

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OF JUDGES

Week Six

The Intrinsic Significance of the Book of Judges and the Apostasy of Israel in the Worshipping of God

Hymns: E832 (E800)

Scripture Reading: Judg. 1:1; 2:1; 17:1-5; 18:1, 30-31; 2 Thes. 2:2-3;
2 Pet. 1:3-21; 2:1, 15

OUTLINE

§Day 1

- I. **We need to know the intrinsic significance of the book of Judges:**
 - A. **Israel's inquiring of Jehovah in Judges 1:1-20 describes the beautiful scene of Israel's trusting in God; this marvelous picture of oneness with the Lord, prefiguring the organic union of God with His people, is a continuation of the oneness in the book of Joshua when the people of Israel first entered into the good land as described in Joshua 6—Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 22:10; 23:9-10; 2 Sam. 2:1.**
 - B. **According to the full scope of the Old Testament, at Mount Sinai God married Israel—Exo. 20:6, footnote 2:**
 1. **In His concept and desire, God wanted to be a Husband to Israel, and He wanted Israel to be a wife to Him, living in the most intimate contact with Him in this marvelous marriage union.**
 2. **In writing the books of history, Samuel put Judges after Joshua to show us the kind of life Israel lived toward her Husband.**
 3. **As unveiled in Judges, Israel did not have a heart to be the wife of Jehovah; rather, she forsook God as her Husband and went about as a harlot after other gods and worshipped them—2:11-13,**

17; 3:7; 8:33; 10:6; cf. Jer. 11:13; Ezek. 16:25-26; Hosea 1:2; 2:2.

- C. After the account of Judah and Caleb in Judges 1:1-20, Israel's history as recorded in this book is full of the rottenness and corruption of a harlot:**
- 1. Whereas Joshua is the book of Israel's history full of marvelous victories over the inhabitants of Canaan in the presence of Jehovah, Judges is the book of Israel's history full of miserable defeats under their enemies in the forsaking of Jehovah.**
 - 2. This is the intrinsic significance of the book of Judges.**
- D. The content of Judges consists of the children of Israel trusting in God, forsaking God, being defeated by their enemies, repenting to God in their misery, being delivered through the judges, and again becoming corrupted; this became a cycle repeated seven times in Judges—1:1-2; 2:11—3:11.**

§Day 2

- II. Judges 2:1 speaks of the Angel of Jehovah—5:23; Num. 22:22:**
- A. The Angel of Jehovah is God Himself in His Divine Trinity serving His elect as a Servant—cf. Heb. 1:14.**
 - B. The embodiment of the Triune God is Christ, and Christ is the Angel of Jehovah, who took care of Israel as Jehovah in action in the Old Testament—Exo. 3:2, footnote 1.**
 - C. For Christ to be the Angel of Jehovah means that God has appointed and commissioned Himself in His Divine Trinity to act in caring for His people.**
 - D. Because Israel did not act as a proper wife, the very Jehovah who was the Husband, the Head, and the King of Israel became a Servant to His wife:**
 - 1. Jehovah came to her not as a Husband, Head, or King but as the Angel of Jehovah, who was sent by Jehovah—Zech. 2:9-11.**
 - 2. Since Israel did not regard Jehovah as the Head, He became a Servant to serve her; His word to Israel in Judges 2:1-3 was not a**

rebuke or a command but the admonition of a servant.

§Day 3

III. Judges 17 and 18 reveal the apostasy of Israel in the worshipping of God:

- 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. “The man Micah had a house of gods; and he made an ephod and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons to become his priest”—17:5:**
 - 1. The house of Micah as a house of gods, with its idols (as replacements of Christ), its ephod (representing the authority of God), and its hired priest (representing the clergy-laity system, vv. 7-13), portrays the apostate situation related to the worship of God among Christians today.**
 - 2. Micah’s mother offered something to God, but her offering was mixed with the leaven of idolatry (vv. 1-4); the same mixture and apostate situation exists in Christianity.**
 - 3. We may apply the picture of Micah’s “house of gods” (v. 5) to the situation of Christianity.**
 - 4. 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.**

§Day 4 & Day 5

- C. “The children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol,” and they “set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh”—18:30-31:**
 - 1. The apostasy with Dan was the setting up of a divisive center of worship—17:9-10; 18:27-31; 1 Kings 12:26-31.**

2. **Dan fought as a young lion to gain more land (signifying Christ), but after being successful and victorious, he became proud, individualistic, and independent—Deut. 33:22; Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:27-31.**
3. **What the Danites gained made them proud and independent, unwilling to submit to what the Lord had ordained—vv. 1-31; 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.**
4. **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, 30-31.**
5. **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:**
 - a. **The tabernacle was in Shiloh, and the graven image was in Dan—Josh. 18:1.**
 - b. **“They set up the sculptured idol.. .the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh”—Judg. 18:31; 1 Sam. 1:3.**
6. **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—Judg. 18:1, 13-31.**
7. **The best way to be safeguarded from falling into apostasy is to care for the entire Body and the Lord’s unique testimony in the Lord’s one work—1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12, 27.**

§Day 6

- D. **There is a strong prophecy in the Bible that before the Lord’s coming back there will be a great apostasy among His people—2 Thes. 2:3:**

- 1. The day of the Lord's coming will not come unless the apostasy comes first—vv. 2-3.**
 - 2. This apostasy will be a falling away from the straight way of God's economy as revealed in the Scriptures—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:9.**
 - 3. Even today there is a tendency among some Christians to leave the straight way of the New Testament—2 Pet. 2:15.**
- E. The background and burden of 2 Peter is apostasy—a deviation from the right track of God's truth—2:1:**
- 1. The apostasy distracted the believers from the economy of God by leading them into the human logic of puzzling philosophies—Col. 2:8.**
 - 2. The teachings of the apostates 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; 2 Cor. 11:2-3, 12-15.**
 - 3. The antidotes used by Peter in dealing with 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.**
 - 4. Because today's Christianity is filled with apostasy, the Lord needs a recovery—the recovery of life and truth—John 1:4; 8:12; 10:10b; 14:6; Rev. 2:4, 15.**
- F. 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.**

WEEK 6 — DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Judg. 1:1-2 ...After the death of Joshua, the children of Israel inquired of Jehovah, saying, Who will go up for us first against the Canaanites, in order to fight against them? And Jehovah said, Judah shall go up. I have now given the land into his hand.

After the death of Joshua, the children of Israel inquired of Jehovah concerning who would go up for them first against the Canaanites in order to fight against them (Judg. 1:1). Jehovah gave His answer and promise, saying, “Judah shall go up. I have now given the land into his hand” (v. 2). This marvelous picture of oneness with the Lord, of the organic union of God with His people, is a continuation of the oneness in the book of Joshua when the people of Israel first entered into the good land. (Life-study of Judges, p. 5)

Today's Reading

If we read the Old Testament according to [the] full scope [of the Scriptures], we will realize that at Mount Sinai God married Israel. In His concept and desire, He wanted to be to Israel as a husband to a wife, and He expected Israel to act as a wife toward Him. We need to keep this point in mind as we read the book of Judges.

In writing the books of history, Samuel put Judges after Joshua to show us what kind of life Israel lived toward her Husband. For some reason, she did not have a heart to be the wife of Jehovah. As a wife, she forgot her Husband, left her Husband, and acted according to her own desires. Eventually, Israel became a harlot. At the time of Hosea, Israel was a harlot in the eyes of God (Hosea 1:2; 2:2). Having fallen into the sin of adultery, she did not have a definite husband. In addition to Jehovah as her Husband, she had many other men....In the book of Judges there is a terrible picture of a wife forsaking her Husband and not even acknowledging His existence.

This is an ugly picture of a harlot, a wife who forsook her Husband and went after idols. In the beginning Israel had a bridal love toward God, but after her marriage she lost her position as a chaste wife to her husband. She forsook God and went to idols. Every idol was a “man,” and Israel became full of idols. Jeremiah 11:13 says that according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem the people had set up altars to burn incense to their idols. Ezekiel 16:24 tells us that Israel made “an elevation in every open square.”

In the book of Judges, a particular saying is repeated a number of times: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did that which was right in his own eyes” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). But God was the King! According to the principle in the Bible, the husband is the head of the marriage and the head of the family. In creation God ordained that the man would have this authority; therefore, he also has the kingship. In typology and in figure, God is the unique man. We all are females because we, the church, are the corporate wife to Christ. Since God is our Creator and our Lord, He should also be our King.

In the book of 1 Samuel, the children of Israel asked God to appoint a king for them (8:5). This was a great offense to God (v. 7). Even though Israel was a wife to God, she became a harlot. She did not recognize God’s kingship, and she did not recognize God as her Husband. Therefore, the children of Israel did what was right in their own eyes, and as a result they became rotten and corrupted.

This is what we see in the book of Judges.... After the story of Judah and Caleb in 1:1-20, Israel’s history as recorded in Judges was full of the rottenness and corruption of a harlot. This is the intrinsic significance of the book of Judges.

Joshua is the book of Israel’s history full of the marvelous victories over the inhabitants of Canaan in the presence of Jehovah. Judges, on the contrary, is the book of Israel’s history full of miserable defeats under their enemies in the forsaking of Jehovah. (Life-study of Judges, pp. 1-3)

Further Reading: Life-study of Judges, msgs. 1,3,9-10; CWWN, vol. 53, “The Ministry of God’s Word,” ch. 6

WEEK 6 — DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

Judg. 2:1 Then the Angel of Jehovah...said, I caused you to go up out from Egypt, and I brought you into the land that I swore to your fathers. And I said, I will never break My covenant with you.

Exo. 3:2 ...The Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thornbush...

At Mount Sinai God entered into a marriage union with Israel and...wanted her to remain in the most intimate contact with Him in this marvelous marriage union. But Israel rejected God as her Husband and as her King and “went about as harlots after other gods and worshipped them” (Judg. 2:17). In dealing with this situation, the King became a servant, as the Angel of Jehovah, to admonish the children of Israel (vv. 1-5).

The Angel of Jehovah is spoken of throughout the Old Testament, from Exodus 3 through Zechariah 3. The Angel of Jehovah is also mentioned in Judges 2 and 6. The word angel is capitalized in these instances because this Angel is a particular Angel. The Angel of Jehovah is just God Himself in His Divine Trinity serving His elect as a Servant. (Life-study of Judges, p. 9)

Today's Reading

When Moses was being called by God to lead Israel out of Egypt, the calling Jehovah became the Angel of Jehovah. In Exodus 3 the names Jehovah and the Angel of Jehovah are used interchangeably (vv. 2,4). The embodiment of the Triune God is Christ, and Christ is the Angel of Jehovah, who took care of Israel as the acting Jehovah in the Old Testament. Christ is the acting God, not a silent, passive God. For Christ to be the Angel of Jehovah means that God has appointed and commissioned Himself in His Divine Trinity to act in caring for His people.

Because Israel did not act as a proper wife, the very Jehovah who was the Husband, the Head, and the King of Israel became a Servant to His wife.

This means that He did not come to her as a Husband, Head, or King but came to her as the Angel of Jehovah, who was sent by Jehovah (Zech. 2:9-11). Since Israel did not consider Jehovah as the Head, He became a Servant to serve her. His admonition in Judges 2 was the admonition of a servant.

With respect to Christ as the Angel of Jehovah, let us review what is revealed concerning Christ in the four Gospels. In the Gospel of Matthew Christ is presented as the King, and in the Gospel of Mark the King is presented as a Slave. The King-Savior thus became a Slave-Savior. In the Gospel of Luke the Slave-Savior is presented as a Man-Savior in His human virtues with the divine attributes. However, He is more than just a man; He is also God. Therefore, in the Gospel of John He is presented as God (1:1). He is the eternal God who became flesh (v. 14). Our Savior, therefore, is a God-man, who is both a King and a Slave. This is the intrinsic significance of the four Gospels.

Our God wants to save us and be our King, and we need to acknowledge Him as our Head and King. In order to save us, however, the King had to become a Servant and a Slave. As a Slave He is both God and man. He is a man, but His substance, His very essence, is God. In His divinity God is our King and Head. Because our situation was so poor, the King had to become a Servant to serve us. The Servant sent by God in Judges 2 was actually Jehovah Himself in His acting situation. He did not come to rebuke or command; rather, He came to admonish and to take care of Israel. This is the significance of the Angel of Jehovah in Judges 2.

In 2:1-5 we have the admonition of the Angel of Jehovah, who, as we have seen, is Christ as the acting Jehovah in the Old Testament taking care of Israel (Exo. 3:2-10; 14:19; Judg. 6:21). (Life-study of Judges, pp. 9-11)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msgs. 80-81; Life-study of Revelation, msgs. 13, 62

WEEK 6 — DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

2 Pet. 2:2 ...Many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled.

15 Forsaking the straight way, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.

In their degradation Israel became chaotic in three ways: in government, in worship, and in morality....God's tabernacle was at Shiloh, and the high priest had the Urim and Thummim, but there was no administration. Judges 17 and 18 reveal the abominable chaos in the children of Israel's worship. Micah set up a house of gods in his home. His mother consecrated silver to Jehovah to make an idol and a molten image. Micah then set up a house of gods, made an ephod and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons to be his priest. The ephod signifies the authority of God, without which no one can worship God. Later, Micah consecrated a Levite to be his house priest, paying him a salary of ten pieces of silver a year plus an array of clothing and his food. In those days the Danites robbed Micah of his idol, the ephod, the teraphim, and the molten image with his priest, and with them they set up another worship place in the city of Dan, while God's tabernacle remained in Shiloh. The result was two worship centers—the proper one with God's tabernacle at Shiloh and the improper one in Dan. That was the chaos of the children of Israel in their worship. (Life-study of Judges, p. 53)

Today's Reading

We may apply this picture to the present situation of Christianity. Today's Christianity has many "houses of Micah," the most prominent of which is the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church has set up idols, made its own "ephod," and set up its own priests. According to the New Testament all those who are born of God should be priests (1 Pet. 2:5,

9), but Catholicism has hired its own priests and set up a hierarchy under a pope. In principle, Catholicism is the same as the house of Micah in Judges. The state churches, the denominations, and many of the independent groups are also houses of Micah, full of idols as replacements of Christ.

Not everything in Christianity is wrong, but everything is a mixture. It is like the woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened (Matt. 13:33). The meal signifies Christ as food for God and for His people. The leaven signifies evil things (1 Cor. 5:6, 8) and evil doctrines (Matt. 16:6, 11-12). Micah's mother offered something to God, but her offering to God was mixed with the leaven of idolatry.

Any teaching or practice among Christians that is not according to the Scriptures is an idol. In the recent rebellion among us, a teaching regarding autonomy was promoted. Those who teach this stress that every local church is absolutely autonomous. However, this is contrary to the Scriptures and produces local sects. This teaching has become an idol. Each local church is autonomous in its business affairs, but the teaching that each local church is absolutely autonomous in every way within its locality is an idol. Nevertheless, some are using this teaching to spread division.

The Bible reveals that the church as the Body of Christ is universally and uniquely one. Because all the members of the Body of Christ exist on earth in different cities, this unique Body of Christ is expressed among people on earth in many cities—one city, one church. Whereas Catholicism, the denominations, and the independent groups are “houses of Micah,” we meet as a local church, as the church in a particular city. In the Scriptures there are no house churches, street churches, state churches, or district churches. Instead, there are local churches. The local church in a city is a part of the Body. Therefore, we practice the local churches, and we also practice the universal Body of Christ. (Life-study of Judges, pp. 53-54,59-60)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ephesians, msg. 27; CWWL, 1986, vol. 1, “Elders’ Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord’s Move,” ch. 8

WEEK 6 — DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Deut. 12:5 But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.

8 You shall not do according to all that we do here today, each man doing all that is right in his own eyes.

In Deuteronomy 33:22 Dan is likened to a young lion.... As a young lion, Dan fought in order to gain more land (Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:27-29), the land signifying Christ (see footnote 1 on Deut. 8:7). After his success in his victory Dan became a serpent, a viper, acting individualistically and independently in his pride to set up an idol and a divisive center of worship and to ordain a hired priest in the city of Dan during the time that the house of God was in Shiloh (Judg. 18:30-31; cf. Deut. 12:5 and footnote). As a serpent Dan bit the horse's heels so that its rider fell backward, signifying that the apostasy brought in by Dan became a great stumbling block to the nation of Israel. Throughout the history of the church many spiritual people have followed Dan's example, thereby frustrating God's people from going on in His ordained way. (Gen. 49:17, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

Many use the matter of the worship of God as a cloak for setting up a divisive center. Some would say, "What could be wrong with doing such a thing for the worship of God? Isn't it better to set up a center of worship than to go to a movie theater?" According to the history in the Old Testament, nothing throughout the generations was more sinful or more damaging to God's people than Dan's act of setting up a divisive center of worship. In Deuteronomy 12, 14, 15, and 16 the Lord through Moses charged the children of Israel at least fifteen times not to offer their burnt offerings in the place of their choice. They were commanded to go to the unique place the Lord had chosen for His name and for His habitation.

Deuteronomy 12:13 and 14 say, “Be careful that you do not offer up your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which Jehovah will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer up your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.”...Again and again Moses, the elderly, loving lawgiver, charged the children of Israel concerning this matter. If you read these chapters, you will see that Moses charged the people concerning the unique place, the place the Lord had chosen for His name and for His habitation. The reason the Lord commanded Moses to issue this charge repeatedly was that He was concerned about maintaining the unity of His people.

After the children of Israel entered the good land, the tabernacle, the house of God, was in Shiloh (Judg. 18:31).... [Hence,] Shiloh was the unique center for the worship of God. As the unique center, it should have maintained the unity of God’s people. However, Dan set up another center in the north, which caused the first division among the children of Israel.... [Although God] is omnipresent...[He] enjoys being limited for the purpose of keeping the unity of His people. Most Christians today,...like the Danites,...feel free to set up another center of worship.

Judges 18:30 says, “The children of Dan erected for themselves the sculptured idol.” Here we see that the Danites did something for themselves. They did not care for the other tribes. Thus, the source of their apostasy was not caring for their brothers. Not caring for the other parts of the Body is the source of apostasy. This apostasy crept in under the guise of the worship of God. The principle is the same today. Many Christians set up other centers, not for gambling or dancing, but for worshipping God. Although this seems so positive, it is actually done by the self and for the self. Every divisive center is established for someone’s self-interest. Such a practice causes not only division but also competition. (Life-study of Genesis, pp. 1317-1319)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msgs. 102-103; CWWL, 1975-1976, vol. 3, “Young People’s Training,” ch. 12; Life-study of Matthew, msg. 47

WEEK 6 — DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 12:27 Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually.

12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

The words for themselves in Judges 18:30 are very significant. Many who claim to be worshipping God are really doing something for themselves. Apostasy is doing something for the self under the cloak of worshipping God. Jeroboam had no heart for God. Rather, his heart was for his own little empire. In his heart he feared that the kingdom would return to the house of David (1 Kings 12:26). Using the name of God as a cloak, he did everything possible to preserve his empire. This is apostasy. (Life-study of Genesis, p. 1321)

Today's Reading

The whole of Christendom today is an apostasy. So many are doing things for themselves under the name of Jesus Christ and under the cloak of the worship of God. This is the reason the Lord needs a recovery. The Lord's recovery will always offend others. As long as the recovery is here, the divisive groups will stand condemned. As long as the temple was in Jerusalem, the golden calf was under condemnation. Was it possible for Dan to love Jerusalem? No, there could be no reconciliation between Dan and Jerusalem. Often others have come to me and said, "Brother Lee, please don't be so bold. Why not be a little nice?" I replied, "To whom should I be nice? To the serpent? To the horned snake? To the graven image? To the golden calf?..." How can we be kind to today's apostasy? There can be no compromise. Do not try to compromise with the serpent, the horned snake. If you are kind to the snake, you will be poisoned by it. If you try to be nice to today's apostasy, you will be damaged.... In Jerusalem there was God's

temple as His testimony, but in Dan there was apostasy. Both in church history and in our own Christian experience we have seen this very thing....We might have said that we were working for the Lord when we were actually working for something else. This is apostasy.

Dan did not care for the other tribes; he cared only for his own tribe. After he won the victory and gained the expansion, the enlargement, he did something for himself. This was the source of his apostasy. According to the Old Testament, the Lord never forgot Dan's apostasy. In the eyes of God it was the worst sin in His economy. Nothing is more damaging than divisiveness. Nothing is more destructive than division among God's people. Divisive worship centers are often related to idols. Because the devil lurks behind idols, by setting up an idol Dan became a serpent. Whenever you become divisive, no matter how good your reason may be, there will be something behind you—the serpent, the subtle one. The whole history of the church testifies of this and our experience confirms it. Whenever you do not care for others, but only for your interests, doing something merely for yourself, the serpent is at hand. The best way to be safeguarded from falling into apostasy is taking care of others. Suppose Dan had contacted the other tribes and said, "Brothers, do you agree that I set up another worship center in the city of Dan?" Had he done this, the others would have said, "Brother, don't do this. Deuteronomy 12, 14, 15, and 16 forbid us to have any other center of worship that we may come to the unique center." If Dan had consulted the other tribes, he would have been kept from apostasy. But being individualistic, he set up another worship center and fell into apostasy.

In principle, every divisive center of worship is the same. Those who establish them care only for their interests, their desires, and they neglect all the other saints. They are like Dan, who cared only for his tribe, not for the others. (Life-study of Genesis, pp. 1321-1323)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1972, vol. 2, "The Genuine Ground of Oneness," ch. 3; Life-study of 1 & 2 Kings, msg. 8

WEEK 6 — DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

2 Pet. 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue.

19 And we have the prophetic word made more firm, to which you do well to give heed as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

[Second Peter] was written in the time of the church's degradation and apostasy...The burden of the writer was to inoculate the believers against the poison of apostasy...The apostasy distracted the believers from the economy of God by leading them into the human logic of puzzling philosophies. It was not the exercise of partaking of the tree of life that gives life, but of participating in the tree of knowledge that brings in death (Gen. 2:9, 16-17).... In order to inoculate against this death-poison in his healing Epistle, Peter first prescribed the divine power as the strongest and most effective antidote. This provides the believers with all things related to the generating and supplying divine life (not the killing knowledge) and the God-expressing godliness (not the show of human wisdom). This rich divine provision, which is covered in detail in the following verses (2 Pet. 1:3-11), is more than sufficient for the believers to live a proper Christian life and overcome the satanic apostasy. (Life-study of 2 Peter; p. 14)

Today's Reading

In 2 Peter 1:3 the word divine denotes the eternal, unlimited, and almighty divinity of God. Hence, divine power is the power of the divine life related to the divine nature. Here the word granted means imparted, infused, planted. All things which relate to life and godliness have been imparted to us, infused into us, by the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit, who has regenerated us and who indwells us. Life is the inward energy, inward strength, to bring forth the outward godliness, which leads to glory and

results in glory.

In 1:19-21 Peter [uses] the prophetic word found in the Old Testament to confirm the apostles' testimony. Both the apostles' witness and the prophetic word in the Scriptures are the shining of the truth. This shining is part of the divine provision, the provision God has made by His power so that His elect children may be able to stay away from heresy and apostasy.

It is important for us to realize that the element of apostasy continues today. Because a number of 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....We believe not only in all the genuine items held by fundamental Christians, but also in the deeper truths. We definitely believe that the Bible is fully inspired by God word for word. We would follow the literal translation of 2 Timothy 3:16 to say that all Scripture is God-breathed. We believe that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God. He is true God and true man. We believe in Christ's incarnation and in His death on the cross for our redemption. According to the Scriptures, we believe that the Lord's death was all-inclusive. Through His crucifixion He terminated the old creation, including us with our flesh and our fallen nature. We fully believe in the Lord's resurrection and ascension. We believe that the Lord is now on the throne. But we also believe that He is not limited to the throne, for as the life-giving Spirit He dwells in our spirit. We believe in every aspect of what Christ is and of what He has done, is doing, and will do. We also believe in all that Christ has attained and obtained. Furthermore, according to the Bible, we believe in transformation and in being constituted of the element of God for the rearrangement of our being. We may say that all this is our deeper faith. In a time of apostasy, we believe and testify the full revelation of the pure Word of God. (Life-study of 2 Peter, pp. 14-15, 69-70, 91-92)

Further Reading: Life-study of 2 Peter, msgs. 2, 8-11; Life-study of 2 Timothy, msgs. 2, 7

« WEEK 6 — HYMN »

Hymns, #800 God the Lord has spoken, God has been unveiled

Study of the Word — The Function of the Word

- 1 God the Lord has spoken, God has been unveiled;
All His character and persons are expressed;
Unto Adam's sons His mystery is revealed,
Fully illustrated and made manifest.
- 2 God the Lord has spoken, and His heart disclosed,
That His Son should have pre-eminence in all,
That in His dear Son He might be glorified
Midst all His creation, either great or small.
- 3 God the Lord has spoken, Christ has been revealed:
He is very God and yet is truly man;
He is all in all, in Him all things subsist,
Center and circumference of th' eternal plan.
- 4 God the Lord has spoken, and His mystery shown,
Christ and His expression has His counsel willed:
Christ with all God's fulness as the glorious Head,
And the Church His Body, with His riches filled.
- 5 God the Lord has spoken, and from heaven shown
That the triune God would blend with creature-man:
Father in the Son, the Son the Spirit is,
Dwelling in the Body to fulfill His plan.
- 6 God the Lord has spoken, revelation giv'n
Of His vast creation and His lowly birth,
Of His great redemption and salvation full;
May His adoration ever fill the earth.

