

Message Two

Inheriting the All-inclusive Christ as the Good Land by Taking Heed to His Words of Advice and Warnings and by Receiving His Renewed Training to Have Our Inner Man Renewed Day by Day

Scripture Reading: Heb. 3:12, 16-19; 4:2, 6; 11:1; 1 Cor. 10:1-14; Psa. 106:24-25; Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4

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 (Heb. 3:7-19) because of their evildoings and unbelief.
- 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:
 1. 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.
 2. The word of God is our bread (Matt. 4:4), doing God's will is our food (John 4:34), and our bread is also the Anakim (Num. 14:9), who represent the seemingly insurmountable obstacles and impossible situations in our pursuit of Christ for the building up of the church.
 3. Every difficulty and temptation Satan puts in our way is food for us; this is a God-appointed means of spiritual progress (1 Tim. 4:15-16); 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 (Josh. 14:11-15).
 4. 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 (2 Cor. 4:13; 3:16; 1:20), to believe that He is with His people, and to believe that they are well able to overcome (Josh. 14:12-15; Num. 13:30); we must commit our souls as a deposit to God, the faithful Creator (1 Pet. 4:19), hand ourselves over to Him, and commit to Him the keeping of our life (2 Tim. 1:12).
 5. 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.
 6. 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; 9:23; Heb. 3:12, 16-19; 4:2, 6; 11:1; cf. 2 Cor. 4:13; Gal. 3:2, 5; Rom. 10:17; Acts 6:5a; Num. 13:25-33; 14:4-10; 32:11-12; Josh. 14:6-12; 1 Cor. 10:1-13.
 7. 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—v. 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” (1 Cor. 10:14), referring to the children of Israel’s idolatry in worshipping the golden calf (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 (Ezek. 14:3); as genuine children of the genuine God, we need to be on the alert to guard ourselves from idols (1 John 5:21), from all the substitutes and replacements of Christ in our life.
- 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:
 - 1. Self-beautification leads to idolatry (Exo. 32:1-4; 33:5-6; Gen. 35:1-4); God is our beauty, and He is beautifying the church as the house of His beauty so that He may be beautified (Isa. 60:7, 19, 21; Eph. 5:26-27); in the expression of our self there is division, but in the corporate expression of God, the divine glory, there is oneness (John 17:22-24); our work is our living to glorify, to express, God on earth (v. 4; 1 Cor. 10:31; Isa. 43:7), 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 (John 7:17; 2 Cor. 4:5).
 - 2. 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.
 - 3. 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—32:6, 18-19; cf. Psa. 36:8-9:
 - a. 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’” (1 Cor. 10:7; Exo. 32:6); C. A. Coates says that they sported; on the weekends many people care only for eating, drinking, and sporting.
 - b. *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.
 - 4. With idolatry there is the pretense of worshipping the true God—vv. 4-6; 1 Kings 12:26-30; cf. Matt. 4:8-11; John 4:23-24.
 - 5. 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 (vv. 11, 14); 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.

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:
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. 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—3:18; Rom. 12:2.
- B. Our transformation in life takes place as we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. 3:16); 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*:
 - 1. All the words in the Bible are God's breathing, and all refer to Christ, who is the totality of God's Word (John 1:1; Rev. 19:13) 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 6:57, 63; 20:22).
 - 2. Because the Scriptures are the breathing out of God, the exhaling of God (2 Tim. 3:16), we should inhale the Scriptures by receiving the word of God by means of all prayer (Eph. 6:17-18); as we are teaching the Bible, we should be exhaling God into people.
 - 3. 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 (Lam. 3:22-24; Deut. 34:7; Rom. 7:6; Jer. 15:16); we must beware of languishing in the land (Deut. 4:25); 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).
 - 4. 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.

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 (John 20:28); because God loves us and has set His affection on us (Deut. 10:15; Jer. 31:3), we should love Him in return by setting our affection on Him (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 (Rom. 9:1), is also a function of our heart (Heb. 10:22); thus, to love and serve God with all our heart and soul indicates that we love and serve Him also with our spirit (Rom. 1:9), which is a spirit of love (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 (Gal. 5:24), which is all that we are and have in our natural being, by our living and serving in our regenerated spirit (Rom. 1:9; 2:28-29; 7:6; 8:4, 16); 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” (Phil. 3:3).
- G. We must not be stiff-necked any longer; our stiff neck signifies our stubborn and rebellious will (Deut. 31:27), which must be subdued and resurrected by Christ through Him as the transforming Spirit to become our beauty in our obedience to Him (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 (Deut. 11:8, 24); this means that we will gain Christ (Phil. 3:8); furthermore, our days will be extended in Christ (Deut. 11:9, 21), 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 (vv. 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” (10:20b-21); 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 (Rom. 10:12-13).