

#2: The Present Truth and the Way of the Truth

I. In the Bible there are two trees, two sources, two ways, two principles, and two consummations.

II. Second Peter 2 shows that this Epistle was written in a time of the church's degradation and apostasy:

A. Apostasy is a deviation from the right track of God's truth and a falling away from the straight way of God's economy as revealed in the Scriptures; through such apostasy the church became degraded.

B. Apostasy was the background of 2 Peter, and the burden of the writer was to inoculate the believers against the poison of apostasy:

1. God's salvation is to impart Himself in His Trinity into the believers to be their life and life supply; this is God's economy, God's plan.

2. The apostasy distracted the believers from the economy of God by leading them into the human logic of puzzling philosophies:

a. This did not lead the believers to partake of the tree of life, which gives life, but to participate in the tree of knowledge, which brings in death.

b. Through the serpent's questioning and undermining of God's word, the believers, like Eve, can be carried away to the tree of knowledge and be distracted from the simplicity of eating the tree of life.

3. In order to inoculate against this death poison, Peter first prescribed the divine power as the strongest and most effective antidote:

a. This power provides the believers with all things related to the generating and supplying divine life and the God-expressing godliness.

b. This rich divine provision enables the believers to overcome the satanic apostasy.

III. The antidotes used by Peter in dealing with the apostasy are the provision of life and the revelation of truth:

A. In verses 3 through 11 Peter used the provision of the divine life for the proper Christian life to inoculate against the apostasy.

B. In verses 12 through 21 he used the revelation of the divine truth to inoculate against the heresy in the apostasy.

IV. The present truth is the truth that is present with the believers, which they have already received and now possess:

A. We need to know the present, up-to-date truth and to uphold the absoluteness of the truth.

B. We need to be clear whether a particular matter is an item of the truth:

1. "Is calling on the name of the Lord a truth? No, it is not a truth. Calling on the Lord is necessary, and we need to have such a practice in our daily life, but calling on the Lord's name is not a truth. Likewise, baptism, presbytery, foot-washing, and pray-reading are not truths".

2. "Justification by faith is a truth. Regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, conformation, transfiguration, being made God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—all these are

truths".

C. Because many basic truths have been given up, even by those who apparently are fundamental believers, there is the need for us in the Lord's recovery to fight the battle for the truth.

D. Today, in a time of apostasy, we need to testify the full revelation of the pure Word of God and to fight for the deeper truths revealed in the Word of God, including:

1. The revelation concerning the eternal economy of God.

2. The revelation concerning the Divine Trinity.

3. The revelation concerning the person and work of the all-inclusive Christ.

4. The revelation concerning the consummated life-giving Spirit.

5. The revelation concerning the eternal life of God.

6. The revelation concerning the Body of Christ, which is the church of God.

E. We need to know and testify the highest truth: In Christ God became man to make man God in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not in the Godhead so that the redeeming God and the redeemed man can be united, mingled, and incorporated together to become one entity—the New Jerusalem.

V. The way of the truth is the path of the Christian life according to the truth, which is the reality of the contents of the New Testament:

A. The way of the truth is the straight way; to take the straight way is to live an upright life without crookedness and bias.

B. The way of the truth is the way of righteousness; to take the way of righteousness is to live a life that is right with both God and man, a life which, according to God's righteousness, can receive God's governmental judgment for His kingdom of righteousness.

C. The way of the truth is "the Way," denoting the Lord's full salvation in God's New Testament economy:

1. It is the way God dispenses Himself into the believers through Christ's redemption and the Spirit's anointing.

2. It is the way the believers partake of God and enjoy God.

3. It is the way the believers worship God in their spirit by enjoying Him and follow the persecuted Jesus by being one with Him.

4. It is the way the believers are brought into the church and built up into the Body of Christ to bear the testimony of Jesus.

D. To take the way of the truth is to purify our souls by obedience to the truth; this is the sanctifying truth, which is God's word of reality:

1. The purifying of our souls by obedience to the truth causes our entire being to be concentrated on God that we may love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind.

2. Such a purifying of our souls issues in unfeigned brotherly love, that is, in our loving from the heart fervently those whom God loves.

CP1: Satan tries to make us question God's word and provoke reaction to God. So we should not talk to Satan

OL1: God's salvation is to impart Himself in His Trinity into the believers to be their life and life supply; this is God's economy, God's plan. **OL2:** The apostasy distracted the believers from the economy of God by leading them into the human logic of puzzling philosophies. This did not lead the believers to partake of the tree of life, which gives life, but to participate in the tree of knowledge, which brings in death. **OL3:** Through the serpent's questioning and undermining of God's word, the believers, like Eve, can be carried away to the tree of knowledge and be distracted from the simplicity of eating the tree of life. **OL4:** In order to inoculate against this death-poison, Peter first prescribed the divine power as the strongest and most effective antidote. This power provides the believers with all things related to the generating and supplying divine life and the God-expressing godliness. **OL5:** This rich divine provision enables the believers to overcome the satanic apostasy. Gen. 2:9 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. 2 Peter 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. **OL6:** We need to know the present, up-to-date truth and to uphold the absoluteness of the truth. 2 Peter 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. John 18:37 ...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. 8:32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. The "present truth" can also be rendered the "up-to-date truth." What is the up-to-date truth? Although all truths are in the Bible, through man's foolishness, unfaithfulness, negligence, and disobedience many of the truths were lost and hidden from man....Not until the fullness of time did God release certain truths during particular periods of time and cause them to be revealed once more. Take, for example, the raising up of Martin Luther in the sixteenth century. God opened his eyes to see the matter of justification by faith....The fact already existed before Luther's time. Luther was merely the one who realized this truth in a stronger way; he was particularly outstanding in this truth. For this reason, this truth became the "present truth" in that age.

Every worker of the Lord must uphold the absoluteness of the truth. This is possible only when a man is delivered from himself. Many are not absolute to the truth; they are affected by people, things, and

personal feelings. If a man is not absolute to the truth, he will, in the course of his work, sacrifice God's truth for man, himself, or his own desires. A basic requirement for being a servant of the Lord is to not sacrifice the truth.

Application to New ones, Youth and College Students

Gen. 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other animal of the field that Jehovah God had made. And he said to the woman, Did God really say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden? FN **Did God really say?** In tempting the woman, Satan first touched her mind by questioning God's word, causing her to doubt God's word. The serpent's question stirred up Eve's doubting mind and prevented her from using her spirit to contact God. Satan's evil thought entered into Eve and contaminated her mind even before she ate of the tree of knowledge.

2 And the woman said to the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die. 4 And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make oneself wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also give some to her husband with her, and he ate.

You should learn from Eve's failure. Eve's failure was to have conversation with Satan. Learn to simply accept God's Word and reject Satan's word thoroughly (not partially). Never insert your preferences or feelings in this matter. When you talk to Satan, your mind will be contaminated and eventually your entire soul will be contaminated. **Brother's testimony:** When I was in college, my professor was the responsible one for the church. I often brought people to the monthly gospel meeting, and many were saved. And each time the fellowship was held with the responsible brother a few days after the meeting. I thought I would be praised by him, but instead I was rebuked severely every time. I thought to myself, "I came into fellowship to be praised, but I was rebuked. Why is it always like this?", and I was filled with anger. At this time, I heard the Lord's voice inside me, "Shouldn't you simply open and accept the fellowship, whether it suits you or not?" Through the Lord's mercy, I was able to reject Satan's suggestion to provoke the reaction to the brother and stay in oneness with him, and accepting the Lord's speaking and leading. As a result, I was able to maintain the gospel-preaching spirit. Thank the Lord.

Prayer: Oh Lord Jesus, Satan, who tempted Eve, uses various methods to speak against the Lord and the brothers and sisters, and to make us questioning the Lord's word. I learn to reject Satan's speaking thoroughly with absoluteness. Because Satan is more crafty than I am, and when I talk to him, my mind gets contaminated, and I become antagonistic to God, brothers and sisters. Lord, I will take the helmet of salvation. Protect my mind to genuinely love and follow You.

CP2: Work and research under the divine dispensing and learn to apply the vision of God's economy in our living

OL1: Today, in a time of apostasy, we need to testify the full revelation of the pure Word of God and to fight for the deeper truths revealed in the Word of God, including: ① The revelation concerning the eternal economy of God ② The revelation concerning the Divine Trinity ③ The revelation concerning the person and work of the all-inclusive Christ ④ The revelation concerning the consummated life-giving Spirit ⑤ The revelation concerning the eternal life of God ⑥ The revelation concerning the Body of Christ, which is the church of God

The first item concerns God's eternal economy. ... God's economy is God's plan. For this plan, God made an administrative arrangement, which is His administrative management for dispensing Himself through the processed and consummated all-inclusive Spirit into His chosen, regenerated, sanctified, and transformed tripartite men so that they can become God in life and nature yet with no share in His Godhead. Thus they are being constituted to be the Body of Christ and will ultimately be enlarged and built up to be the New Jerusalem as God's eternal and corporate expression.

The second major item in the divine revelation concerns the Divine Trinity. The three [of the Divine Trinity] coexist and coinhere. Although the three are distinct, They cannot be separated. All this is not for doctrinal debate or study but for our experience and enjoyment. The Divine Trinity is for the dispensing of God into His chosen people that they may accomplish His eternal economy.

The third major item in the divine revelation concerns the person and work of the all-inclusive Christ. This all-inclusive Christ, as the preeminent One over all things and the One who fills all in all, is the center and circumference of God's economy. By passing through incarnation, human living, death, resurrection, and ascension, He dispenses Himself into the believers to regenerate, sanctify, renew, and transform them, and also to conform them to the image of God's firstborn Son,...and ultimately to glorify them.

The fourth major item concerns the consummated life-giving Spirit. The Spirit passed through the processes to become a consummated Spirit.... The Spirit of God, after being compounded, transformed, and intensified, became the consummated Spirit of the Triune God.

The fifth major item in the divine revelation concerns the eternal life of God.... Eternal implies that in quality, quantity, time, space, and existence, it is perfect and complete. We are regenerated and transformed in this eternal life, and glorified with the consummated Triune God as our eternal glory.

The sixth major item of the divine revelation in the Bible concerns the Body of Christ, which is the church of God. ...Such a church as the house of God and also the Body of Christ is unique in the universe, yet it is manifested and expressed in many different localities on

the earth to be the many local churches. The fellowship in life of this church, whether universally or locally, is unique.

Application to business person/graduate students

The basic and important revelations of the Bible are the six items on the left. All of them have to do with the economy of God. God's economy is to dispense Christ into people and build His Body. Businesspersons and graduate students should carry out their work and research under God's economy, enjoying the divine dispensing. Brother Lee said that 1/4 of the church life is the meetings and 3/4 of the church life is living. You should fellowship with brothers and sisters in your daily life, and even in your real life such as business life, you should consider it as a part of your church life. And in your demanding business life, learn to meet the demands by walking according to the Spirit in the Lord. [Rom. 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.](#)

For example, your boss at work has assigned you to carry out a difficult project with a fixed deadline. Since your real life is a continuation of, or a part of your church life, you need to exercise your spirit, open your mind, put your mind on your spirit, and then pray like this, "I don't think I am able to carry out such a difficult project in a short period. But I open my spirit now and open my mind to fellowship with you. In carrying out this project, let me experience You. My company and boss were given to me under your environmental arrangement. So I need to follow my boss's assignment in the Lord. I want to enjoy and express the Lord in my business life too". Then the Lord will be pleased to dispense more of Himself into us. This is the business life under the economy of God, the business life that is a part of the church life. After experiencing Christ in this way, we can dispense this Christ to others. You can also learn more about Christ by listening to the testimonies of others.

You should not treat the vision of God's economy as just a good teaching that you do not have to apply to your practical living. Make sure you apply it to your practical living. It's very easy to apply. ① Pray for a vision of God's economy and apply it gradually to your practical living, ② Apply in your practical living, ③ Pray unceasingly and apply and practice. You must not be afraid of failures. The following is Brother Lee's prayer in his later years of matured ministry, "...We ourselves are still useless, still lacking, still flawed before You, even to this day. Oh Lord, we must admit before You that what You have shown us is too much, too high, but that reality we have actually entered into is very short. ...".

Prayer: Oh Lord Jesus, please let me see the vision of God's economy clearly. I pray that I would apply it to my practical living. I renew my consecration and in the Lord, with the Lord, for the Lord, let me break through my habit of not applying it. I pray in the name of the Lord. Amen!

CP3: We are responsible to purify our souls by our obedience to the truth we heard and received

OL1: We need to know and testify the highest truth: In Christ God became man to make man God in life, nature, constitution, and expression but not in the Godhead so that the redeeming God and the redeemed man can be united, mingled, and incorporated together to become one entity—the New Jerusalem. John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. Rev. 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal. **OL2:** The purifying of our souls by obedience to the truth causes our entire being to be concentrated on God that we may love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. **OL3:** Such a purifying of our souls issues in unfeigned brotherly love, that is, in our loving from the heart fervently those whom God loves.

Mark 12:30 “And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength.”

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently.

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

In order to understand what it means to purify our souls by obedience to the truth, we must be clear concerning the meaning of truth in this verse. Truth here is the sanctifying truth, which is God’s word of reality. Truth in this verse does not mean doctrine. Truth is the reality contained in God’s word and conveyed by it. God will not purify our soul for us. We need to do this ourselves by our obedience to the truth we have heard and received. Suppose a certain brother struggles for a period of time concerning the Lord’s recovery. Eventually, by God’s mercy and the moving of the sanctifying Spirit within him, he declares, “Praise the Lord! My mind is girded up with one goal. My emotion is fully set on one person, the Lord Himself. I have no other object of my love. Therefore, my will follows to make a strong decision: I am for the Lord, and I am for the Lord’s recovery. I don’t care for anything else.” This is obedience to the truth. In verse 22 Peter says that we purify our souls by obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love. Since the purification of our souls concentrates our entire being on God that we may love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, it results in unfeigned brotherly love. We love from the heart fervently all those whom God loves. First, God’s regeneration issues in a holy life. Then His sanctification (purification) results in brotherly love.

Application to the serving ones

According to the revelation of 1 Peter 1:22, one purifies one’s soul through obedience to the truth.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you

are spirit and are life. The Lord speaks to you through the words of the Bible in a fresh and timely manner. The Lord speaks the Rhema Word to you during the meetings or when you are pray reading the Word. These fresh words will water you and supply you. But if you only listen to the words of the Rhema and do not practice them, you will not be able to grow. Don’t be satisfied with only being watered by hearing the Rhema Word. This is also not to be obedient to the truth. If you are not obedient to the truth, you cannot purify your soul and you cannot love God with all your soul. Matt. 7:26 And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. **FN** built his house upon the sand Sand refers to human concepts and natural ways. If we live and work according to our human concepts and natural ways, our living and work will be founded on sinking sand. This is to enter in through the wide gate and walk the broad way that leads to destruction.

Brother’s testimony: As I was busily working, Satan suggested, “Isn’t business life so real that you can’t be bothered by something called God’s economy?”. But I told him by faith that “God’s economy is the most important truth in the Bible. No matter how busy the work is, or even how well it is going, you cannot change the truth. Satan, I ignore your suggestion. I will still set God’s economy as the center, even though I may sometimes fail in applying the vision of God’s economy. Satan, go back to the cross!”.

When Brother Liu Sui had fellowshiped about God’s ordained way before, I found myself looking for some excuses not to follow it when it didn’t fit my concept. Even though I was translating for Brother Liu Sui and knew that he had paid the price and was pleading with us in the Lord, it was still difficult for me to accept the Lord’s speaking through him. But because of the Lord’s mercy and grace, I repented and prayed, “Lord, there is an old concept and stubbornness within me that prevents me from obediently following You. I am following You by my own choice. This does not mean that I am truly following You. Lord, renew my mind and save me from old habits of disobedience. Since I am a responsible one in the church, the brothers and sisters are watching to see if I follow. Please help me not to become a bad example”. By praying in this way, I was able to receive the Lord’s grace and practice my obedience little by little. I thank the Lord.

Prayer: Oh Lord Jesus, I need to purify my soul to love You with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength. Give me grace to obediently follow the truth and Lord’s timely speaking so that I will not be a foolish one who hears Your speaking but does not do them, who builds his house on the sand. Amen.