

Lesson 2

The Meaning of Migration

Scripture Reading: Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 41-47; 8:1, 4-5, 14; 11:19-20, 22; Rev. 1:11-12; 2:1, 7a; 21:2, 9

I. Migration is the going of the disciples—Matt. 28:19:

- A. In Matthew 28:19 the Lord said, “Go therefore”:
 - 1. Before the day of Pentecost, there was no migration of the disciples; however, before ascending to the right hand of the Father, the Lord Jesus predicted and even commanded concerning migration—v. 20.
 - 2. Matthew 28:19 refers to the *disciples*, not to the apostles; migration is not for the apostles or for Christian “preachers” but for all the disciples.
 - 3. The going of the disciples was based upon the very authority committed to Christ the Head—v. 18.
 - 4. The Lord Jesus promised that if they would go, He would be with them “all the days until the consummation of the age”—v. 20.
- B. In the gospel of grace in the New Testament, there are two particular words: *come* and *go*:
 - 1. In order to be complete Christians, we must be Christians who come and go:
 - a. God in Christ has called us to come near to Him; He is calling us to come to Him for rest, life, and salvation; the more we come to Him, the more grace we receive—Matt. 11:28; John 5:40; 10:10; 7:37.
 - b. After we have received grace by coming to the Lord, He commands us to go and preach the gospel to all the nations, to go and disciple all the nations, and to go and be His witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth—Matt. 24:14; 28:19; Acts 1:8.
 - c. We cannot be Christians who come without being Christians who go; we cannot be half Christians.
 - 2. Instead of remaining on one place, Christians should move all over the earth; unless it is the Lord’s special arrangement, we should not remain in a place for a long time, lest we hold back the gospel and hinder it from spreading to other places.

II. Migration is the move of the Body—Acts 8:1, 4:

- A. Migration is not the movement of an organization; it is a move of the Lord’s Body:
 - 1. Some carry out the movement of an organization by forming a mission board or a mission society; we are absolutely not for this kind of movement in the way of organization.
 - 2. We have no movement, no organization, and no fund-raising; migration is the move of the Body.
- B. We see migration as the move of the Body in the book of Acts—2:1-4, 41-47; 8:1, 4-5, 14; 11:19-20, 22:
 - 1. After the Lord’s ascension, on the day of Pentecost the church was formed in Jerusalem, and a large number of believers were added; they were then built up in a fast way—1:8-9; 2:1-47.
 - 2. Suddenly, however, a great persecution was raised up; this was according to God’s purpose—8:1.
 - 3. This persecution scattered the believers; there was no time for them to organize a mission or raise funds; all the believers were scattered, but the apostles stayed in Jerusalem; this was migration in the real sense; it was not the movement of a Christian organization—vv. 1, 4.
 - 4. Some who migrated went down to Samaria; then the word was received in Samaria, and a group of believers was raised up—vv. 4-5.

5. The news of this went to Jerusalem, and two of the apostles were sent there; this is proof that the migration that took place in the early days was the move of the Body; even though the apostles did not go, they were one with those going—v. 14.
 6. Then the scattered believers went farther and farther; eventually, the word sent to Antioch, farther to the north; the account concerning Antioch was heard in the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and Barnabas was sent to have fellowship with them; this again proves that the migration was the move of the Body—11:19-20, 22.
- C. We must be completely clear about what we are doing in the migration; the migration we are going to have is absolutely the move of the Body:
1. Do not think that after certain ones leave their locality to go to their places, they should have nothing to do with their former locality; if we think this way, we have never seen the Body of Christ.
 2. Regardless of where we go, we are still in one Body.

III. The depth concerning migration is that it is the Lord's moving through the church and the churches on this earth—8:14-15; 9:31; 11:22-24; 18:24; 19:2; 1 Cor. 3:4-7; 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:33; 16:1; 1 Thes. 2:14; Rev. 1:11-12; 2:1, 7a:

- A. In Acts 8:1 we see the first local church, the church in Jerusalem, and in the last book of the New Testament, we see the seven churches (Rev. 2—3).
- B. Eventually, in Revelation 22:17 there is the Spirit and the bride, which includes all the local churches; at the beginning of the book of Revelation, the Spirit speaks to all the churches, but at the end of this book, the Spirit and the bride speak together.
- C. By all this, we can trace how the Lord started His move on the earth and how He has continued His way on the earth; the Lord started His move with the local church, and He has continued through the local churches:
 1. When the Lord ascended to the heavens, He received the headship, the lordship, the kingship, the throne, the glory, the crown, and the kingdom, and He was committed with all authority in heaven and on earth; He was appointed by God to be the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Head, and the very Christ—Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 2:36a; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 2:10; Dan. 7:13-14; Matt. 28:19; Rev. 17:14; 19:16; Acts 2:36.
 2. On the day of Pentecost He came down upon His members, His disciples, at Jerusalem for His move on earth; by this, the church in Jerusalem was formed and came into existence; that was the first expression of the Lord's Body in a locality—2:1-4, 41-47.
 3. The Lord's move started from Jerusalem in the way of the local church; the Lord did not begin with individual believers; from that point, the Lord moved onward through the local churches; eventually, through so many local churches, we come to the seven local churches in Revelation—13:1-4; Rev. 1:11-12.
 4. The many local churches all become the one New Jerusalem; this is the way for the Lord's move—21:2, 9; 22:16a.

IV. Migration is a divine principle:

- A. To migrate, to move, is a divine principle that we have found in the Bible; the divine policy is for man to always move on.
- B. After God created man as male and female, He blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; and fill the earth" (1:28); to fill the earth requires migration.
- C. Thus, the more we move, the more we go along with God's policy and enjoy His blessing.
- D. Through all the generations the churches' degradation has often been due to a lack of migration—cf. Acts 8:1; 21:20.
- E. Today is a day of moving; we should not expect to remain in one place; even after migrating, we should not become settled.

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1969*, vol. 3, "Migration in God's Move," chs. 1-2.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1950-1951*, vol. 2, "Serving According to Revelation," ch. 8.
3. *Life-Study of Acts*, msg. 22.
4. *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 55, "The Open Door," Issue No. 4, "The Way of Migration"; Issue No. 20, "The Way of Migration."
5. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985*, vol. 1, "Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 4," ch. 1; "Principles for Practicing the New Way," ch. 1.
6. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1971*, vol. 4, "The Establishing and Spread of the Churches"; "Migration for the Lord's Move in the United States"; "Being Saved in the Life of Christ for the Church Life," ch. 3.