

Message Eleven
Apostasy, the High Places,
and the Recovery of the Genuine Ground of Oneness

RA Hymns: 845, 831

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 12:25-33; 13:33-34; Deut. 12:2-18

- 1 Kings 12:25 Then Jeroboam built up Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and he dwelt in it; and he went forth from there and built up Penuel.
- 1 Kings 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom will return to the house of David.
- 1 Kings 12:27 If this people go up to make sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will return to their lord, to Rehoboam the king of Judah; and they will slay me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah.
- 1 Kings 12:28 And the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!
- 1 Kings 12:29 And he set one in Bethel, and he put the other one in Dan.
- 1 Kings 12:30 And this thing became a sin; and the people went to worship the one as far as Dan.
- 1 Kings 12:31 And he made a house of high places and appointed priests from among the people who were not from the sons of Levi.
- 1 Kings 12:32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; he did likewise at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made.
- 1 Kings 12:33 And he went up to the altar that he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day, in the eighth month, that is, the month he had devised in his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.
- 1 Kings 13:33 After this matter Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but he again made priests for the high places from among the people; whoever desired it, he consecrated to be priests of the high places.
- 1 Kings 13:34 And this matter became a sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as even to cut it off and destroy it from the face of the earth.
- Deut 12:2 You shall completely destroy all the places where the nations whom you will dispossess have served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every flourishing tree.
- Deut 12:3 And you shall tear down their altars and crush their pillars; and their Asherahs you shall burn with fire, and the idols of their gods you shall cut down; and you shall destroy their name from that place.
- Deut 12:4 You shall not do so to Jehovah your God.
- 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.
- Deut 12:6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;
- Deut 12:7 And there you shall eat before Jehovah your God, and you and your households shall rejoice in all your undertakings, in which Jehovah your God has blessed you.
- Deut 12:8 You shall not do according to all that we do here today, each man doing all that is right in his own eyes;
- Deut 12:9 For until now you have not come to the rest and to the inheritance that Jehovah your God is giving you.
- Deut 12:10 But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which Jehovah your God is giving you as an inheritance, and when He gives you rest from all your enemies surrounding you so that you dwell securely;
- Deut 12:11 Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to Jehovah.
- Deut 12:12 And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, you and your sons and daughters, and your male servants and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no portion nor inheritance with you.
- Deut 12:13 Be careful that you do not offer up your burnt offerings in every place that you see;

- Deut 12:14 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.
- Deut 12:15 Yet you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, in all that your soul desires, according to the blessing of Jehovah your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat it as the gazelle and the deer are eaten.
- Deut 12:16 However, you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it out upon the earth like water.
- Deut 12:17 You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or of your new wine or of your fresh oil, nor the firstborn of your herd or of your flock, or any of your vows which you vow or of your freewill offerings or of the heave offering of your hand;
- Deut 12:18 But you shall eat them before Jehovah your God in the place which Jehovah your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God in all your undertakings.

I. The apostasy of Jeroboam can be considered a type of today's Christianity—1 Kings 12:25-33; 13:33-34:

- 1 Kings 12:25 Then Jeroboam built up Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and he dwelt in it; and he went forth from there and built up Penuel.
- 1 Kings 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom will return to the house of David.
- 1 Kings 12:27 If this people go up to make sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will return to their lord, to Rehoboam the king of Judah; and they will slay me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah.
- 1 Kings 12:28 And the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!
- 1 Kings 12:29 And he set one in Bethel, and he put the other one in Dan.
- 1 Kings 12:30 And this thing became a sin; and the people went to worship the one as far as Dan.
- 1 Kings 12:31 And he made a house of high places and appointed priests from among the people who were not from the sons of Levi.
- 1 Kings 12:32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; he did likewise at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made.
- 1 Kings 12:33 And he went up to the altar that he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day, in the eighth month, that is, the month he had devised in his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.
- 1 Kings 13:33 After this matter Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but he again made priests for the high places from among the people; whoever desired it, he consecrated to be priests of the high places.
- 1 Kings 13:34 And this matter became a sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as even to cut it off and destroy it from the face of the earth.
- 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.
- Acts 9:2 And asked for letters from him to Damascus for the synagogues, so that if he found any who were of the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
- Acts 18:26 And this man began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him to themselves and expounded the way of God to him more accurately.
- 2 Pet 2:2 And many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled.
- 2 Pet 2:15 Forsaking the straight way, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness
- 2 Pet 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.
- Jude 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain and have rushed out in the error of Balaam for reward and have perished in the rebellion of Korah.

- Judg 18:30 And the children of Dan erected the sculptured idol; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, he and his sons, became priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.
- Judg 18:31 Thus they set up the sculptured idol that Micah had made the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

B. Jeroboam's apostasy consisted of five things:

1. Jeroboam made two calves of gold (idols), putting one in Bethel and the other in Dan, in order to distract the people from worshipping in Jerusalem, thus breaking God's ordination of having one unique worship center in the Holy Land for keeping the oneness of the children of Israel—1 Kings 12:26-30; Deut. 12:2-18.

1 Kings 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom will return to the house of David.

1 Kings 12:27 If this people go up to make sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will return to their lord, to Rehoboam the king of Judah; and they will slay me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah.

1 Kings 12:28 And the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!

1 Kings 12:29 And he set one in Bethel, and he put the other one in Dan.

1 Kings 12:30 And this thing became a sin; and the people went to worship the one as far as Dan.

Deut 12:2 You shall completely destroy all the places where the nations whom you will dispossess have served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every flourishing tree.

Deut 12:3 And you shall tear down their altars and crush their pillars; and their Asherahs you shall burn with fire, and the idols of their gods you shall cut down; and you shall destroy their name from that place.

Deut 12:4 You shall not do so to Jehovah your God.

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.

Deut 12:6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices and your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and your vows and your freewill offerings and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock;

Deut 12:7 And there you shall eat before Jehovah your God, and you and your households shall rejoice in all your undertakings, in which Jehovah your God has blessed you.

Deut 12:8 You shall not do according to all that we do here today, each man doing all that is right in his own eyes;

Deut 12:9 For until now you have not come to the rest and to the inheritance that Jehovah your God is giving you.

Deut 12:10 But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which Jehovah your God is giving you as an inheritance, and when He gives you rest from all your enemies surrounding you so that you dwell securely;

Deut 12:11 Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to Jehovah.

Deut 12:12 And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, you and your sons and daughters, and your male servants and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no portion nor inheritance with you.

Deut 12:13 Be careful that you do not offer up your burnt offerings in every place that you see;

Deut 12:14 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.

Deut 12:15 Yet you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, in all that your soul desires, according to the blessing of Jehovah your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat it as the gazelle and the deer are eaten.

- Deut 12:16 However, you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it out upon the earth like water.
- Deut 12:17 You may not eat within your gates the tithing of your grain or of your new wine or of your fresh oil, nor the firstborn of your herd or of your flock, or any of your vows which you vow or of your freewill offerings or of the heave offering of your hand;
- Deut 12:18 But you shall eat them before Jehovah your God in the place which Jehovah your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God in all your undertakings.
2. Jeroboam built a temple at the high places and appointed priests from among the common people who were not of the tribe of Levi—1 Kings 12:31; 13:33b; 2 Chron. 13:9.
- 1 Kings 12:31 And he made a house of high places and appointed priests from among the people who were not from the sons of Levi.
- 1 Kings 13:33b ... whoever desired it, he consecrated to be priests of the high places.
- 2 Chron 13:9 Have you not cast out the priests of Jehovah, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites? And you made for yourselves priests like those of the peoples of other lands, so that anyone who comes to consecrate himself with a bull of the herd and seven rams becomes a priest of what are not gods.
3. Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month (the month he had devised in his own heart) like the feast that was in Judah—1 Kings 12:32a, 33b.
- 1 Kings 12:32a And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; ...
- 1 Kings 12:33b ... and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.
4. Jeroboam offered sacrifices on the altar at Bethel to the calves that he had made, and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places—vv. 32b-33a.
- 1 Kings 12:32b ... he did likewise at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made.
- 1 Kings 12:33a And he went up to the altar that he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day, in the eighth month, that is, the month he had devised in his own heart; ...
5. Jeroboam went up to the altar although he was not a priest—v. 33b.
- 1 Kings 12:33b ... and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.
- C. Jeroboam's apostasy became a serious sin that caused his entire family to be destroyed under God's judgment and eventually led to Israel's being carried away into captivity—13:34; 14:7-11, 15-16; 15:29-30; 2 Kings 17:20-23.
- 1 Kings 13:34 And this matter became a sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as even to cut it off and destroy it from the face of the earth.
- 1 Kings 14:7 Go and tell Jeroboam, Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, Because I exalted you from among the people and made you ruler over My people Israel,
- 1 Kings 14:8 And I tore away the kingdom from the house of David and gave it to you; and yet you have not been like My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, doing only what was upright in My sight,
- 1 Kings 14:9 But you have done more evil than all who were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods and idols, so as to provoke Me to anger; and you have cast Me behind your back -
- 1 Kings 14:10 Because of this then, I am now bringing evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and I will cut off from Jeroboam every male, bond and free, in Israel; and I will sweep up after the house of Jeroboam as a man might sweep up dung until it is all gone.
- 1 Kings 14:11 Him of Jeroboam's who dies in the city, the dogs will eat; and him who dies in the field, the birds of heaven will eat; for Jehovah has spoken it.
- 1 Kings 14:15 And Jehovah will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He will uproot Israel out of this good land, which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they made their Asherahs, provoking Jehovah to anger.
- 1 Kings 14:16 And He will give Israel up on account of the sins of Jeroboam, by which he sinned and by which he caused Israel to sin.

- 1 Kings 15:29 And as soon as he became king, he struck down all the house of Jeroboam; he left to Jeroboam not one who had breath, until he had destroyed them, according to the word of Jehovah, which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the Shilonite,
- 1 Kings 15:30 Because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he committed and by which he caused Israel to sin, because of his provocation by which he provoked Jehovah the God of Israel to anger.
- 2 Kings 17:20 And Jehovah rejected all the seed of Israel; and He afflicted them and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them out of His sight.
- 2 Kings 17:21 For He tore Israel from the house of David. Now they had made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king, and Jeroboam drove Israel away from following Jehovah and made them commit a great sin.
- 2 Kings 17:22 And the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them,
- 2 Kings 17:23 Until Jehovah removed Israel from His sight, as He had said through all His servants the prophets. And Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria; as it is unto this day.
- D. The centers of worship set up by present-day “Jeroboams” are actually centers of ambition:
1. The divisions in Christianity are caused by selfishness and ambition.
 2. Because certain ones are ambitious to have an empire to satisfy their selfish desire, they neglect God’s choice.
- 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. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 2:6, 15.
- 1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
- Rev 1:6 And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.
- Rev 5:10 And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.
- Rev 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- Rev 2:15 In the same way you also have some who hold in like manner the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
- F. Because today’s Christianity is filled with apostasy, the Lord needs a recovery—the recovery of life and truth—Jer. 2:11, 13, 19; Rev. 2:6, 15; 1 John 1:1-2, 5-6; John 18:37b; 10:10b.
- Jer 2:11 Has a nation ever exchanged its gods, / Even though they are no gods? / But My people have exchanged their glory / For that which does not benefit them.
- Jer 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.
- Jer 2:19 Your own wickedness will correct you, / And your apostasies will reprove you. / Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing, / That you have forsaken Jehovah your God / And that My fear is not in you, / Declares the Lord Jehovah of hosts.
- Rev 2:6 But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- Rev 2:15 In the same way you also have some who hold in like manner the teaching of the Nicolaitans.
- 1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life
- 1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
- 1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- 1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;

- John 18:37b ... Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.
- John 10:10b ...I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- G. 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.
- 1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life
- 1 John 1:2 (And the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us);
- 1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- 1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and are not practicing the truth;
- John 18:37b ... Jesus answered, You say that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I would testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.
- John 10:10b ... I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- 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,
- 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
- 2 Pet 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;
- 2 Pet 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- 2 Pet 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.
- 2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.
- 2 Pet 1:12 Therefore I will be ready always to remind you concerning these things, even though you know them and have been established in the present truth.
- 2 Pet 1:13 And I consider it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by a reminder,
- 2 Pet 1:14 Knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle is imminent, even as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.
- 2 Pet 1:15 Moreover I will also be diligent that you may be able, after my exodus, to bring these things to mind at all times.
- 2 Pet 1:16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we became eyewitnesses of that One's majesty.
- 2 Pet 1:17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory, a voice such as this being borne to Him by the magnificent glory: This is My Son, My Beloved, in whom I delight.
- 2 Pet 1:18 And this voice we heard being borne out of heaven while we were with Him in the holy mountain.
- 2 Pet 1:19 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;
- 2 Pet 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own interpretation;
- 2 Pet 1:21 For no prophecy was ever borne by the will of man, but men spoke from God while being borne by the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Tim 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus,

- 2 Tim 1:10 But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,
- 2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman, cutting straight the word of the truth.
- 2 Tim 2:25 In meekness correcting those who oppose, if perhaps God may give them repentance unto the full knowledge of the truth,

II. For the recovery and preservation of the genuine, all-inclusive oneness, we must destroy the high places—1 Kings 11:7-8; 12:26-33; 13:33-34; 14:22-23; 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kings 12:2-3; 14:3-4; 15:3-4, 34-35:

- 1 Kings 11:7 Then Solomon built a high place to Chemosh the detestable thing of Moab in the mountain that is before Jerusalem and to Molech the detestable thing of the children of Ammon.
- 1 Kings 11:8 And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.
- 1 Kings 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom will return to the house of David.
- 1 Kings 12:27 If this people go up to make sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will return to their lord, to Rehoboam the king of Judah; and they will slay me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah.
- 1 Kings 12:28 And the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!
- 1 Kings 12:29 And he set one in Bethel, and he put the other one in Dan.
- 1 Kings 12:30 And this thing became a sin; and the people went to worship the one as far as Dan.
- 1 Kings 12:31 And he made a house of high places and appointed priests from among the people who were not from the sons of Levi.
- 1 Kings 12:32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; he did likewise at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made.
- 1 Kings 12:33 And he went up to the altar that he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day, in the eighth month, that is, the month he had devised in his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.
- 1 Kings 13:33 After this matter Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but he again made priests for the high places from among the people; whoever desired it, he consecrated to be priests of the high places.
- 1 Kings 13:34 And this matter became a sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as even to cut it off and destroy it from the face of the earth.
- 1 Kings 14:22 And Judah did what was evil in the sight of Jehovah and provoked Him to jealousy because of the sins which they committed, above all the sins which their fathers had committed.
- 1 Kings 14:23 And they also built for themselves high places and pillars and Asherahs on every high hill and under every flourishing tree,
- 1 Kings 15:14 But the high places were not removed; otherwise the heart of Asa was perfect with Jehovah all his days.
- 1 Kings 22:43 And he walked in all the way of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of Jehovah. Nevertheless the high places were not removed; the people offered sacrifices and burned incense still on the high places.
- 2 Kings 12:2 And Jehoash did what was right in the sight of Jehovah all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him.
- 2 Kings 12:3 However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places.
- 2 Kings 14:3 And he did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, yet not like David his father; he did according to all that Joash his father had done.
- 2 Kings 14:4 However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places.
- 2 Kings 15:3 And he did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.
- 2 Kings 15:4 However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places.

2 Kings 15:34 And he did what was right in the sight of Jehovah; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

2 Kings 15:35 However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places. He built the upper gate of the house of Jehovah.

- A. High places were the places where the Gentile people worshipped their idols.
- B. When the children of Israel entered into the land of Canaan to possess it, God commanded them to destroy all the high places of the nations—Deut. 12:1-3:

Deut 12:1 These are the statutes and the ordinances that you shall be certain to do in the land which Jehovah, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.

Deut 12:2 You shall completely destroy all the places where the nations whom you will dispossess have served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every flourishing tree.

Deut 12:3 And you shall tear down their altars and crush their pillars; and their Asherahs you shall burn with fire, and the idols of their gods you shall cut down; and you shall destroy their name from that place.

1. To set up a high place is to have a division; hence, the significance of high places is division.

2. To preserve the oneness of His people, God required that they come to the unique place of His choice; the high places were a substitute and an alternative for this unique place—vv. 8, 11, 13-14, 18.

Deut 12:8 You shall not do according to all that we do here today, each man doing all that is right in his own eyes;

Deut 12:11 Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you, your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to Jehovah.

Deut 12:13 Be careful that you do not offer up your burnt offerings in every place that you see;

Deut 12:14 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.

Deut 12:18 But you shall eat them before Jehovah your God in the place which Jehovah your God will choose, you and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God in all your undertakings.

3. In 1 Kings, two kings—Solomon and Jeroboam—took the lead to set up the high places, the former because of the indulgence of lust and the latter because of ambition—11:7-8; 12:27.

1 Kings 11:7 Then Solomon built a high place to Chemosh the detestable thing of Moab in the mountain that is before Jerusalem and to Molech the detestable thing of the children of Ammon.

1 Kings 11:8 And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

1 Kings 12:27 If this people go up to make sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will return to their lord, to Rehoboam the king of Judah; and they will slay me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah.

C. A high place is an elevation, something lifted above the common level:

1. This indicates that a high place involves the exaltation of something.

2. In principle, every high place, every division, in Christianity involves the uplifting, the exaltation, of something other than Christ—cf. Col. 1:18.

Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

D. The record of the building of the high places under Solomon and Jeroboam has a spiritual significance; it was written for our spiritual instruction—Rom. 15:4-6:

Rom 15:4 For the things that were written previously were written for our instruction, in order that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

- Rom 15:5 Now the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind toward one another according to Christ Jesus,
- Rom 15:6 That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
1. The high places built by Solomon and Jeroboam seriously damaged the ground of oneness—1 Kings 11:7-8; 12:26-33.
 - 1 Kings 11:7 Then Solomon built a high place to Chemosh the detestable thing of Moab in the mountain that is before Jerusalem and to Molech the detestable thing of the children of Ammon.
 - 1 Kings 11:8 And so he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.
 - 1 Kings 12:26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom will return to the house of David.
 - 1 Kings 12:27 If this people go up to make sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, the heart of this people will return to their lord, to Rehoboam the king of Judah; and they will slay me and return to Rehoboam the king of Judah.
 - 1 Kings 12:28 And the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!
 - 1 Kings 12:29 And he set one in Bethel, and he put the other one in Dan.
 - 1 Kings 12:30 And this thing became a sin; and the people went to worship the one as far as Dan.
 - 1 Kings 12:31 And he made a house of high places and appointed priests from among the people who were not from the sons of Levi.
 - 1 Kings 12:32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; he did likewise at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made.
 - 1 Kings 12:33 And he went up to the altar that he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day, in the eighth month, that is, the month he had devised in his own heart; and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.
 2. In the church life we should not have any high places; instead, we should all be on one level to exalt Christ—Col. 1:18; 3:10-11.
 - Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
 - Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 - Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
 3. Any high place, even those at which genuine sacrifices are offered, causes damage to the ground of oneness.
- E. The destruction of the high places involved three main things: the places, the images, and the names—Deut. 12:2-3:
- Deut 12:2 You shall completely destroy all the places where the nations whom you will dispossess have served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every flourishing tree.
- Deut 12:3 And you shall tear down their altars and crush their pillars; and their Asherahs you shall burn with fire, and the idols of their gods you shall cut down; and you shall destroy their name from that place.
1. Spiritually speaking, we must destroy every place other than the church and every name other than the name of Christ; this means that we must destroy our culture, disposition, temperament, habits, natural characteristics, preferences, religious background with its influence—everything that damages the genuine oneness—Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14.
 - Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- Gal 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.
- Gal 6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.
2. In order to fulfill the word in Colossians 3:11, every other place must be utterly destroyed:
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- a. We must destroy everything that is not the church with Christ.
 - b. We should simply be in the church life enjoying Christ as the riches of the good land—Deut. 8:7-9; Eph. 3:8.

Deut 8:7 For Jehovah your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains;

Deut 8:8 A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;

Deut 8:9 A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity; you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you can mine copper.

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
3. The church life has been weakened because of the lack of willingness to destroy the high places—1 Kings 15:14; 22:43:
- 1 Kings 15:14 But the high places were not removed; otherwise the heart of Asa was perfect with Jehovah all his days.
- 1 Kings 22:43 And he walked in all the way of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of Jehovah. Nevertheless the high places were not removed; the people offered sacrifices and burned incense still on the high places.
- a. In our human life and culture there are many places that remain, which need to be destroyed; we must destroy them all and then go to the unique place of God's choice, the church—Gal. 5:24; Matt. 16:18.

Gal 5:24 But they who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and its lusts.

Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
 - b. In every place that is to be destroyed, there is a dedicated pillar, a symbol, or an image; in our character or disposition there may be such pillars, symbols, or images that must be destroyed.
 - c. In the church there cannot be anything other than Christ; Christ must be all and in all—Col. 1:18, 27; 2:2; 3:11.

Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Col 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,

Col 2:2 That their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,

Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

III. Because of the apostasy, the high places, and the divisions throughout Christendom, there is the need for the recovery of the genuine ground of oneness—Eph. 4:2-6, 13; John 17:11, 14-23; 1 Cor. 10:16-17:

Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
 Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
 Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;
 Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
 Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
 John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.
 John 17:14 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.
 John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.
 John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
 John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.
 John 17:18 As you have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.
 John 17:19 And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
 John 17:20 And I do not ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,
 John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
 John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;
 John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.
 1 Cor 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?
 1 Cor 10:17 Seeing that there is one bread, we who are many are one Body; for we all partake of the one bread.

A. According to the divine revelation in the New Testament, the church ground—the genuine ground of oneness—is constituted of three crucial elements:

1. The first element of the constitution of the church ground is the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ—Eph. 4:4:

Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

a. This oneness is called “the oneness of the Spirit”—v. 3.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

b. 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.

John 17 be omitted.

John 17:6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:14 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.

John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.

John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

John 17:18 As you have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

John 17:19 And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

- John 17:20 And I do not ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,
- John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.
- John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;
- John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.
- John 17:24 Father, concerning that which You have given Me, I desire that they also may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.
- c. 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.
2. 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.
- Acts 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church and had prayed with fastings, they committed them to the Lord into whom they had believed.
- Titus 1:5 For this cause I left you in Crete, that you might set in order the things which I have begun that remain and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you:
- Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
3. 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 of a local church—1 John 5:6; John 16:13:
- 1 John 5:6 This is He who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood; and the Spirit is He who testifies, because the Spirit is the reality.
- John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming.
- a. 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.
- b. Through this Spirit the ground of the church is applied in life and not in legality.
- c. By this Spirit the genuine ground of the church is linked with the Triune God—Eph. 4:3-6.
- Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:
- Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
- Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;
- Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
- B. The church, the organic Body of Christ, 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.
- Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.
- John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

- John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.
- C. The genuine oneness—the oneness according to the nature of God—is an all-inclusive, comprehensive oneness that includes all positive things—Psa. 23:6; 36:8-9; 43:3-4; 84:1-8, 10-12; 92:10; 133:1, 3b:
- Psa 23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me / All the days of my life, / And I will dwell in the house of Jehovah / For the length of my days.
- Psa 36:8 They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures.
- Psa 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light.
- Psa 43:3 Send forth Your light and Your truth; / They will lead me; / They will bring me to Your holy mountain / And to Your tabernacles.
- Psa 43:4 And I will go to the altar of God, / To God my exceeding joy; / And I will praise You with the harp, / O God, my God.
- Psa 84:1 How lovely are Your tabernacles, / O Jehovah of hosts!
- Psa 84:2 My soul longs, indeed even faints, / For the courts of Jehovah; / My heart and my flesh cry out / To the living God.
- Psa 84:3 At Your two altars even the sparrow has found a home; / And the swallow, a nest for herself, / Where she may lay her young, / O Jehovah of hosts, my King and my God.
- Psa 84:4 Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; / They will yet be praising You. Selah.
- Psa 84:5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, / In whose heart are the highways to Zion.
- Psa 84:6 Passing through the valley of Baca, / They make it a spring; / Indeed the early rain covers it with blessings.
- Psa 84:7 They go from strength to strength; / Each appears before God in Zion.
- Psa 84:8 O Jehovah God of hosts, hear my prayer; / Give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.
- Psa 84:10 For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand; / I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God / Than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- Psa 84:11 For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield; / Jehovah gives grace and glory; / He does not withhold anything good / From those who walk uprightly.
- Psa 84:12 O Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man / Who trusts in You.
- Psa 92:10 But You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox; / I am anointed with fresh oil.
- Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!
- Psa 133:3b ... For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever.
1. When the oneness is recovered, all the spiritual riches and all the positive things are recovered with it, because they all exist in the oneness—Eph. 4:3; 3:8.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
 2. All the godly things and all the spiritual riches are ours on the genuine ground of oneness—Deut. 8:7-9; 12:12, 26-28.

Deut 8:7 For Jehovah your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains;

Deut 8:8 A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;

Deut 8:9 A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity; you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you can mine copper.

Deut 12:12 And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, you and your sons and daughters, and your male servants and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no portion nor inheritance with you.

Deut 12:26 But you shall take your holy things which you have and your vows, and go to the place which Jehovah will choose;

Deut 12:27 And you shall offer your burnt offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of Jehovah your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out upon the altar of Jehovah your God, and you shall eat the flesh.

Deut 12:28 Keep and listen to all these words which I am commanding you so that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of Jehovah your God.

3. The genuine oneness is not a partial oneness; it is a great, complete, comprehensive oneness, a oneness in entirety—Psa. 133:1:

Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!

- a. This oneness, as revealed in Ephesians 4:3-6, includes God the Father, Christ the Lord, and the Spirit as the Giver of life.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- b. The all-inclusive oneness gives us access to all positive virtues and attributes—vv. 1-2.

Eph 4:1 I beseech you therefore, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called,

Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing one another in love,

- D. We thank and praise the Lord for the vision concerning the destruction of the high places and concerning the recovery and preservation of the genuine, all-inclusive oneness; it is our privilege to know, experience, and enjoy this oneness in the Lord's recovery today—Psa. 133:1, 3b; John 17:21-23; Eph. 4:3-6.

Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!

Psa 133:3b ... For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever.

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.