

## **KNOWING THE BODY—THE PRINCIPLES OF THE BODY**

Morning Session—Message Five

### **The Genuine Ground of Oneness**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 1:11; Deut. 12

- I. The Body is universal, and this universal Body has just one expression in a city; thus, there should be only one church in a city—Rev. 1:11; Acts 8:1; 13:1:**
- A. The organic Body is undivided and indivisible; this unique Body is expressed in many local churches in the divine oneness as it is with the Triune God and in the divine nature, element, essence, expression, function, and testimony—Rev. 1:11; John 17:11, 21, 23.
  - B. There are many churches, yet they have one divine nature, one divine element, one divine essence, one divine expression, one divine function, and one divine testimony because they are one Body.
  - C. All the basic things of the Body are not local; there are no local God, no local Christ, no local Spirit, no local Bible, and the apostles' teaching and fellowship are not local.
- II. According to the divine revelation in the New Testament, the church ground is constituted of three crucial elements:**
- A. The first element of the constitution of the church ground is the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ—Eph. 4:4:
    - 1. This oneness is called “the oneness of the Spirit”—v. 3.
    - 2. This oneness is the oneness that the Lord prayed for in John 17—a oneness in the mingling of the processed Triune God with all the believers in Christ—vv. 6, 11, 14-24.
    - 3. This oneness was imparted into the spirit of all the believers in Christ, in their regeneration by the Spirit of life with Christ as the divine life.
  - B. The second element of the church ground is the unique ground of the locality in which a local church is established and exists—Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Rev. 1:11.
  - C. The third element of the church ground is the reality of the Spirit of oneness, expressing the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ on the unique ground of locality as a local church—1 John 5:6; John 16:13:
    - 1. By the Spirit of reality, who is the living reality of the Divine Trinity, the oneness of the Body of Christ becomes real and living.
    - 2. Through this Spirit the ground of the church is applied in life and not in legality.
    - 3. By this Spirit the genuine ground of the church is linked with the Triune God—Eph. 4:3-6.

### **III. Deuteronomy 12 corresponds in at least four ways to the revelation in the New Testament:**

- A. In Deuteronomy 12 and in the New Testament, we see that the people of God should always be one:
  - 1. In His wisdom God did not allow His people to have their own choice or preference but required them to come to the unique worship center.
  - 2. Regardless of their number, God's children, the believers in Christ, must be one and have the same center for the worship of God.
- B. Both in Deuteronomy 12 and in the New Testament, God's way to keep the oneness of His people is to have a place with His name, the unique name—Deut. 12:5, 11, 21:
  - 1. To be gathered into different names is to be divided, because these names are the base of divisions.
  - 2. Not designating ourselves by any title or name, we should be gathered together into the name of the Lord Jesus—Matt. 18:20.
- C. Both Deuteronomy 12 and the New Testament reveal that the place chosen by God for our worship of Him is the place of His habitation—Deut. 12:5:
  - 1. The fulfillment of the type in Deuteronomy 12 is not a matter of a geographical place—it is a matter of our spirit—Eph. 2:22; John 4:21-23.
  - 2. In gathering together for the worship of God by enjoying Christ, we must gather into the name of Christ and we must be in the spirit; otherwise, we will lose the proper ground of the church.
- D. In Deuteronomy 12 and in the New Testament, we have the altar, the cross—Matt. 10:38:
  - 1. At the entrance of the church is the cross, and everyone who would come into the church must experience the cross and be crucified—Gal. 6:14.
  - 2. To experience the cross is to be set aside, to be annulled, to be reduced to nothing—1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:2.
  - 3. If we have the name, the habitation, and the cross, there will be no divisions among us.

### **IV. Jeroboam's apostasy broke God's ordination of having one unique worship center in the holy land for the keeping of the oneness of the children of Israel; this apostasy may be considered a type of the apostasy in today's Christianity—1 Kings 12:25-33.**

### **V. The record in Joshua 22:10-34 shows us that no matter what the situation of God's people might be today, we are not allowed to set up another altar for the worship of God or for fellowship with God:**

- A. In God's economy, among God's people there should be only one altar, in Jerusalem.
- B. This indicates that in the enjoyment of Christ division must be avoided to the uttermost.
- C. To enjoy the all-inclusive Christ as the good land, we must be one people, one Body, one universal church, to testify for Christ.