

INSIGHT

- I. **The goal of God's calling of the children of Israel was that they would enter into the promised land to enjoy its riches so that they might establish God's kingdom and be God's expression on earth—Exo. 3:8, 14, 17:**
- A. Although all Israel was redeemed through the passover, delivered out of the Egyptian tyranny, and brought to the mountain of God to receive the revelation of God's dwelling place, the tabernacle, nearly all fell and died in the wilderness, failing to reach this goal because of their evildoings and unbelief—Heb. 3:7-19.
- B. This signifies that although we have been redeemed through Christ, delivered out of Satan's bondage, and brought into the revelation of God's economy, we may yet fail to reach the goal of God's calling, that is, to enter into the possession of our good land, Christ, and enjoy His riches for the kingdom of God that we may be His expression in the present age and participate in the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the kingdom age—Matt. 25:21, 23.
- C. Only Caleb and Joshua reached the goal and entered into the good land; like Caleb and Joshua, we New Testament believers need to "pursue toward the goal" (the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ) "for the prize" (the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom)—Num. 14:27-30; Phil. 3:12-14:
- Ten of the twelve men whom Moses sent to spy out the land brought an evil report that caused the children of Israel to murmur and rebel against the word of the Lord, but Caleb and Joshua said to the whole assembly, "Only do not rebel against Jehovah, nor should you fear the people of the land [the Anakim], for they are our bread"—Num. 14:9.
 - The word of God is our bread, doing God's will is our food, and our bread is also the Anakim, who represent the seemingly insurmountable obstacles and impossible situations in our pursuit of Christ for the building up of the church.
 - Every difficulty and temptation Satan puts in our way is food for us; this is a God-appointed means of spiritual progress; if we are relying on the Lord for victory and allow His overcoming life to be manifested in us, we will find fresh nourishment and increased vitality—Matt. 4:4; John 4:34; 1 Tim. 4:15-16; Josh. 14:11-15.
 - In order to have God's keeping power, we must exercise our spirit of faith and keep our heart turned to the Lord to believe wholeheartedly in His promises, to believe that He is with His people, and to believe that they are well able to overcome; we must commit our souls as a deposit to God, the faithful Creator, hand ourselves over to Him, and commit to Him the keeping of our life—2 Cor. 4:13; 3:16; 1:20; Josh. 14:12-15; Num. 13:30; 1 Pet. 4:19; 2 Tim. 1:12.
 - If we trust in His promises and commit ourselves utterly to Him, we will be kept from this day to the day of His return; He is able to guard us from stumbling and to set us before His glory without blemish in exultation—Jude 24.
 - If we are going to fully possess Christ as the good land, we must beware of having an evil heart of unbelief; not to believe in the Lord is to rebel against Him—Deut. 1:25-26, 28, 35-39; Heb. 3:12, 16-19; 4:2, 6; 11:1.
 - If we are going to fully possess Christ as the good land, we must beware of murmurings (discontented and secret mutterings, grumbings, and complaining); murmuring is an indistinct, whispered complaining in low tones, discontentedly and with a gloomy resentment—1 Cor. 10:10; Psa. 106:24-25; Phil. 2:14.

II. If we are going to fully possess Christ as the good land, the apostle Paul says that we must “flee from idolatry”, referring to the children of Israel’s idolatry in worshipping the golden calf—1 Cor. 10:14; Exo. 32:1-6:

- A. The golden calf was a made-by-God’s-redeemed-people idol; to stand up to play is to indulge in revelry (or boisterous merrymaking); an idol in our heart is anything within us that we love more than the Lord and that replaces the Lord in our life; as genuine children of the genuine God, we need to be on the alert to guard ourselves from idols, from all the substitutes and replacements of Christ in our life—Ezek. 14:3; 1 John 5:21.
- B. We must be warned by the principle of the golden-calf idol, an idol made by God’s redeemed people to make them an idolatrous camp; idolatry involves five principles—1 Cor. 10:5-7:
- Self-beautification leads to idolatry; God is our beauty, and He is beautifying the church as the house of His beauty so that He may be beautified; in the expression of our self there is division, but in the corporate expression of God, the divine glory, there is oneness; our work is our living to glorify, to express, God on earth, and in our speaking we should not seek our own glory by preaching ourselves, but we should preach Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves as slaves to serve the believers—Exo. 32:1-4; Eph. 5:26-27; John 17:22-24; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 4:5.
 - Idolatry is Satan’s usurping of what God has given us in order to make it a waste; it is our abusing what God has given us and not using God’s gifts, both material and spiritual, for God’s purpose; the gold given to the children of Israel by God through the Egyptians before their exodus from Egypt was to be used for the building of the tabernacle; however, before the gold could be used for God’s purpose, it was usurped by Satan and used by God’s people to make an idol—Exo. 11:2-3; 12:35-36; 25:2-8; 35:4-9.
 - Idolatry is the worship of the things we enjoy, the worship of amusement and entertainment; yes, we have the enjoyment of the Lord, but this is not a form of worldly amusement and entertainment—Exo. 32:6, 18-19; cf. Psa. 36:8-9:
 - Paul warns the Corinthians in this way: “Neither become idolaters, as some of them did; as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play’”; C. A. Coates says that they sported; on the weekends many people care only for eating, drinking, and sporting—1 Cor. 10:7; Exo. 32:6.
 - To play is to frolic, to joke, and to act, perform, or speak with little seriousness; to play is to behave playfully and uninhibitedly; it is to engage in hilarity, that is, high-spirited fun.
 - With idolatry there is the pretense of worshipping the true God—1 Kings 12:26-30; cf. Matt. 4:8-11; John 4:23-24.
 - With idolatry there is mixture in worship—Exo. 32:4-6, 21-24; cf. 1 Cor. 3:12.
- C. After the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf, Moses realized that the Lord’s presence would no longer be in the midst of the people, so he removed his tent and pitched it some distance from the camp; his tent then became the tent of God, for both the Lord’s presence and speaking were there—Exo. 33:7-11.
- D. After Moses removed his tent and separated it from the idolatrous camp, the Lord spoke to him face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion; God and Moses were companions, associates, partners, involved in the same career and having a common interest in a great enterprise; Moses was intimate with God, and he was a person who knew God’s heart, who was according to God’s heart, and who could touch God’s heart—Exo. 33:11, 14.

III. A renewed training was given by God through Moses to the new generation of the children of Israel after their long wandering, to prepare them to enter into the good land promised by God and inherit it as their possession; after the first generation, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, had died out, the second generation was ready to enter into the good land and possess it:

- A. The first generation typifies our old man; the second generation typifies our new man—Deut. 2:14; 8:6-10; Exo. 3:8; Col. 1:12:
- We need to be those who grow in life into the full possession and enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ, God's promised land; transformation is the dying out of the old man and the growing up of the new man; God's economy is to have our old man (the outer man) consumed and our new man (the inner man) renewed day by day—2 Cor. 4:16.
 - By the Lord's mercy and grace, since we have come into the Lord's recovery, we are being renewed for our growth in life and transformation in life to usher us into the enjoyment of Christ as our good land for God's building and kingdom—2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2.
- B. Our transformation in life takes place as we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly; Deuteronomy 8:3 says that "man lives not by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out from the mouth of Jehovah"; in Matthew 4:4 *everything* is replaced by *every word*—Col. 3:16:
- All the words in the Bible are God's breathing, and all refer to Christ, who is the totality of God's Word to be the life and life supply of God's people; to live by every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God is to live by Christ, the embodiment of the divine breath—John 1:1; Rev. 19:13; John 6:57, 63; 20:22.
 - Because the Scriptures are the breathing out of God, the exhaling of God, we should inhale the Scriptures by receiving the word of God by means of all prayer; as we are teaching the Bible, we should be exhaling God into people—2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 6:17-18.
 - In order to fully possess Christ as the good land, we must maintain our freshness and newness with the Lord by receiving His new speaking to us day by day; we must beware of languishing in the land; the word languish implies "the loss of spiritual freshness, and the blunting of original impressions, produced by force of custom, or long residence in the same spot" (S. R. Driver)—Lam. 3:22-24; Deut. 34:7; Rom. 7:6; Jer. 15:16; Deut. 4:25.
 - If we love God, humble ourselves, and come to the Lord as the living word in His written word by pray-reading His Word, He becomes the applied word of the Spirit to us; His instant words are spirit and life to us for our supply and nourishment, we are infused with God's substance through His words, and we become one with God in life and nature but not in the Godhead for His glory, His expression—John 5:39-40; 6:57, 63; Eph. 5:26-27.

EXPERIENCE

IV. The renewed training by God was His charge to His people in nine matters:

- A. **We must fear the Lord**; to fear the Lord is to be in fear of offending Him, of losing His presence, and of not receiving Him as our reward in the next age; we should be in fear of missing the Lord's smile in this age and His reward in the next—Prov. 1:1, 7; Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 5:9-10.
- B. **We must walk in God's ways**; whatever God is, is a way to us; hence, to take what God is as our ways and walk in these ways is to live God, to live Christ; to take Christ as our way is to live Him, and to live Him is to express Him, to magnify Him—John 14:6; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- C. **We must love the Lord Jesus, who is our God**; because God loves us and has set His affection on us, we should love Him in return by setting our affection on Him—John 20:28; Deut. 10:15; Jer. 31:3; 1 Cor. 2:9.
- D. **We must love and serve God with all our heart and all our soul**; our heart is linked to our spirit, for our conscience, which is a function of our spirit, is also a function of our heart; thus, to love and serve God with all our heart and soul indicates that we love and serve Him also with our spirit, which is a spirit of love—Rom. 9:1; Heb. 10:22; Rom. 1:9; 2 Tim. 1:7.
- E. **We must keep His commandments and statutes for our good**; this means that today we need to keep Christ as the reality of God's commandments and the riches of Christ that have been ministered to us so that we may be blessed—Deut. 10:13.
- F. **We must circumcise the foreskin of our heart, which means that we crucify the flesh**, which is all that we are and have in our natural being, by our living and serving in our regenerated spirit; this makes us the true "circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh"—Gal. 5:24; Rom. 1:9; 2:28-29; 7:6; 8:4, 16; Phil. 3:3.
- G. **We must not be stiff-necked any longer**; our stiff neck signifies our stubborn and rebellious will, which must be subdued and resurrected by Christ through Him as the transforming Spirit to become our beauty in our obedience to Him—Deut. 31:27; S. S. 1:10; Phil. 2:13.
- H. **We must hold fast to Christ as God's whole commandment**; then we will be strengthened and encouraged to go on to possess Christ as our good land; this means that we will gain Christ; furthermore, our days will be extended in Christ, God's eyes will be upon us to care for us and give us the blessing of His presence (v. 12), and we will enjoy the heavenly rain, the watering of the Spirit to reap a harvest of Christ—Deut. 11:8, 24; Phil. 3:8; Deut. 11:9, 21, 12, 14-15.
- I. **"By His name shall you swear**. He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you, which your eyes have seen"; in New Testament terms and experience, this means that we call upon the name of the Lord so that we may enjoy His organic salvation and His unsearchable riches—Deut. 10:20b-21; Rom. 10:12-13.

I. **The goal of God's calling of the children of Israel was that they would enter into the promised land to enjoy its riches so that they might establish God's kingdom and be God's expression on earth**

- Like almost all Israelites who were redeemed but died in the wilderness, failing to reach God's goal because of unbelief; we, the redeemed through Christ, may yet fail to reach the goal of God's calling to enter into and possess our good land, Christ, and enjoy His riches for the kingdom of God. In the Old Testament, only Caleb and Joshua reached the goal and entered into the good land; Caleb charged the whole assembly not to rebel against Jehovah nor fear the enemies [the Anakim], "for they are our bread". Likewise, we need not fear the seemingly insurmountable obstacles and temptation Satan puts in our way, this is food for us. God's word is our bread, doing God's will is our food, and our bread is also the Anakim; a God-appointed means of spiritual progress. We must beware of murmurings and have an evil heart of unbelief, this is to rebel against God. We must exercise our spirit of faith and keep our heart turned to the Lord to believe and trust wholeheartedly in His promises, commit to Him the keeping of our life; He is able to guard us from stumbling and set us before His glory without blemish in exultation. We need to pursue gaining Christ fully for the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom by relying on God for victory and allowing His overcoming life to be manifested in us for fresh nourishment and increased vitality. [Exo. 3:8] *And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey...* [Heb. 3:12] *Beware, brothers, lest perhaps there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God.* [Num. 14:9] *Only do not rebel against Jehovah, nor should you fear the people of the land, for they are our bread...* [2 Cor. 4:13] *And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak.*

II. **If we are going to fully possess Christ as the good land, the apostle Paul says that we must "flee from idolatry", referring to the children of Israel's idolatry in worshipping the golden calf**

- We need to guard against idols, anything that we love more than God and that replaces the Lord in our life. The golden calf was an idol made-by-God's-redeemed-people; making them an idolatrous camp that lost God's presence. We must therefore be warned by the five principles of the golden-calf idol: 1. Self-beautification leads to idolatry; God is our beauty, and He is beautifying the church as the house of His beauty so that He may be beautified. Our living is to glorify and express God on earth and not ourselves, preaching Christ Jesus as Lord. 2. Idolatry is Satan's usurping of God's material and spiritual gifts to us, making it a waste, abusing or not using them for God's purpose. 3. Idolatry is worshipping things we enjoy, amusement and entertainment. 4. With idolatry there is the pretense of worshipping the true God. 5. With idolatry there is mixture in worship. [1 Cor. 10:14] *Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.* [1 John 5:21] *Little children, guard yourselves from idols.* [John 4:24] *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.*
- After the Israelites' worshipping of the golden calf and losing God's presence, Moses removed and separated his tent from the idolatrous camp; his tent then became God's tent for the Lord's presence and for speaking to God face to face. Moses was intimate with God, and he was a person who knew God's heart, who was according to God's heart, and who could touch God's heart. [Exo. 33:11] *I And Jehovah would speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his companion...*

III. **A renewed training was given by God through Moses to the new generation of the children of Israel after their long wandering, to prepare them to enter into the good land promised by God and inherit it as their possession; after the first generation, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, had died out, the second generation was ready to enter into the good land and possess it**

- God's economy is to have our old man (the outer man, the first generation) consumed and our new man (the inner man, the second generation) renewed day by day by the Lord's mercy and grace. Transformation in life, letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly, ushers us to enjoy and possess Christ as our good land for God's building and kingdom. Matthew 4:4 says "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God." All the words in the Bible are God's breathing, and all refer to Christ; to live by every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God is to live by Christ, the embodiment of the divine breath. Since the Scriptures are the exhaling of God, we should inhale the Scriptures by receiving the word of God by means of all prayer and exhale God into people as we teach the Bible. To fully possess Christ as the good land, we must beware of languishing but maintain our freshness and newness by receiving His new speaking to us day by day; loving, humbling ourselves, and coming to the Lord as the living word by pray-reading His written Word. His instant words are spirit and life to us for our supply and nourishment, infusing us with God's substance through His words. God and We become one in life and nature but not in the Godhead for His glory, His expression. [Rom. 12:2] *And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind* [2 Tim. 3:16] *All Scripture is God-breathed...* [John 6:63] *...the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.*

IV. **The renewed training by God was His charge to His people in nine matters**

- The 9 matters we must heed: 1. Fear the Lord; fear of offending Him or losing His presence, and not receiving Him as our reward in the next age. 2. Walk in God's ways; to live Him, express and magnify Him. 3. Love the Lord Jesus who is our God; love Him in return as He first loves us. 4. Love and serve God with all our heart and all our soul; and also with our spirit. 5. Keep Christ as the reality of God's commandments and statutes for our good. 6. Circumcise the foreskin of our heart; crucify and have no confidence in the flesh of our natural life, live and serve in our regenerated spirit to boast in Christ Jesus. 7. Not be stiff-necked any longer; be subdued and resurrected by Christ through the transforming Spirit, and be obedient to Him. 8. Hold fast to Christ as God's whole commandment; be strengthened and encouraged to go on to possess Christ as our good land and enjoy the blessing of His presence. 9. "By His name shall you swear..." means that we call upon the name of the Lord so that we may enjoy His organic salvation and His unsearchable riches. [Deut. 10:12] *And now, O Israel, what does Jehovah your God ask of you except that you fear Jehovah your God so that you would walk in all His ways and love Him and serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul,* [Rom. 10:12] *...for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him.*

In order to have a proper Christian living and church life, we need to enjoy Christ as the life-giving Spirit. In this way we will be satisfied by Christ as the life-giving Spirit and will not be tempted to seek after worldly entertainment. Instead of forbidding our young people to participate in worldly activities, we should minister Christ as the life-giving Spirit to them. Nothing is more enjoyable than Christ. We need to partake of Him and minister Him one to another. When we are fully enjoying the all-inclusive Christ in the church life, we will not be distracted by the world. People seek worldly amusement when they do not have Christ as their joy. Christ is completely satisfying. The content of the Lord's recovery is not outward practices; rather, the content is Christ, who is our unique joy and entertainment.

<Excerpts from "The Recovery of Christ as Everything in the Church", Message 2, "The Recovery of Christ as Life">

We know from experience that in our Christian life we must have the increase of Christ. This increase is what replaces the natural life. We should not expect God immediately to drive out every element of the natural life. God's driving out of the pagan tribes from within us depends on our growth in life, on the increase of Christ in us. If God were to drive out the natural life without a corresponding increase of Christ, we would become vacant. Then something worse— the beasts, the demons— would enter in to take possession of us. Therefore, God's way is to terminate the natural life according to the increase of Christ within us.

Moses was a figure, a representative, of the real Father of the children of Israel—God the Father in the heavens, who was very concerned about His people. Whatever proceeded out of the mouth of Moses was actually something that proceeded out of the heavenly Father. Through Moses the real Father was speaking to the people. For us today, the entire Bible is the Father's word spoken to us.

The general sketch of Deuteronomy is this: the renewed training given to the new generation of the children of Israel after their long wandering, to prepare them to enter into the good land promised by God and inherit it as their possession. The word training cannot be found in Deuteronomy, but in fact Moses was giving the people a renewed training. The first training had been given forty years earlier at Mount Sinai, and in the book of Deuteronomy this training was given again, this time to the new generation, who had been wandering in the wilderness. The purpose of this training was to prepare them to enter into the good land and inherit it.

The key words in Deuteronomy are loving God, obeying His commandments (His words), and receiving His blessing. These matters are repeated throughout the book of Deuteronomy. Moses tells us over and over again that if we love the Lord our God and obey His commandments, we will receive His blessing.

< Excerpts from "Life-study of Deuteronomy", Message 1, "An Introductory Word">