

Message Eleven

The Present Truth and the Way of the Truth

Scripture Reading: 2 Pet. 1:12; 2:2, 15, 21; 1 Pet. 1:22

- I. In the Bible there are two trees (Gen. 2:9), two sources (John 1:4; 15:1; 8:44), two ways (Matt. 7:13-14), two principles (Gen. 4:3-4; John 15:5-6; Jer. 17:5-8), and two consummations (Rev. 21:2, 10-11; 22:1-2; 20:10, 14-15).**
- II. Second Peter 2 shows that this Epistle was written in a time of the church's degradation and apostasy:**
 - A. Apostasy is a deviation from the right track of God's truth and a falling away from the straight way of God's economy as revealed in the Scriptures; through such apostasy the church became degraded—2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1.
 - B. Apostasy was the background of 2 Peter, and the burden of the writer was to inoculate the believers against the poison of apostasy—2:1:
 1. God's salvation is to impart Himself in His Trinity into the believers to be their life and life supply; this is God's economy, God's plan—2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:10; 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4.
 2. The apostasy distracted the believers from the economy of God by leading them into the human logic of puzzling philosophies—Col. 2:8:
 - a. This did not lead the believers to partake of the tree of life, which gives life, but to participate in the tree of knowledge, which brings in death—Gen. 2:9, 16-17.
 - b. Through the serpent's questioning and undermining of God's word, the believers, like Eve, can be carried away to the tree of knowledge and be distracted from the simplicity of eating the tree of life—3:1-6; 2 Cor. 11:2-3.
 3. In order to inoculate against this death-poison, Peter first prescribed the divine power as the strongest and most effective antidote—2 Pet. 1:3:
 - a. This power provides the believers with all things related to the generating and supplying divine life and the God-expressing godliness.
 - b. This rich divine provision enables the believers to overcome the satanic apostasy—1 John 5:4; Rev. 2:14-15, 17, 20, 24, 26-28.
- III. The antidotes used by Peter in dealing with the apostasy are the provision of life and the revelation of truth—2 Pet. 1:3-21:**
 - A. In verses 3 through 11 Peter used the provision of the divine life for the proper Christian life to inoculate against the apostasy.
 - B. In verses 12 through 21 he used the revelation of the divine truth to inoculate against the heresy in the apostasy—2:1, footnote 3.
- IV. The present truth is the truth that is present with the believers, which they have already received and now possess—1:12:**
 - A. We need to know the present, up-to-date truth and to uphold the absoluteness of the truth—John 18:37.
 - B. We need to be clear whether a particular matter is an item of the truth—8:32:

1. “Is calling on the name of the Lord a truth? No, it is not a truth. Calling on the Lord is necessary, and we need to have such a practice in our daily life, but calling on the Lord’s name is not a truth. Likewise, baptism, presbytery, foot-washing, and pray-reading are not truths” (*Life-study of Ezra*, p. 33).
 2. “Justification by faith is a truth. Regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, transfiguration, being made God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—all these are truths” (p. 33).
- C. Because many basic truths have been given up, even by those who apparently are fundamental believers, there is the need for us in the Lord’s recovery to fight the battle for the truth—1 Tim. 6:12, 20-21.
- D. Today, in a time of apostasy, we need to testify the full revelation of the pure Word of God and to fight for the deeper truths revealed in the Word of God, including:
1. The revelation concerning the eternal economy of God—Eph. 1:10; 3:9.
 2. The revelation concerning the Divine Trinity—2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5.
 3. The revelation concerning the person and work of the all-inclusive Christ—Col. 2:9, 16-17; 3:11.
 4. The revelation concerning the consummated life-giving Spirit—John 7:39; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 22:17.
 5. The revelation concerning the eternal life of God—John 3:15-16.
 6. The revelation concerning the Body of Christ, which is the church of God—Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27; 10:32.
- E. We need to know and testify the highest truth: In Christ God became man to make man God in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not in the Godhead so that the redeeming God and the redeemed man can be united, mingled, and incorporated together to become one entity—the New Jerusalem—John 1:12-14; 14:20; Rev. 21:2, 10-11.
- V. The way of the truth is the path of the Christian life according to the truth, which is the reality of the contents of the New Testament—2 Pet. 2:2:**
- A. The way of the truth is the straight way; to take the straight way is to live an upright life without crookedness and bias—v. 15.
 - B. The way of the truth is the way of righteousness; to take the way of righteousness is to live a life that is right with both God and man, a life which, according to God’s righteousness, can receive God’s governmental judgment for His kingdom of righteousness—vv. 21, 9; Matt. 5:20; Rom. 14:17.
 - C. The way of the truth is “the Way,” denoting the Lord’s full salvation in God’s New Testament economy—Acts 9:2:
 1. It is the way God dispenses Himself into the believers through Christ’s redemption and the Spirit’s anointing—Eph. 1:7; 1 John 2:27.
 2. It is the way the believers partake of God and enjoy God—2 Pet. 1:4.
 3. It is the way the believers worship God in their spirit by enjoying Him and follow the persecuted Jesus by being one with Him—John 4:24; Heb. 13:12-13.

4. It is the way the believers are brought into the church and built up into the Body of Christ to bear the testimony of Jesus—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27; Rev. 1:2.
- D. To take the way of the truth is to purify our souls by obedience to the truth; this is the sanctifying truth, which is God's word of reality—1 Pet. 1:22; John 17:17:
1. The purifying of our souls by obedience to the truth causes our entire being to be concentrated on God that we may love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind—Mark 12:30.
 2. Such a purifying of our souls issues in unfeigned brotherly love, that is, in our loving from the heart fervently those whom God loves—1 John 5:1.