

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE LORD'S RECOVERY

Message One

(Friday—First Morning Session)

Orthodoxy, Apostasy, and Recovery

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:13, 19; Judg. 18:30-31; Heb. 8:5; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20; 3:3-5

I. “We care for the Lord’s recovery and the Lord’s way. May the Lord’s grace bring us up to date in His recovery....What we urgently need today is to come back to the orthodoxy of the beginning and stand firmly on the ground of locality” (Witness Lee, *The Orthodoxy of the Church*, p. 6).

II. Because today’s Christianity is filled with apostasy, 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, and it is to do things for the self under the name of Jesus Christ and under the cloak of worshipping God—Acts 9:2; 18:26; 2 Pet. 2:2, 15, 21; Jude 11; Judg. 18:30-31.
- B. We may apply the picture of Micah’s “house of gods” (17:5) to the situation of Christianity:
 1. Micah’s mother offered something to God, but her offering was mixed with the leaven of idolatry (vv. 1-4); the same mixture and chaotic situation exists in Christianity.
 2. Today’s Christianity has many “houses of Micah”; the Roman Catholic Church, the state churches, the denominations, and many of the independent groups are “houses of Micah,” full of idols as replacements of Christ.
- C. In the history of Christianity there have been many “Dans,” who were not willing to submit to others but set up another center of worship—18:1, 13-31:
 1. What these “Dans” gained made them proud and independent, unwilling to submit to what the Lord has ordained—Deut. 12:5, 8:
 - a. Because Dan was successful, he became proud and individualistic; he cared only for himself, not for others—33:22; Judg. 18:27-31.
 - b. The source of Dan’s apostasy was in not caring for the other tribes; not caring for other parts of the Body is the source of apostasy.
 2. Every divisive center is set up for someone’s self-interest; such a practice causes not only division but also competition—vv. 1, 13-31; Gen. 49:16-18; Deut. 33:22.
- D. The apostasy of Jeroboam can be considered a type of today’s Christianity—1 Kings 12:25-33; 13:33-34:
 1. Jeroboam made two calves of gold, putting one in Bethel and the other in Dan, in order to distract the people from worshipping in Jerusalem; the source of these idols was Jeroboam’s selfish ambition—12:25-30.
 2. Jeroboam built a temple at the high places and appointed priests from among the common people—v. 31.

3. Jeroboam ordained a feast like the one in Judah, doing what he had devised in his own heart, and offered sacrifices on the altar at Bethel to the calves that he had made—vv. 32-33.
4. The centers of worship set up by present-day “Jeroboams” are actually centers of ambition:
 - a. The divisions in Christianity are caused by selfishness and ambition.
 - b. Because certain ones are ambitious to have an empire to satisfy their selfish desire, they neglect God’s choice.
- E. The provision of life and the revelation of truth are the antidotes the apostles used in dealing with apostasy and the decline of the church—1 John 1:1-2, 5-6; John 18:37b; 10:10b; 2 Pet. 1:3-21; 2 Tim. 1:1, 10; 2:15, 25.

III. “See...that you make all things according to the pattern that was shown to you in the mountain”—Heb. 8:5:

- A. The most important thing in our spiritual work is a knowledge of the pattern shown in the mountain:
 1. The pattern shown in the mountain is God’s plan; if we do not understand God’s plan, it will be impossible for us to do God’s work—Eph. 3:4.
 2. Before Moses built the tabernacle, God showed him the pattern and method of construction for the heavenly tabernacle—Exo. 24:9—25:9, 40:
 - a. God’s building of the church is the same as His building of the tabernacle; He works according to a prescribed and revealed plan—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20.
 - b. All God’s work is related to His eternal purpose in Christ, and this purpose can be known only by divine unveiling—3:3-5, 8-11.
- B. “Upon this rock I will build My church”—Matt. 16:18a:
 1. *This rock* refers not only to Christ but also to the revelation concerning Christ; the heavenly revelation from the Father is the rock.
 2. The church is built on Christ and on the revelation concerning Christ.
 3. The church that is built upon the revelation concerning Christ is the genuine church, and it is not sectarian; if we see this, we shall be saved from division.
- C. “Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”—Eph. 2:20a:
 1. Because the mystery of Christ was revealed to the apostles and prophets (3:4-5), the revelation they received is considered the foundation on which the church is built.
 2. In eternity there will be the unique New Jerusalem, built upon the foundation of many ministries laid one on top of the other, leading to the unique testimony in the unique expression—Rev. 21:14, 18-20.
 3. “A minister of the word does not receive an isolated, unrelated, great, and unprecedented revelation all at once. Rather, he builds his light upon God’s past speakings....Today’s revelation must match that of our predecessors, and today’s light and word must match that of our forebearers....No one can speak anything that is independent....We have to see what our predecessors have seen and receive what they have received” (Watchman Nee, *The Ministry of God’s Word*, pp. 91-92).