

Message Two

Apostasy and Recovery

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:13, 19; Judg. 18:30-31; John 18:37b; 10:10b; 14:6; 1 John 1:1-2, 5-6

I. The whole of today's Christendom is an apostasy; this is the reason the Lord needs a recovery—Jer. 2:11, 13, 19; Rev. 2:4, 15:

- A. Apostasy means to leave the way of God and to take another way to follow things other than God—Acts 9:2; 18:26; 2 Pet. 2:2, 5, 21; Jude 11.
- B. Apostasy is doing things for the self under the name of Jesus Christ and under the cloak of worshipping God—Judg. 18:30-31.
- C. Nothing throughout the history of Israel was more sinful or more damaging to God's people than Dan's apostasy in setting up a divisive center of worship—Gen. 49:16-18; Deut. 33:22; Judg. 18:1, 13-31:
 - 1. Every divisive center is set up for someone's self-interest; such a practice causes not only division but also competition:
 - a. The tabernacle was in Shiloh, and the graven image was in Dan.
 - b. "They set up the sculptured idol...the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh"; this indicates competition—v. 31.
 - 2. Because Dan was successful, he became proud and individualistic; he cared only for himself, not for others—Deut. 33:22; Judg. 18:27-31:
 - a. The source of Dan's apostasy was in not caring for the other tribes; not caring for the other parts of the Body is the source of apostasy.
 - b. In the history of Christianity there have been many "Dans"; what they gained made them proud and independent, unwilling to submit to what the Lord has ordained—Deut. 12:5, 8.
- D. The apostasy of Jeroboam can be considered a type of today's Christianity—1 Kings 12:25-33; 13:33-34:
 - 1. Jeroboam's apostasy broke God's ordination of having one unique worship center in the Holy Land for keeping the oneness of God's people—Deut. 12:2-18.
 - 2. Jeroboam ordained a feast like the one in Judah, doing what he had devised in his own heart—1 Kings 12:32.
- E. In God's New Testament economy, all true believers in Christ are made priests to God, but degraded Christianity has built up a system to ordain some believers to do the service of God, making them a clerical hierarchy and leaving the rest of the believers as laymen; this is an apostate practice which we must abhor and abandon—1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 2:6, 15.

II. The Lord's recovery is a recovery of the truth and of life—John 18:37b; 10:10b; 1 John 1:1-2, 5-6:

- A. The decline of Christianity is due to the fact that it has lost both the truth and the life—2 Tim. 2:25; 1:10; Titus 1:1-2.
- B. Both the truth and the life are Christ Himself—John 14:6:
 - 1. Life is the inward and intrinsic content, and truth is the outward definition and explanation—1:4; 18:37b; 8:12, 32, 36; 17:17.
 - 2. The experience of the Lord as life is contained in the Lord as the truth; thus, in order to experience the Lord as life, we must know the truth—14:6; 11:25; 8:32, 36.

- C. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the light of the truth—1 John 1:5-6:
 - 1. Truth is the shining, the expression, of the divine light—John 8:12, 32, 36.
 - 2. The standard of the truth should constantly be raised higher among all the churches in the Lord's recovery—1 Tim. 2:4; 3:15.
- D. The Lord desires to recover the scriptural view and proper realization of the eternal life of God—John 3:15, 36; 20:31:
 - 1. Life is the first and basic attribute of God—Eph. 4:18.
 - 2. We need to grow in life, be saved in life, and reign in life—4:13-16; Rom. 5:10, 17.
- E. The provision of life and the revelation of truth are the antidotes used by Peter in dealing with apostasy—2 Pet. 1:3-21:
 - 1. Life is the inward energy, the inward strength, to bring forth the outward godliness, which leads to and results in glory—v. 3.
 - 2. The present truth is the truth that is present with the believers, which they have already received and now possess—v. 12.
- F. By life and truth Paul encouraged Timothy and inoculated him against the decline of the church—2 Tim. 1:1, 10; 2:15, 25:
 - 1. Though the churches may become degraded and many of the saints may backslide in unfaithfulness, the eternal life remains forever the same—1:1, 10.
 - 2. The word of the truth, rightly unfolded, enlightens the darkened people, inoculates against the poison, swallows up the death, and brings the distracted ones back to the proper track—2:15, 25.