Adam to Moses and from Moses to Christ, everything was unveiled, and there was no mystery; it will be the same in the dispensation of the millennial kingdom and in the new heaven and new earth—everything will be unveiled and there will be no more mystery.
- C. In the dispensation from the incarnation of Christ to the millennial kingdom—the church age, the age of grace—everything is a mystery—1 Tim. 3:9:
 - 1. The incarnation of Christ, as the beginning of the age of mystery, is a mystery; through the incarnation of Christ, the infinite God was brought into the finite man—v. 16.
 - 2. Christ is the mystery of God—Col. 2:2:
 - a. God is a mystery, and Christ, as the embodiment of God to express Him, is the mystery of God.
 - b. As the mystery of God, Christ is the embodiment of God; all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily—v. 9.
 - 3. The church is the mystery of Christ—Eph. 3:4-6:
 - a. Christ is a mystery, and the church, as the Body of Christ to express Him, is the mystery of Christ.
 - b. Christ and the church as one spirit are the great mystery—5:32; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 - c. During the church age, the age of mystery, Christ is building up the church, the Body of Christ, to be His bride—Matt. 16:18; Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 4:16; Col. 1:18; Rev. 19:7-9.
 - 4. The kingdom of the heavens, the gospel, the indwelling of Christ, and the coming resurrection and transfiguration of the saints are all mysteries that were hidden in the times of the ages—Matt. 13:11; Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 15:51-53.

5. All the mysteries will be completed, finished, and will be over at the trumpeting voice of the seventh trumpet—Rev. 10:7.
- D. We need “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”—Eph. 3:9:
1. In the New Testament a mystery refers not only to things that are hidden and unknown to us but also to things that are hidden in God’s heart—Mark 4:11; Rom. 16:25-26; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3; Eph. 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19.
 2. God’s mystery is His hidden purpose, which is to dispense Himself into His chosen people; hence, there is the economy of the mystery of God—3:9.
 3. The mystery hidden in God’s heart is God’s eternal economy (1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4), which is God’s eternal intention with His heart’s desire to dispense Himself in His Divine Trinity as the Father in the Son by the Spirit into His chosen and redeemed people to be their life and nature so that they may be the same as He is as His duplication (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2), to become an organism, the Body of Christ as the new man (Eph. 2:15-16), which will become the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2—22:5).
 4. Paul preached the gospel of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and he also preached the gospel concerning the economy of the mystery hidden in God—Eph. 3:8-9:
 - a. The gospel concerning the economy of the mystery hidden in God is to produce the church for God’s expression and glorification according to God’s eternal purpose—vv. 10-11, 21.
 - b. Today we must announce the gospel concerning the mystery hidden in God in order to enlighten all so that they may see what is the economy of the mystery hidden in God, who created all things for the fulfillment of His will, the desire of His heart, and His eternal purpose—1:5, 9, 11; 3:8-11.

III. The age of mystery is the age of faith—Heb. 11:1, 6; Rev. 10:7; 1 Tim. 3:9:

- A. God’s mysteries are known by faith; for this reason the age of mystery is also the age of faith—Rev. 10:7.
- B. Faith is a substantiating ability by which we substantiate, give substance to, the things not seen or hoped for—Heb. 11:1:
 1. Faith assures us of the things not seen, convincing us of what we do not see; therefore, it is the evidence, the proof, of things not seen—v. 1.
 2. We do not regard, or look at, the things which are seen but the things which are not seen—2 Cor. 4:18.
 3. The Christian life is a life of things unseen, and the Lord’s recovery is to recover His church from things seen to things unseen—Rom. 8:24-25; Heb. 11:27; 1 Pet. 1:8; Gal. 6:10.
- C. Faith is the unique way for God to carry out His New Testament economy with man—Heb. 11:6:
 1. God’s economy is in faith—a matter initiated and developed in the sphere and element of faith; without faith we cannot realize God’s economy—1 Tim. 1:4.
 2. Faith is the unique requirement for people to contact God in His New Testament economy—Heb. 11:1, 6; 1 Tim. 1:4.

3. God's requirement for us related to everything in the New Testament economy is faith—Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; Mark 11:22; Luke 18:8.
4. Genuine faith is Christ Himself infused into us to become our ability to believe in Him; after the Lord Jesus has been infused into us, He spontaneously becomes our faith—Rom. 3:26.
5. Through faith in Christ Jesus, we are brought into an organic union with Christ; in this organic union we experience Christ and live Christ—Gal. 2:16, 20; John 14:17; Eph. 3:17.
6. In the Body “God has apportioned to each a measure of faith”; therefore, we should not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think “but to think so as to be sober-minded”—Rom. 12:3.
7. Faith is the divine requirement for the overcomers to meet Christ in His triumphant return and to receive the reward of the kingdom—Luke 18:8; 2 Tim. 4:7c-8a; Heb. 10:35, 39.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977, vol. 2, “The Two Great Mysteries in God's Economy,” pp. 223, 225-227

Truth Lessons—Level Four, vol. 1, pp. 136-139

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1981, vol. 1, “Crucial Aspects of the Experience of Christ Revealed in Paul's Epistles,” pp. 426-427

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985, vol. 3, “Elders' Training, Book 6: The Crucial Points of the Truth in Paul's Epistles,” pp. 543-544