

TRUTH ALONE UNITES AND KEEPS THE CHURCH TOGETHER

Hebrews 10:25 *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

Last week we considered the importance of holiness, and how God forgave the idolatry of Aaron, and made him a holy high priest. This week we will consider the role that truth plays in the unity of the church. The church can only have true unity in the true revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ – if this truth is changed or abandoned, the church will be dissolved. So the church must grow in the revelation of Jesus Christ and cleave tenaciously to it in order to enjoy a God-ordained unity. A good place to begin is the cause of the division of Israel into two nations.

1Kings 11:29 *And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field:*

1Kings 11:30 *And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:*

1Kings 11:31 *And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee.*

The garment of Jeroboam represents the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. In tearing the garment into twelve pieces, we understand that the body of Christ, the church itself, was being divided into twelve divisions. The body of Christ, the church, cannot be destroyed, but it can be divided. This was because Solomon filled Jerusalem with idols. Jerusalem is the city of the great king; God has never shared his sanctuary with idols. When falsehood enters the holy sanctuary, it must be removed immediately or God will depart. Eli was complacent about disciplining his wayward children, Hophni and Phinehas. Despite repeated warnings from God, they continued to defile the sanctuary. Finally, the Philistines took the Ark, and the Eli and his sons died. It was left to Phinehas' wife to articulate the situation during childbirth.

1Samuel 4:21 *And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.*

1Samuel 4:22 *And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.*

The Bible records that the 10 northern tribes of Israel were destroyed and sent into exile in 721 B.C. by the Assyrians. In 586 B.C., the southern kingdom of Judah suffered the same fate and was exiled into Babylon. However, there is good news! God already promised reunification through the prophet Ezekiel to the scattered children of Israel and Judah. “Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand” (Ezekiel 37:19). The body of Christ will always become one finally. The twelve pieces will always find their way back to the one body of Christ. Apostolic brothers and sisters, we all have one origin and one source: the Lord Jesus Christ! We belong together no matter where you are scattered or which Assyria or Babylon you find yourself exiled to.

Do you know that some years ago, Jewish Rabbis were shocked to discover that the Pashtun people (known in Afghanistan as the Taliban) claim to be the children of Israel (beni Israel)? The Jewish filmmaker, Simcha Jacobovici made a documentary¹ which some stunning evidence, among others:

- An oral tradition passed down that the Pathans are the children of King Saul.
- Although Muslims, they have cities of refuge as God commanded Moses and Joshua.
- They wear garments very similar to the Jewish prayer cloth – talith with tsitsit.
- They have a Jewish burial ground with the Star of David and an old Synagogue.
- They have subtribes with names, such as: Levoni, Rabbani, Shimoni, Gadi, Afridi...
- There are several huge white stones with ancient Aramaic writing in their region.
- Their King told them once that they are from the tribe of Benjamin.

The Jewish Rabbis believe that the return of the lost tribes and the reunification of Israel heralds the return of the Messiah. By the way, this is true. The church must take note of this – we are indeed living in the last of the last days.

Isaiah 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Isaiah 11:11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

¹

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=lost+tribes+youtube&docid=608039195118079624&mid=0A167D94C6F63409575C0A167D94C6F63409575C&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

Isaiah 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

What is most troubling is the fact that none of these tribes had to be lost if only they had been faithful to the one great command God gave to Israel as their possession and pride. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5). The unity of the church will be unbroken if we keep the revelation of the one God who was manifested in flesh, Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Colossians 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

The greatest of all commandments is the most powerful glue that could keep the children of Israel in unity, and, similarly, the revelation that the Lord Jesus is Christ is this same Jehovah revealed in a body, can guarantee the unity of the church. We can observe this in comparing about the 12 tribes of Israel with the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ. Only two tribes of Israel are known today – the tribes of Judah and Benjamin because they were exiled together to Babylon and returned together under Ezra and Zerubbabel, among others. The remaining 10 tribes are considered lost among the nations. On the other hand, none of the 12 apostles, except Judas, was lost. We know where they ministered and died. They remained faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ until the end. Jesus is the fulfilment of the ultimate and greatest of all commandments! Holding on the identity of our Lord will ensure we are not lost among the nations and forgotten. If we hold on to the truth, the truth will hold us up. The enemy managed to scatter the apostles before and during the crucifixion of our Lord, but the resurrection of our Lord cemented their unity once again, never to be broken. The 12 apostles’ ministry is greater than that of the 12 tribes of Israel. This is why Jesus said:

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

You see, even Moses could not judge the 12 tribes of Israel. His father-in-law, Jethro, counselled him to appoint judges for each tribe or he would weary himself to death. “And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves” (Exodus 18:26). What an honor will be bestowed upon

the 12 apostles – they will judge the 12 tribes. Is this not proof of the superiority of the New Testament? Through Christ, there is true unity – forever. Outside of Christ is only division and scattering. Do we want to stay together until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ? Then we must hold fast to the revelation shared through the apostles.

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

1Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Titus 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;