

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Eleven : Apostasy, the High Places, and the Recovery of the Genuine Ground of Oneness

I. Overview:

The apostasy of Jeroboam can be considered a type of today's Christianity. Apostasy means to leave the way of God and to take another way to follow things other than God. Apostasy consisted of five things: Jeroboam made two calves of gold (idols), built a temple at the high places, appointed priests from among the common people, ordained a feast, and offered sacrifices on the altar. Apostasy became a serious sin that are caused by selfishness and ambition; thus, the Lord needs a recovery. For the recovery and preservation of the genuine oneness, we must destroy the high places which were the places where the Gentile people worshipped their idols. To set up a high place is to have a division; hence, the significance of high places is division. 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. According to the divine revelation in the New Testament, the church genuine ground of oneness is constituted of three crucial elements; the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ, the unique ground of the locality, and the reality of the Spirit of oneness. All the godly things and all the spiritual riches are ours on the genuine ground of oneness.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the results of Jeroboam making the two calves of gold.

Jeroboam was afraid that the ten tribes would return to their rightful king if they went to worship God in Jerusalem. Thus, he set up two worship centers, saying that it was not convenient to travel to Jerusalem. Jeroboam's apostasy broke God's ordination of having one unique worship center in the holy land for keeping the oneness. This became a great sin and caused the people to worship idols.

B. Explain what the apostasy and its illustration are.

Apostasy means to be distracted from the right track in following God. Whenever someone uses the worship of God as a cloak to take a devilish way, he has fallen into apostasy. Although those in Catholicism worship God in name, they are actually worshipping idols. Jeroboam seemed to be saying, "This is the God you must worship." In reality that was not God; it was a golden calf. Hence, apostasy is worshipping God in a way that is false and devilish.

Day 2 —

A. Expound the evil things Jeroboam had done.

The nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms. Jeroboam became the king of the northern nation, and Rehoboam, the king of the southern nation. After this division was formed, idolatry came in. Jeroboam not only caused division; he also set up idols in Bethel and in Dan. Jeroboam set up another center of worship because he feared the loss of his kingdom. This clearly indicates that the origin of these idols was his ambition.

B. State how the divisions in Christianity are caused.

Many Christian leaders have set up centers of worship. Apparently, these centers are established for the worship of God. Actually, they are set up to fulfill a man's ambition to have an empire. Hence, in a very real sense, the founders of many Christian groups are today's Jeroboams. The centers of worship set up by these present-day Jeroboams are actually centers of ambition.

Day 3 —

A. Explain Solomon's connection with the idols in his life.

Although the children of Israel destroyed the places wherein the nations served their gods and although the temple was built in Jerusalem, eventually the very things that had been destroyed came back. These high places were related to fornication and idolatry. Solomon's setting up of the high places was especially connected with the indulgence of lust. It was for the sake of "all his foreign wives" that he built up the high places.

B. Expound regarding the meaning of a high place.

To set up a high place is to have a division. Hence, the significance of high places is division. The high places, however, were a substitute for this unique place. This indicates that division is a replacement for oneness. The

unique place, Jerusalem, signifies oneness, whereas the high places signify division. Just as all manner of evil and abominable things were related to the setting up of the high places, so all manner of evil is related to division.

Day 4 —

A. Expound what instruction the building of the high places gave us for.

The account of the building of the high places under Solomon and Jeroboam was for our spiritual instruction today. All of us, especially the young people, must learn not to elevate anything other than the Lord Jesus. He alone should be exalted. In the church life we should not have any high places. Instead, we should all be on one level to exalt Christ.

B. Explain how we should be toward the high places.

Every place in which the heathen peoples had worshipped idols was to be destroyed, no matter whether such places were “on the high mountains and on the hills and under every flourishing tree”. God’s people were to tear down their altars, crush their pillars, burn their Asherahs, cut down the idols of their gods, and destroy the names of them from that place. The good land was to be thoroughly cleared of all the heathen centers of worship.

Day 5 —

A. Expound the first element of the constitution of the church ground.

The first element is the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ, which is called the oneness of the Spirit. This is the oneness that the Lord prayed for in John 17. It is a oneness of the mingling of the processed Triune God with all the believers in Christ. This oneness is even in the Triune God through sanctification by His holy word. This oneness is ultimately in the divine glory for the expression of the Triune God.

B. Explain the second element of the constitution of the church ground.

The second element of the church ground is the unique ground of the locality in which a local church is established and exists. The New Testament presents us a clear picture that all the local churches, as the expression of the universal church—the universal Body of Christ—are located in their respective cities. Every city, as the boundary in which a church exists, is the local ground of that church.

Day 6 —

A. Explain the Lord for recovering the genuine oneness been lost by Christianity.

This oneness is all-inclusive; it includes all positive things. Division, on the contrary, includes all negative things. When we come back to the oneness, all the godly, heavenly, spiritual things return. The unique ground of oneness is here, and all the spiritual riches are included with this ground.

B. Expound standing on the proper ground, the Word of God is transparently open to us. This is wholly due to the Lord’s blessing on the ground of oneness. Where the recovery of the ground of oneness is, there the testimony of the Lord is also. When God’s people in the Old Testament returned to Jerusalem, all the things pertaining to God’s testimony returned; the altar, the offerings, the temple, the feasts, and the rich enjoyment. The godly things were found in Jerusalem.

III. Conclusion:

If we would understand and practice the oneness of the Body of Christ, we must give up everything other than the Lord Himself. For the oneness of the Body of Christ is Christ Himself. The goal of the enemy is to destroy the oneness of the Body of Christ. Whenever we emphasize anything other than Christ, we are in danger of becoming sects. Therefore, in order to practice the oneness of the Body, we must give up all things that are not Christ, no matter how good these things are. Keeping the oneness is costly. We will face the condemnation of the Sanhedrin and the difficulties of the saints who meet in the local churches. In one sense, once we enter into the proper oneness, we are imprisoned, because we are no longer free to leave the oneness; only entrance, no exit. If we can go in and out, we have not yet entered into the oneness.