

# **CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES FIRST AND SECOND CHRONICLES, EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER**

## **KEY STATEMENTS**

The intrinsic significance of the twelve historical books  
in the Old Testament (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel,  
1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther)  
is the revelation that God's move in man's history prepares the way  
for God to carry out His eternal economy by His becoming a man  
that man may become God in life and in nature (but not in the Godhead),  
for the producing and building up  
of the church as the organic Body of Christ  
to consummate the New Jerusalem for His ultimate expression.

Ezra reconstituted the people of Israel with heavenly truths;  
in the Lord's recovery we need Ezras, priestly teachers,  
who contact God, who are saturated with God, who are one with God,  
who are filled with God, and who are skilled in the Word of God—  
the kind of person who is qualified to be a teacher in the recovery.

We need to live by Christ and to live out Christ, thus magnifying Christ,  
so that we can build up the church as the expression of God;  
in order to express God, we need to be daily sanctified and renewed  
by the washing of the water in the word  
to be presented to Christ, our Bridegroom,  
as His pure, glorious, God-expressing bride.

For the building up of the church as the Body of Christ,  
there is the need for spiritual warfare carried out  
according to four principles—not using fleshly weapons,  
keeping the position of ascension,  
using spiritual weapons,  
which are powerful to overthrow the strongholds of the enemy,  
and understanding that prayer is warfare and uttering prayers of warfare  
in the heavenly realm and from the throne of God.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
Message One      God's Move in Man's History for the Carrying Out of His Eternal Economy	<u>1</u>
Message Two      Crucial Aspects of Living in the Good Land after Returning from Captivity in Babylon	<u>5</u>
Message Three    The Rebuilding of the Altar of God—the Altar of Burnt Offering	<u>8</u>
Message Four    The Recovery of the Building of the House of God through the Divine Encouragement of the Prophets of God	<u>11</u>
Message Five    Ezra, a Priestly Scribe, and the Need for Ezras— Those Skilled in the Word of God	<u>14</u>
Message Six      The Intrinsic Significance of the Purification of the Returned Captives	<u>17</u>
Message Seven   Nehemiah—a Pattern of One Who Has Dispensational Value to God	<u>20</u>
Message Eight   Building the Wall of the City for the Protection of the Church as the House of God	<u>23</u>
Message Nine    Building and Fighting— the Need to Engage in Spiritual Warfare for the Building of the Church	<u>26</u>
Message Ten     The Central and Crucial Point of the Recovery Books of Ezra and Nehemiah— the Proper and Adequate Leadership in the Lord's Recovery	<u>29</u>
Message Eleven   The Intrinsic Significance of Ezra's Ministry and Nehemiah's Leadership— to Build Up the Church as the House of God and the Kingdom of God by Living Out and Working Out the New Jerusalem	<u>33</u>
Message Twelve   A God Who Hides Himself—the Hidden God	<u>37</u>

Message One  
**God's Move in Man's History  
for the Carrying Out of His Eternal Economy**

Scripture Reading: Zech. 1:3, 18-21; 2:1-2, 5, 8-9, 11; 6:12-13;  
10:1, 3, 8, 12; 11:7; 12:1, 10; 14:5, 9

- I. The intrinsic significance of the twelve historical books in the Old Testament (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther) is the revelation that God's move in man's history prepares the way for God to carry out His eternal economy by His becoming a man that man may become God in life and in nature (but not in the Godhead), for the producing and building up of the church as the organic Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem for His ultimate expression:**
- A. We must link the twelve books of history in the Old Testament to God's eternal economy; the Bible actually tells us only one thing—God's eternal economy, which is based upon His good pleasure, the desire of His heart (Eph. 1:4-5, 9-10; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3); these twelve historical books were written in God's divine revelation for our admonition and enlightenment (1 Cor. 10:11).
  - B. The carrying out of God's eternal economy (with the procedure of His judicial redemption and the goal of His organic salvation) to prepare us to be His bride to bring Him back is the only way to solve the problems of today's world situation; this is the desire of God's heart, and He will accomplish it—Rom. 5:10, 17, 21; 1 Thes. 5:23-24; Phil. 1:3-6.
  - C. The Lord's second coming will resolve all the problems of the world, such as injustice (Isa. 11:4), war (2:4), sickness (Rev. 22:2; Ezek. 47:12), famine (Isa. 35:1, 6), education (2:2-5; 4:2-6; 11:9; Hab. 2:14; Heb. 8:11; Psalms 2:6, 12), sinful establishments (Matt. 13:41-43), the suffering of all creation (Rom. 8:21-22; Isa. 11:6, 9), and earthly governments (Rev. 11:15; Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45).
- II. The book of Zechariah reveals that the crucial point and major content of God's move in man's history are the two comings of Christ for the testimony of Jesus, the building of God:**
- A. Zechariah 9 through 11 speaks of Christ's lowly first coming, which was humble and intimate:
    - 1. Christ came in a righteous way with salvation for God's people as a King, but as a lowly King, a humiliated King, riding not on a majestic horse but upon a donkey, even upon a colt of a donkey; this was fulfilled when Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem the last time—Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5-10.
    - 2. Christ was detested, attacked, rejected, and betrayed by one of His disciples for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave (Zech. 11:8, 12-13; Exo. 21:32); what is prophesied here was fulfilled in the Gospels (Matt. 26:14-15; 27:3-10).
    - 3. Christ, the Fellow of Jehovah, came as the God-sent Shepherd to the children of Israel; as a man Christ was both a relative of the children of Israel and a Fellow of Jehovah; He was smitten as the Shepherd, and His disciples were scattered as the sheep—Zech. 13:6-7; John 10:11; Matt. 9:36; 26:31; John 16:32-33.
    - 4. Christ was wounded on the cross in the house of Israel, but He said, "I was wounded in the house of those who love Me"; the children of Israel killed Christ, but in this

- sweet word Christ counts their action as wounds from those who love Him—Zech. 13:6-7; 12:10; Rev. 1:7; Psalms 22:16.
5. Christ's side was pierced, and He became an opened fountain for sin and for impurity—Zech. 12:10; 13:1; John 19:34, 37; Matt. 26:28.
- B. Zechariah 12 through 14 speaks of Christ's victorious second coming, which will be with power and authority:
1. Christ will come a second time accompanied by His saints, the overcomers—14:5; Joel 3:11; Jude 14.
  2. His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east—Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:9-12.
  3. He will fight for the children of Israel, His chosen people, against the nations that besiege them and will save them from destruction—Zech. 14:2-3, 12-15; 12:1-9.
  4. At that time the whole house of Israel will look upon Him whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him; thus, all Israel will be saved—vv. 10-14; Rom. 11:26.
  5. Afterward, He will be the King to reign and rule over the nations; all the people will go up to Jerusalem year after year to worship Him, and all will be sanctified unto Him—Zech. 9:10; 14:16-21.
  6. "Jehovah will be King over all the earth; and in that day Jehovah will be the one God and His name the one name"—v. 9; Psalms 72:8; Rev. 11:15.

### **III. The all-inclusive Christ is the history of God's move in man's history in order to gain the building of God for the manifestation of God—Zech. 4:9; 6:12-15; Matt. 16:18; John 1:1, 14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 21:2:**

- A. While Christ is skillfully working to sovereignly control the world situation in human history, He is skillfully working Himself into us in the divine history to make us the masterpiece of His work, the poem of God, a new invention of God, expressing His infinite wisdom and divine design—Acts 5:31; Eph. 2:10.
- B. Christ in His humanity is the Angel of Jehovah, Jehovah Himself as the Triune God, standing with God's people in the lowest part of the valley in their humiliation to care for them, intercede for them, and bring them swiftly out of Babylonian captivity—Zech. 1:7-17; Exo. 3:2, 4-6, 13-15; Isa. 63:9; Deut. 33:27.
- C. Christ is the last Craftsman used by God to break the four horns; the four horns are the four kingdoms with their kings—Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and the Roman Empire—also signified by the great human image with four sections in Daniel 2:31-33, the four stages of locusts in Joel 1:4, and the four beasts in Daniel 7:3-8, that damaged and destroyed the chosen people of God—Zech. 1:18-21:
  1. The four craftsmen are the skills used by God to destroy these kingdoms with their kings; each of the first three kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece) was taken over in a skillful way by the kingdom that followed it—Dan. 5; 8:3-7.
  2. The fourth Craftsman will be Christ as the stone cut out without hands, who will crush the restored Roman Empire and thereby crush the great human image as the totality of human government at His coming back—2:31-35.
  3. This stone signifies not only the individual Christ but also the corporate Christ, Christ with His "mighty ones"—Joel 3:11.
- D. The corporate Christ, Christ with His overcoming bride, will come as a stone to crush the aggregate of human government in order to bring in God's kingdom—Dan. 2:34-35; Joel 3:11; Rev. 19:11-21; cf. Gen. 1:26.
- E. Whereas Daniel 2 speaks of Christ coming as a stone cut out without hands, Revelation 19 speaks of Christ coming as the One who has His bride as His army.

**IV. Ephesians 5 and 6 reveal that the church is both the bride and the warrior; in Revelation 19 we also have these two aspects of the church—Eph. 5:25-27; 6:10-20; Rev. 19:7-9, 11, 14:**

- A. To be the bride in the divine history, God's move in man's history, we need the beautifying word of God, and to be the warrior in the divine history, God's move in man's history, we need the slaying word of God—Eph. 5:26; 6:17-18; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16.
- B. On the day of His wedding, Christ will marry His bride, the overcomers, who have been fighting the battle against God's enemy for years—cf. Dan. 7:25; 6:10; Eph. 6:12.
- C. Before Christ descends to earth to deal with Antichrist and the totality of human government, He will have a wedding, uniting His overcomers to Himself as one entity—Rev. 19:7-9.
- D. Thus, Christ as the Spirit, the processed and consummated Triune God, marries the church as the bride, the processed and transformed tripartite man—22:17a.
- E. After His wedding He will come with His newly married bride to destroy Antichrist, who with his army will fight against God directly—19:11, 14:
  - 1. The Lord Jesus, the Word of God, will slay Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, by the breath of His mouth, and He will bring Antichrist to nothing by the manifestation of His coming—vv. 11-15; 2 Thes. 2:2-8.
  - 2. Out of Christ's mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations—Rev. 19:15; 1:16; 2:12, 16.
- F. After crushing the human government, God will have cleared up the entire universe; then the corporate Christ, Christ with His overcomers, will become a great mountain to fill the whole earth, making the whole earth God's kingdom—Dan. 2:35, 44; 7:22, 27; Rev. 11:15.

**V. The way to fulfill God's move in man's history for the carrying out of His eternal economy is by exercising our spirit to experience and enjoy Christ as the sevenfold intensified Spirit—1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10; 4:5; 5:6; Zech. 3:9; 4:10:**

- A. Zechariah 1:3 says, "Return to Me, declares Jehovah of hosts, and I will return to you, says Jehovah of hosts"; we need to exercise our spirit to return to the Lord with all our heart; this establishes the principle that we must return to the Lord first, and then the Lord will return to us—Jer. 24:7; Hosea 6:1-3; 14:1-5; Joel 2:13; Luke 15:17-24.
- B. Zechariah 12:1 says, "The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him":
  - 1. In His creation God made three crucial, equally important items—the heavens, the earth, and the spirit of man.
  - 2. The heavens are for the earth, the earth is for man, and man was created by God with a spirit that he may contact God, receive God, worship God, live God, fulfill God's purpose for God, and be one with God—v. 1.
  - 3. The central government and most prominent part of man's being should be his spirit; a man who is ruled and controlled by his spirit is a spiritual man—1 Cor. 2:14-15; 3:1; 14:32; John 3:6; Eph. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:4; Dan. 6:3, 10.
  - 4. Zechariah charges us to pay full attention to our human spirit, that we may receive the Christ revealed in this book and may understand all that is revealed therein concerning Him—Gen. 2:7; John 4:24; Phil. 4:23.
- C. We need to enjoy Christ as the sevenfold intensified Spirit in the following aspects:
  - 1. Christ is a man with a measuring line in His hand, measuring God's people in order to

test, judge, examine, and possess them for His kingdom—Zech. 2:1-2; Ezek. 40:3; 47:1-5; Psa. 139:23-24.

2. “I will be her wall of fire round about, declares Jehovah, and I will be the glory within her”—Zech. 2:5:
  - a. That the wall of the city of Jerusalem and the glory within her will be Jehovah Himself indicates that Jehovah as Christ will be the protection of Jerusalem at her circumference and her glory at her center; this shows the centrality and universality of Christ in God’s economy.
  - b. Today Christ is the glory in the center of the church, and He is also the fire burning around the circumference of the church for her protection; in the New Jerusalem the Triune God in Christ will be the glory at its center (Rev. 21:23; 22:1, 5), and this glory will shine through the transparent wall of the city to be its protection of fire (21:11, 18a, 24).
3. Christ is the One sent by Jehovah of hosts and is also the Sender, Jehovah of hosts, for the care of His people, who are very dear to Him; whoever touches them touches the pupil of His eye—Zech. 2:8-9, 11; cf. John 14:26; 15:26.
4. Christ came as a Shepherd, shepherding the flock with two staffs—one is called Favor (grace), and the other is called Bonds (binding); grace is for our being mingled with God, and binding is for our being bound into oneness—Zech. 11:7; 2:1-2, 5, 8-9, 11; John 21:15-17:
  - a. While the Lord is so favorable to us, we should ask Him to send us even more favor, more grace, more “rain”—Zech. 10:1; 12:10; Ezek. 34:26.
  - b. After being visited by the Lord as the Shepherd, every weak sheep among God’s people becomes a horse of majesty—Zech. 10:3; cf. 9:13, 16; Dan. 11:32b.
  - c. Often during our time of morning revival, the Lord whistles to us, calling us and gathering us to Him; the Lord’s whistling is not shrill but mild and gentle, somewhat like the singing of a bird—Zech. 10:8.
  - d. The Lord strengthens us in Himself so that we may walk about in His name—v. 12; Col. 3:17.

**VI. With God’s move, as the divine history, in man’s history, there is the new creation—the new man with a new heart, a new spirit, a new life, a new nature, a new history, and a new consummation; we praise the Lord that we are in the divine history, experiencing and enjoying the mysterious, divine things for our organic salvation, so that we may make ourselves ready to become His overcoming bride to bring Him back—*Hymns*, #16; Rom. 5:10, 17-18, 21; 6:4; Ezek. 36:26; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Matt. 5:8; Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:26-27; 6:17-18; Rev. 19:7; Matt. 24:44; 25:10.**



Message Two  
**Crucial Aspects of Living in the Good Land  
after Returning from Captivity in Babylon**

Scripture Reading: 1 Chron. 4:10; 9:1; 16:8-12, 16-18; 29:10-20;  
2 Chron. 20:15-22; 36:22-23

- I. The history of the people of Israel is a type, typifying the New Testament believers and therefore typifying the church—2 Chron. 36:22-23; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11.**
- II. Judah was carried away captive to Babylon because of unfaithfulness; thus, those who returned from captivity were to be faithful to God—1 Chron. 9:1; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; 7:25; 2 Tim. 2:13; Rev. 17:14:**
  - A. God is faithful in fulfilling His economy and in leading us into His economy—Lam. 3:23b.
  - B. As the faithful God, God cannot deny Himself; He cannot deny, go against, His own being—2 Tim. 2:13.
  - C. When He, with His attribute of faithfulness, is wrought into us, He becomes us, and we become Him in His attribute of faithfulness—1 Cor. 7:25; 2 Tim. 2:13:
    - 1. Just as God cannot deny His own being, we, having been constituted with Him, cannot deny our own being—cf. Eph. 3:16-17.
    - 2. It is in this way that we can, and will, become faithful as stewards of the mysteries of God—1 Cor. 4:1-2.
    - 3. Because we are constituted with the faithful God, we must be faithful to Him; our being, our constitution, does not allow us to be otherwise.
  - D. For us to be faithful, trustworthy, means to fulfill the stewardship that the Lord has apportioned to us—vv. 1-2; 7:25; 1 Tim. 1:12.
  - E. When the Lord comes for the battle at Armageddon, He will be the Lord of lords and the King of kings, and the overcomers who are with Him will be “the called and chosen and faithful”—Rev. 17:14; 19:11-21.
- III. All those who returned to the good land from captivity in Babylon were commanded to know, obey, and worship Jehovah—1 Chron. 16:8-14:**
  - A. *God* implies God’s power and His relationship with creatures; *Jehovah God* denotes God having a relationship with man.
  - B. Jehovah God is not only the One who is powerful but also the One who draws near to man—Gen. 2:4, 8, 15-16, 18-19, 21-22.
  - C. *Jehovah* means “I am who I am,” indicating that Jehovah is the self-existing and ever-existing eternal One, the One who was in the past, who is in the present, and who will be in the future forever—Exo. 3:14; Rev. 1:4.
  - D. Jehovah is the only One who is—Heb. 11:6:
    - 1. This unique One who has being is the great “To Be”; the verb *to be* can be applied only to God and not to us.
    - 2. God is the universal To Be, the genuine being; only God is I Am; only He has being.
  - E. *Jehovah* is God’s name for existence and fulfillment—Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; Exo. 3:14; 6:6-8.
  - F. Because Jehovah exists eternally and because He is the reality of the verb *to be*, He will fulfill whatever He has spoken—John 8:28-29.

- G. In the Lord's recovery today, we are in the stage of fulfillment; we are experiencing God as Jehovah, the great I Am—Exo. 3:14-16; John 8:24, 28.

**IV. The returning of the children of Israel to the good land signifies the returning of Christians from division to the ground of the church, the ground of oneness—2 Chron. 36:22-23; cf. Deut. 12:1-32:**

- A. The local ground of the church is basically the unique oneness of the Body of Christ practiced in the local churches—Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.
- B. According to the divine revelation in the New Testament, the ground of the church is constituted of three crucial elements:
1. The first element of the constitution of the church ground is the unique oneness of the universal Body of Christ, which is called “the oneness of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3)—the oneness for which the Lord prayed in John 17.
  2. The second element of the church ground is the unique ground of the locality in which a local church is established and exists—Rev. 1:11; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.
  3. The third element of the church ground is the reality of the Spirit of oneness, that is, the reality of the Spirit, who is the living reality of the Divine Trinity—1 John 5:6; John 16:13.
- C. The ground of the church is intrinsically related to life—Psa. 133:1, 3; 36:8-9.

**V. The children of Israel who returned to the good land were told to remember the covenant that God made with Abraham—1 Chron. 16:15-18; Gen. 15:7-21:**

- A. Abraham believed God for His promise concerning the seed, but he lacked the faith to believe God for the promise of the good land—vv. 6-8.
- B. In order to strengthen Abraham's faith, God was compelled to confirm His promise to Abraham by making a covenant with him—vv. 9-21:
1. The covenant God made with Abraham was a covenant of promise that would be fulfilled through God's power in His grace—John 1:14, 17.
  2. The new testament is a continuation of this covenant—Gal. 3:17; 4:22-26.
- C. God made His covenant with Abraham through the crucified and resurrected Christ—Gen. 15:9; Rom. 6:5-6, 9:
1. The three kinds of slain cattle signify Christ in His humanity being crucified for us, and the two living birds signify Christ in His divinity being the living, resurrected One—Gen. 15:9; John 11:25; Rev. 1:18.
  2. The heifer was for a peace offering, the female goat was for a sin offering, and the ram was for a burnt offering—Gen. 15:9; Lev. 3:1; 4:28; 5:6; 1:10.
  3. In typology, the turtledove signifies a suffering life, and the young pigeon signifies a believing life, a life of faith; these are two characteristics of the Lord's life on earth—Gen. 15:9.
  4. Since two is the number of testimony, the two living birds bear testimony of Christ as the One living in us and for us—v. 9; John 14:19-20; Gal. 2:20.

**VI. As believers in Christ, we need to have prayers that express God's will and our desire to have our personal spiritual border to be enlarged—1 Chron. 29:10-20; 4:10:**

- A. In the universe there are three wills: the divine will, the satanic will, and the human will; God wants man's will to be joined to Him and wants man to be one with Him so that man may express and echo His will back to Him in prayer for His good pleasure—Matt. 6:10;



7:21:

1. The real meaning of prayer consists of four steps:
  - a. God intends to do something according to His will—6:10.
  - b. He reveals His will to us through the Spirit for us to know His will.
  - c. We return and echo His will back to Him through prayer—John 15:7.
  - d. God accomplishes His work according to His will—Rev. 4:11.
2. Only prayers that are initiated by God and echo what He has initiated have any spiritual value; we must learn to pray this kind of prayer—Eph. 6:18; 1 John 5:14-16a.
- B. Jabez called on God to enlarge his border; the enlarging of the border of the good land in his prayer signifies the enlarging of the border of gaining Christ and the enjoyment of Christ, who is the reality of the good land—1 Chron. 4:10; cf. Phil. 3:8-14.

## **VII. From 2 Chronicles 20:15-22 we can learn to engage in spiritual warfare by praising the Lord:**

- A. In 2 Chronicles 20:15 Jehovah said to King Jehoshaphat, “Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s,” and in verse 17a, “It is not for you to fight in this battle”:
  1. Many of the serving ones praised Jehovah the God of Israel with an exceedingly loud voice—v. 19.
  2. When they began to shout in song and to praise, Jehovah set ambushes for the enemies, and they were struck—v. 22.
- B. Praise is the highest work carried out by God’s children—Psa. 119:164; Heb. 13:15:
  1. The highest expression of a saint’s spiritual life is his praise to God—Psa. 146:2; Heb. 13:15; Rev. 5:9-13; 19:1-6:
    - a. The Christian life soars through praise—Acts 16:19-34.
    - b. To praise is to transcend everything to touch the Lord—Rev. 14:1-3; 15:2-4.
  2. Spiritual victory does not depend on warfare—it depends on praise—2 Chron. 20:20-22.
- C. In the church life and in our personal life, we need to offer consummate praise to God—Psa. 22:22b; Heb. 2:12b.
- D. Through the Christ whom we have experienced and enjoyed, we need to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually—13:15.
- E. “I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart; / And I will glorify Your name forever”—Psa. 86:12.

## Message Three

### The Rebuilding of the Altar of God— the Altar of Burnt Offering

Scripture Reading: Lev. 1:3-11, 13-14, 17; 6:9, 12a, 13; Num. 28:2;  
Ezra 1:2-3, 5; 3:2-3, 6a; Psa. 43:4a; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 12:1

#### **I. “They built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings upon it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God”—Ezra 3:2b:**

- A. For the recovery of the house we need the recovery of the altar—1:2-3, 5; 3:2-3:
  - 1. The first thing to be recovered for the church life is the altar—Rom. 12:1:
    - a. Before we can have the church life, we must put everything on the altar—Psa. 43:4a.
    - b. We must put all that we have, all that we are, and all that we can do on the altar for God’s satisfaction; this is the start of the church life.
  - 2. The problem is that we have come back from Babylon to Jerusalem, yet at Jerusalem we may still keep many things for our own interests; we may not offer everything on the altar for God’s interests and for God’s satisfaction—Rom. 12:1:
    - a. We should not come back to Jerusalem yet maintain our life as it was in Babylon.
    - b. The life in Jerusalem must be absolutely for the Lord’s interests.
- B. The altar of burnt offering typifies the cross of Christ—Exo. 27:1; 40:6; Heb. 13:10:
  - 1. In His economy God gives us one person—Christ—and one way—the cross—1 Cor. 2:2:
    - a. The cross is the center of God’s operation in His economy—Gal. 1:4; 2:19-21; 3:1, 13; 5:24; 6:14.
    - b. God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross—Col. 1:20-22; 2:11-15.
  - 2. The cross is the base, the ground, of all spiritual experiences; all spiritual experience begins from the cross—Gal. 2:20; 6:14; 1 Cor. 2:2:
    - a. In order to progress spiritually, we need to pass through the cross daily—Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Luke 14:27.
    - b. If we want to have a proper church life, we need to experience the cross—Eph. 2:14-16.
    - c. Through the cross we need to become nothing, to have nothing, and to be able to do nothing; otherwise, what we are, what we have, and what we can do will become a substitute for Christ—1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23.

#### **II. “They began to offer up burnt offerings to Jehovah”—Ezra 3:6a:**

- A. The burnt offering signifies Christ’s being absolute for God’s satisfaction—Lev. 1:3-9:
  - 1. The burnt offering, which was wholly for God’s satisfaction, typifies Christ as God’s pleasure and satisfaction—Eph. 5:2.
  - 2. The burnt offering typifies Christ not only in His living a life that is perfect and absolute for God but also in His being the life that enables God’s people to have such a living—John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:18; 8:29; 14:24; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:19-21.
  - 3. The burnt offering is Christ Himself, and we are one with Him; thus, the burnt offering is also our oneness with Christ—1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. The burnt offering is for God’s food that God may enjoy it and be satisfied—Num. 28:2:
  - 1. Although God is almighty, He cannot provide Himself something to eat; His food

- must come from His people—v. 2.
  - 2. Christ is God's food, but He is not God's food in a direct way; rather, Christ is God's food served to God by us.
- C. The Hebrew word translated "burnt offering" literally means "that which goes up" and denotes something that is ascending to God; this ascending refers to Christ—Lev. 1:3, 10, 14:
  - 1. The only thing that can ascend to God from the earth is the life lived by Christ, for He is the unique person to live a life that is absolutely for God—John 6:38:
    - a. Christ as our burnt offering is completely for God, absolutely for God—4:34; 5:30; Heb. 10:8-10.
    - b. Whatever the Lord Jesus was, whatever He spoke, and whatever He did was absolutely for God—John 6:38; 5:17, 36, 45; 8:28; 10:25; 12:49-50.
  - 2. By laying our hands on Christ as the burnt offering, we are joined to Him—Lev. 1:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.
  - 3. As Christ lives in us, He repeats in us the life He lived on the earth, the life of the burnt offering—Gal. 2:20.
- D. The burnt offering is "a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah"—Lev. 1:9, 13, 17:
  - 1. The Hebrew words translated "satisfying fragrance" literally mean "savor of rest or satisfaction"—v. 9.
  - 2. The satisfying fragrance is a savor that brings satisfaction, peace, and rest; such a satisfying fragrance is an enjoyment to God.
  - 3. Because Christ lived a life that was absolutely for God's satisfaction, His living was a satisfying fragrance, a sweet savor ascending to God for His pleasure and satisfaction—Eph. 5:2.

### **III. In Leviticus the first offering that is mentioned is not the sin offering or the trespass offering but the burnt offering—1:3:**

- A. We need Christ first as our burnt offering because our first situation before God, our first problem related to God, is not a matter of trespasses but of not being for God:
  - 1. God created us to be His expression and His representation—Gen. 1:26.
  - 2. God created us that we might be for Him; He did not create us for ourselves, but as fallen human beings, we live for ourselves, not for Him.
- B. The burnt offering means that as those who were created by God for the purpose of expressing and representing Him, we should be for nothing other than God—vv. 27-28; cf. Psa. 73:25; Mark 12:30.
- C. We need to realize that we are not absolutely for God and that of ourselves we cannot be absolute; therefore, we need to take Christ as our burnt offering—Lev. 1:3-4.

### **IV. To live a life of the continual burnt offering is to be a living sacrifice—Rom. 12:1:**

- A. The burnt offering is a type of our consecration, of our offering ourselves to God as a living sacrifice; the meaning of consecration is to offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice—Lev. 1:3-4, 8-9; 6:9, 12a, 13; Rom. 12:1.
- B. The daily burnt offering in the Old Testament typifies that, in the New Testament, we who belong to God should offer ourselves daily to God—Num. 28:3-8.
- C. Today, in our Christian life and church life, there is the need for the continual burnt offering—Lev. 1:3-4, 8-9; 6:9, 12a, 13.

### **V. We need to worship God the Father with Christ as the burnt offering for God's satisfaction to fulfill His desire—1:3, 9b; Num. 28:2; John 4:23-24:**

- A. God wants us to worship Him with Christ as the reality of all the offerings; the offerings are for pleasing God and making Him happy—vv. 23-24.
- B. Proper worship is a matter of satisfying God with Christ as the burnt offering—1 Pet. 2:5; John 4:34; 5:30; 8:29:
  - 1. When we worship the Father with Christ as the reality of the burnt offering, a fragrance well pleasing to God will ascend to Him for His satisfaction—Lev. 1:9; John 4:23-24.
  - 2. Since God is satisfied with our offering to Him Christ as the reality of the burnt offering, He will render His sweet acceptance to us; this is the significance of the burnt offering—Num. 28:2.

Message Four  
**The Recovery of the Building of the House of God  
through the Divine Encouragement  
of the Prophets of God**

Scripture Reading: Ezra 5:1-2; Hag. 1:2-5, 7-8, 9b, 14;  
2:6-7, 9a, 23; Zech. 3:9; 4:2-7, 11-14

- I. In the rebuilding of the recovered temple as the house of God, both Joshua (representing the priesthood) and Zerubbabel (representing the kingship) became somewhat weak and discouraged; therefore, God used the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to speak for Him in order to strengthen, assist, and encourage Joshua and Zerubbabel—Ezra 5:1-2; cf. 1 Cor. 14:3.**
- II. The central thought of Haggai's prophecy is that the building of the house of God, the temple of God, is related to the welfare of God's people today and to the coming of the millennial kingdom with its Messiah in the age of restoration—Hag. 1:2-5, 7-8, 9b, 14; 2:6-9, 20-23; Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:20-21:**
- A. In the Old Testament the house of Jehovah, or the temple, was first a type of Christ as the house of God individually, and then a type of the church, the Body, the enlarged Christ, as God's house corporately—John 2:19-21; 1 Tim. 3:15.
  - B. Because the house of Jehovah is a type of the church, Haggai's prophecy refers to us, the New Testament believers, since we are the reality of the type.
  - C. Haggai's speaking to Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest was to strengthen and encourage them and the people for the rebuilding of the temple as God's house—Ezra 5:1; Hag. 1:1.
  - D. The self-serving and God-neglecting returned captives were taking care of their houses but not Jehovah's house (v. 4); the word *run* in verse 9 indicates that the people were busy caring for their own houses.
  - E. Haggai 1:6 indicates that if we neglect the church, we will have no real enjoyment or satisfaction; regarding the recovery of the building of God's house, we cannot be neutral; we must be absolute, either taking care of our houses first or taking care of the Lord's house first—Matt. 6:33; Luke 9:57-62; Phil. 2:20-21.
  - F. For the recovery of the building of God's house, God's elect were stirred up in their spirit and came and did work in the house of Jehovah; in our response to the Lord's charge, we all should be occupied by the Lord Jesus in the work of preaching the gospel, feeding the new believers, and taking care of others for the building up of the Lord's house, the church as the Body of Christ—Hag. 1:14; 2:7a; John 21:15-17.
  - G. "I will shake all the nations, and the Desire of all the nations will come"—Hag. 2:7a:
    - 1. This refers to Christ, who is the Desire of all the nations; even though the nations do not know Christ, they still desire Christ; for the nations to desire such things as light, love, joy, and righteousness, the reality of which is Christ, means that, unconsciously, they desire Christ—Mal. 3:1b.
    - 2. The coming of Christ as the Desire of all the nations depends on the return of God's people from their captivity in Babylon and the recovery of the building of God's house—1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5.
  - H. "I will fill this house with glory...The latter glory of this house will be greater than the

former”—Hag. 2:7b, 9a:

1. The glory of God, the expression of God, is in the building of God, the house of Jehovah—Exo. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 3:1; 5:1-2, 13-14; Eph. 3:21; Rev. 21:10-11.
  2. In a vision of God, Ezekiel saw the glory of Jehovah return to the house of Jehovah and fill the house (Ezek. 43:1-5); the glory of Jehovah returned to the house because the building of the house was completed (vv. 2, 5); this indicates that in order for the God of glory to dwell in the church, the church must be built up to become the dwelling place of God (Eph. 2:21-22; 3:14-21).
  3. Ezekiel saw that the river of water of life flowing forth out of the house of God was toward the east, the direction of God's glory (Ezek. 47:1; 43:2); if we do not care for the glory of God, the flow in us will be limited.
  4. In the church life the first consideration we should have is the Lord's glory; the decisions in the church life must be made primarily according to the Lord's glory—Eph. 3:21; 4:20; 1 Pet. 4:10-11; Jude 24-25.
  5. The glorification of God is the purpose of our service; the highest service that we can render to God is for us to glorify God by living the life of a God-man (Isa. 43:7; John 7:16-18; 17:1-4; Rom. 9:21, 23; Phil. 1:19-21a; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 10:31); this is so that we may express God in a corporate, built-up way and enter into the oneness in the divine glory (John 17:22-24).
- I. Jehovah's making Zerubbabel as a signet ring (Hag. 2:23) indicates that Jehovah regarded him as His representative and that He loved him and trusted him; in this matter Zerubbabel is a type of Christ, and He is the One whom God loves and trusts (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 3:35; 17:2); as such a person, Christ is qualified to take care of the building of God's house, the church (Matt. 16:18).

### **III. The book of Zechariah reveals that the seven lamps of the lampstand (4:2; Rev. 4:5) are the seven Spirits of God, the sevenfold intensified Spirit (1:4), as the seven eyes of Jehovah (Zech. 4:10), the seven eyes of the redeeming Lamb (Rev. 5:6), and the seven eyes of the building stone (Zech. 3:9) for the full expression of the Triune God and the rebuilding of the house of God:**

- A. The stone set before Joshua in Zechariah 3:9 typifies Christ as the stone for God's building (Psa. 118:22; Matt. 21:42); Jehovah's engraving of the stone indicates that when Christ was dying on the cross, He was engraved, cut, by God; Jehovah's removing the iniquity of the land in one day indicates that the Christ on whom God has worked will remove the sin of the land of Israel in one day, the day of His crucifixion; through His death on the cross, Christ, the Lamb of God, took away the sin of the world (1 Pet. 2:24; John 1:29):
1. The stone, Jehovah, and the Lamb are one; Christ is the redeeming Lamb and the building stone, and He is also Jehovah; Christ is the Lamb-stone—the Lamb for redemption and the stone for building—Rev. 5:6; Zech. 3:9.
  2. In God's building Christ is the foundation stone to uphold the building, the cornerstone to join together the Gentile and Jewish members of His Body, and the topstone of grace to consummate everything in God's building—Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6; Zech. 4:7.
  3. The fact that Christ, the Lamb of God, is the building stone with seven eyes reveals that the seven eyes of Christ are for God's building—John 1:29; Zech. 3:9; Rev. 5:6.
  4. Christ is the building stone with seven eyes, the seven Spirits, to transfuse Himself into us in order to transform us into precious materials for God's building; as the Lord looks at us, His seven eyes transfuse Himself into us—Zech. 3:9; 1 Cor. 3:12a; Rev.



3:1; 5:6.

- B. For the completion of God's building, the sevenfold intensified Spirit is the eyes of Christ as the redeeming Lamb and the building stone to observe and search us and to infuse and transfuse us with Christ's essence, riches, and burden for God's building—Zech. 3:9; 4:7; Rev. 1:14; 5:6:
1. The seven eyes of the Lamb infuse us with Christ as the judicial Redeemer, and the seven eyes of the stone infuse us with Christ as the organic Savior for God's economical move on earth through His judicial redemption and by His organic salvation for the goal of His building—John 1:29; Acts 4:11-12; Rom. 5:10.
  2. Within us we have two lamps—the sevenfold intensified Spirit of God within our spirit (Prov. 20:27; Rev. 4:5; 1 Cor. 6:17); in order to be transformed, we must fully open to the Lord in prayer to allow the lamp of the Lord with the seven lamps of fire to search all the chambers of our soul, shining on and enlightening our inward parts to supply them with life.
  3. The one who experiences the greatest amount of transformation is the one who is fully open to the Lord; by the operation of the sevenfold intensified Spirit within Christ's seeking believers, they are intensified to become the overcomers to build up the Body of Christ, which consummates the New Jerusalem.
- C. In His resurrection Christ, as the last Adam, became the life-giving Spirit (15:45b; John 6:63a; 2 Cor. 3:6b), who is also the sevenfold intensified Spirit; this Spirit is the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2); hence, the function of the seven Spirits is to impart the divine life into God's people for the building up of God's eternal habitation, the New Jerusalem.
- D. The sevenfold intensified Spirit is the seven lamps of fire to burn, enlighten, expose, search, judge, purify, and refine us to produce the golden lampstands for the fulfillment of God's New Testament economy—Rev. 4:5; 1:2, 4, 9-12, 20.
- E. The two olive trees on the two sides of the lampstand signify Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor at the time, who were the two sons of oil, filled with the Spirit of Jehovah for the rebuilding of God's temple—Zech. 4:1-6, 11-14:
1. The two sons of oil also typify the two witnesses, Moses and Elijah, in the last three and a half years of the present age, who will be witnesses of God in the great tribulation for the strengthening of God's peoples—the Israelites and the believers in Christ—Rev. 11:3-12; 12:17.
  2. In principle, all the believers in Christ should be sons of fresh oil, those who are filled with the fresh, present, and consummated Spirit as the oil of gladness, to flow out the Spirit into the lampstand for its shining testimony, the testimony of Jesus—1:12, 20; Psa. 45:7; 46:4; 92:10; John 7:38:
    - a. The church as the lampstand is the solid embodiment of the Triune God with the sevenfold intensified Spirit as the oil of God in His divine nature.
    - b. The oil itself is gold (Zech. 4:12), which means that the gold flows as oil; when more oil is added into the lampstand, that means more gold is added.
    - c. Day by day we need to pay the price to gain more gold, more of God in His divine nature, so that we can become a pure golden lampstand for the building of the golden New Jerusalem—2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 3:18; 1:20; 21:18; Matt. 25:8-9.
    - d. As we apply this matter to our experience today, we see that the Spirit who flows out of us is God, and God is gold; thus, when we minister Christ to others, supplying them with oil, we are actually supplying them with God; God is flowing out from us into them—Zech. 4:12-14; John 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8.
    - e. We all should be olive trees, emptying God from ourselves into others; in this way oil will be provided to the needy by those who are olive trees out of which

God is flowing—Rom. 11:17; Luke 10:34; cf. John 7:37-39.

Message Five  
**Ezra, a Priestly Scribe,  
and the Need for Ezras—  
Those Skilled in the Word of God**

Scripture Reading: Ezra 7:6, 11-12, 21; 8:21-23;  
Neh. 8:1-9, 11-13; 12:26

- I. Ezra was a priest and also a scribe; thus, he was not a letter scribe but a priestly scribe—Ezra 7:6, 11-12, 21; Neh. 8:1-2, 8-9, 11-12; 12:26:**
- A. A priest is one who is mingled with the Lord and saturated with the Lord; Ezra was this kind of person—Ezra 8:21-23.
  - B. Ezra was a man who trusted in God, who was one with God, who was skilled in the word of God, and who knew God's heart, God's desires, and God's economy—7:6, 11-12, 21.
  - C. As a priestly scribe, Ezra was one with the Lord by contacting Him continually—Neh. 8:1-2, 8-9, 11-12; 12:26.
  - D. Ezra spoke nothing new; what he spoke had been spoken by Moses—Ezra 7:6; Neh. 8:14; 2 Pet. 1:12.
  - E. The priests and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe in order to gain insight into the words of the law; in Nehemiah 8:13 *insight* refers to apprehending the intrinsic significance.
- II. Ezra reconstituted the people of Israel by educating them with the heavenly truths so that Israel could become God's testimony—vv. 1-3, 5-6, 8, 13-18:**
- A. God's intention with Israel was to have on earth a divinely constituted people to be His testimony—a people reconstituted with the word of God—Isa. 49:6; 60:1-3; Col. 3:16.
  - B. After the return from captivity, the people of Israel were still unruly, for they had been born and raised in Babylon and had become Babylonian in their constitution:
    - 1. The Babylonian element had been wrought into them and constituted into their being—Zech. 3:3-5.
    - 2. After they returned to the land of their fathers to be citizens of the nation of Israel, they needed to be reconstituted with the word of God—Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8, 13.
  - C. There was the need of teaching and reconstitution to bring the people of God into a culture that was according to God, a culture that expressed God; this kind of culture requires a great deal of education—v. 8.
  - D. For the reconstituting of God's people, Ezra was very useful, for he bore the totality of the heavenly and divine constitution and culture, and he was one through whom the people could be reconstituted with the word of God—vv. 1-2.
  - E. Ezra brought the people back to the Word of God so that they might be re-educated and reconstituted with the heavenly truths in the divine Word.
  - F. In order to reconstitute the people of God, there was the need to educate them with the word that comes out of the mouth of God and that expresses God—Psa. 119:2, 9, 105, 130, 140:
    - 1. To reconstitute the people of God is to educate them by putting them into the word of God so that they may be saturated with the word—Col. 3:16.
    - 2. As the word of God works within us, the Spirit of God, who is God Himself, through the word spontaneously dispenses God's nature with God's element into our being; in this way we are reconstituted—2 Tim. 3:16-17.
  - G. As a result of being reconstituted through the ministry of Ezra, Israel (in type) became a

particular nation, a nation sanctified and separated unto God, expressing God—Isa. 49:6; 60:1-3; Zech. 4:2:

1. The returned captives were reconstituted personally and corporately to become God's testimony.
2. They were transfused with the thought of God, with the considerations of God, and with all that God is; this made them God's reproduction.
3. By this kind of divine constitution, everyone became God in life and in nature; as a result, they became a divine nation expressing the divine character—1 Pet. 2:9.

**III. In the Lord's recovery we need Ezras, priestly teachers who contact God, who are saturated with God, who are one with God, who are mingled with God, who are filled with God, and who are skillful in the Word of God; this is the kind of person who is qualified to be a teacher in the recovery—Matt. 13:52; 2 Cor. 3:5-6; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11:**

- A. The Lord Jesus taught the people in order to bring them out of the satanic darkness into the divine light—Mark 6:6; cf. Acts 26:18:
  1. Man's fall into sin broke his fellowship with God, making all men ignorant of the knowledge of God, with such ignorance issuing in darkness and death—Eph. 4:17-18.
  2. The Lord as the light of the world came as a great light to shine on the people who were sitting in the shadow of death—John 8:12; Matt. 4:12-16.
  3. The Lord's teaching released the word of light that those in darkness and death might receive the light of life—John 1:4.
- B. Teaching equals revelation, which is the opening of the veil—1 Tim. 2:7; Eph. 3:3-4, 9:
  1. To teach is to roll away the veil; as we are teaching others, we should be taking away the veil so that they may see something of the Triune God.
  2. When we speak something in the church meeting, our speaking should be the rolling away of the veil; this means that our teaching should present a revelation—1 Tim. 4:6.
  3. Today's Ezras should labor to constitute God's people by educating them with the truth so that they may be God's testimony, His corporate expression, on the earth—Neh. 8:1-8, 13; 2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 1 Tim. 3:15.
- C. The recovery has the highest truth—the truth that is the consummation of the truths recovered during the past centuries—2:4; 2 Tim. 2:2, 15:
  1. The greatest need that must be met is to bring the saints in the Lord's recovery into the truth to carry the recovery on—1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:2, 15.
  2. We have both the objective truths and the subjective truths in the Holy Scriptures—Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:34, 10; Col. 3:1; 1:27.
  3. In our study of the Bible, we should not pay attention merely to the "branches" but go deeply into the "roots" and the "trunk."
  4. We need to see the crystallized significances of the steps of God's economy and of the Body of Christ—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6.
- D. To be constituted with the truth is to have the truth wrought into us to become our intrinsic being, our organic constitution—2 John 2:
  1. The intrinsic element of the divine revelation must be wrought into and constituted into our being—Col. 3:16.
  2. Once the truth gets into us through our understanding, it remains in our memory, and then we retain the truth in our memory, causing us to have an accumulation of the truth—1 Pet. 1:13; 2 Pet. 1:15; 3:1.
  3. After the truth gets into our memory, it becomes a constant and long-term nourishment; then we have an accumulation of the truth, and we are under the

constant nourishment—Col. 3:16, 4; 1 Tim. 4:6.

- E. All the saints in the Lord's recovery should be trained in the divine revelation—2 Tim. 2:2, 15:
  - 1. Nearly all the crucial revelations in the Bible have been covered in the ministry of Brother Nee and Brother Lee; we should pay our attention to these pure and healthy things and not waste our time collecting "poisonous gourds"—2 Kings 4:38-41.
  - 2. We all need to be helped through the Life-studies and the Recovery Version with the footnotes to see the intrinsic significance of the word of the Bible—Neh. 8:8, 13.

Message Six  
**The Intrinsic Significance of the Purification  
of the Returned Captives**

Scripture Reading: Ezra 9:1—10:44; Neh. 13:23-30a;  
Matt. 5:8; Rev. 21:18b, 21b; 22:4

- I. The Lord's recovery is unique, and it must be absolutely pure, single, and holy, without any mixture; thus, we need Ezras and Nehemiahs to carry out a purifying work; in all the steps of the Lord's recovery, there is the need of purification:**
- A. Ezra purified the recovery by causing "the holy seed" to be separated from anything heathen—Ezra 9:1—10:44:
    - 1. Before Ezra arrived, there was mixture because some of the Israelites had married heathen wives and had children born of this mixture; this is a type, which we should apply spiritually, not literally.
    - 2. In the Lord's recovery there is the need of purification to separate "the holy seed" from anything that is heathen—9:1-2:
      - a. The Lord's recovery is the holy seed; we must be so pure that the holy seed will never be mingled with anything heathen.
      - b. When the recovery is holy, we will see the Lord's blessing—Ezek. 34:26.
  - B. After the building up of the house, we need purification (seen under Ezra's leadership), and after the building up of the city, we need to be purified again (seen with Nehemiah's absoluteness)—Ezra 9:1-2; 10:1-44; Neh. 13:1-30a.
  - C. In the local churches we must be thoroughly purified of all mixture; anything common and anything contradictory to the heavenly nature of the Lord's recovery must be purged out—2 Tim. 2:19-22.
- II. Babylon is a mixture of the things of God with the things of idols, and the principle of Babylon is the principle of mixing the things of man with the Word of God and the things of the flesh with the things of the Spirit—2 Chron. 36:6-7; Ezra 1:11; Rev. 17:3-5:**
- A. Anything that is a part of Babylon is abominable in the sight of God, and anything Babylonian gives Satan the ground to defeat the people of God—Josh. 7:1-21.
  - B. God hates the principle of Babylon more than anything else; only when we judge everything Babylonian in us can we confess that we too hate the principle of Babylon.
- III. In Acts 21 and in the book of James, there is mixture; James mixed the Old Testament with the New Testament, the new dispensation with the old, the new people of God with the old, and the new man with the old man—James 1:1, 17-18; 2:1-4, 8-12; 3:2; 4:11-12; 5:10-11:**
- A. Acts 21 exposes the terrible mixture in the church in Jerusalem; the Jewish believers still kept the law of Moses, remained in the Old Testament dispensation, and were strongly under the Judaic influence, mixing God's New Testament economy with the outdated Old Testament economy—vv. 18-21.
  - B. They were unaware that the dispensation of law was altogether over, that the dispensation of grace should be fully honored, and that any disregard of the distinction between these two dispensations would be against God's dispensational administration and would be a



great damage to God's economical plan for the building up of the church as the expression of Christ—John 1:16-17; Rev. 2:9.

- C. The law makes demands on man according to what God is; grace supplies man with what God is to meet what God demands; grace is God enjoyed by man—John 1:16-17; Gal. 6:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; 12:9; 1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 3:2; 4:29; 6:24.

#### **IV. A great problem among God's children is the mixture of the self with the spirit—Heb. 4:12:**

- A. This mixture disqualifies many from serving God, for in their spirit there is much mixture, which is displeasing to God—2 Tim. 1:3.
- B. The spirit in our innermost part is pure and undefiled; however, when the spirit comes forth and passes through the soul and the body, it may become contaminated by filthiness and corruption—2 Cor. 7:1.
- C. Dealing with the spirit emphasizes dealing with impure motives and intentions and other mixtures within us—1 Thes. 5:23; 2 Tim. 1:7.

#### **V. We need to be pure in heart, in conscience, and in spirit:**

- A. Those who are pure in heart will see God—Matt. 5:8; Job 42:5; Rev. 22:4:
  - 1. To be pure in heart is to be single in purpose, to have the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory—1 Cor. 10:31.
  - 2. A pure heart is a heart that takes the Lord as the unique goal—1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22; Psa. 73:1.
  - 3. In the New Testament sense, seeing God equals gaining God, and to gain God is to receive God in His element, life, and nature so that we may be constituted with God; seeing God transforms us, because in seeing God we receive His element into us, and our old element is discharged—2 Cor. 3:18.
  - 4. To see God is to be transformed into the glorious image of Christ, the God-man, so that we may express God in His life and represent Him in His authority—1 John 3:1-3; Gen. 1:26.
  - 5. We should be pure in heart and single for the Lord's recovery; only then will we be a help to the recovery—1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Pet. 1:22.
- B. We need to have not only a good conscience but also a pure conscience—Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3:
  - 1. A good conscience is a conscience without offense toward God and man—Acts 23:1; 24:16.
  - 2. A pure conscience is a conscience purified of any mixture; such a conscience testifies that, like Paul, we are seeking only God and His will—2 Tim. 1:3.
- C. The first qualification in the work is purity of spirit—2 Cor. 6:4a, 6:
  - 1. It is very difficult to find a person whose spirit is pure (7:1); pureness is the prerequisite in the leadership and a basic condition of our service (1 Tim. 3:9; 1:5); the problem of mixture is the greatest problem among workers; impureness is often the source of misunderstanding and suspicion (2 Tim. 1:3; 1 Tim. 3:9; Titus 1:15).
  - 2. We need to deal completely with all the mixture in our spirit so that when our spirit is released, it will not be dangerous or cause trouble to others.
  - 3. If we want to be used by God, our spirit must be released, and our spirit must be pure—2 Cor. 6:4a, 6.

#### **VI. The city of New Jerusalem is pure gold, like clear glass, and the street of the city is pure gold, like transparent glass—Rev. 21:18b, 21b:**

- A. Gold signifies the nature of God; the city's being pure gold indicates that the city is of the

divine nature and takes the divine nature as its element—v. 18b.

- B. The pure gold of the street and the city is like clear glass, signifying that the entire city is transparent and not in the least opaque—v. 21b:
  - 1. If we take God's nature as our unique way, we will be pure, without any mixture, and transparent, without any opaqueness.
  - 2. If we are infused and saturated with the life-giving Spirit, our inner being will become transparent and crystal clear—2 Cor. 3:8-9, 18.
- C. If we want to have the real church life, the church herself must be pure gold, that is, altogether of the divine nature; here we need the work of the cross to purge us and to purify us—Rev. 1:11, 20.
- D. The difference between apostate Christendom and the genuine church is that one is a mixture and the other is pure; the local churches, like the New Jerusalem, should be crystal clear, without any mixture—22:1.

Message Seven  
**Nehemiah—a Pattern of One  
Who Has Dispensational Value to God**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 12:1-14; Neh. 1:1-11; 2:9-20;  
4:4-5, 9; 5:10, 14-19; 8:1-10; 13:14, 29-31

**I. God's desire is to end this age and bring in the age of the kingdom; in order for God to accomplish this, He must have His dispensational instrument:**

- A. All of us should look to the Lord and pray that we will have dispensational value to God; we need to ask ourselves what we are doing to close this dispensation and to bring in the next age, the kingdom age; this is a special time, so there is the need of special believers to do a special work.
- B. Those who can only say, "Go," but not "Come," will have no effect; that is, they will have no dispensational value to God—cf. Heb. 10:22:
  - 1. The writer of Hebrews did not tell the believers to go forward but to come forward; this means that the writer was in a particular place and that he wanted his readers to come forward to the place where he was.
  - 2. We need to come forward to three things: to the Holy of Holies, to the throne of grace, and to God Himself; do not shrink backward—come forward—v. 22; 4:16; 7:25; 11:6.
  - 3. God is on the throne of grace, and the throne of grace is in the Holy of Holies; at the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews, the writer was there in the Holy of Holies, calling the Hebrew believers to come forward.
- C. The rapture of the man-child to heaven, the casting of Satan to earth, and the declaration in heaven that the kingdom has come signify that God's gaining of the man-child is His greatest dispensational move, because it brings an end to the church age and introduces the kingdom age—Rev. 12:5, 9-10; 11:15.
- D. The rapture of the man-child to the throne of God will be before the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, which is the time of the great tribulation of three and a half years (forty-two months)—12:1-14; 13:5; 11:2.
- E. We live in the most privileged time in which we can do the most for God; God as light will show us the way, but the indwelling Christ as our strength and power will enable us to walk the road; a great price must be paid in order to be used now—3:18.

**II. Because the church has not attained to God's purpose, God will choose a group of overcomers who will attain to His purpose and fulfill His demand; this is the principle of the man-child—12:1-2, 5, 10-11; 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 20-21:**

- A. The universal bright woman represents the totality of God's people, and ultimately, the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15 is enlarged to include the overcoming believers, the stronger part of God's people, signified by the man-child—Rev. 12:1-2, 5, 10-11.
- B. The resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit is the transfigured descendant of the woman, the seed of the woman, dispensed into us to bruise the serpent's head in us and make us the corporate seed of the woman, the overcoming man-child, to carry out God's judgment on the ancient serpent and to be God's dispensational instrument to change the age and usher in the manifestation of God's kingdom—v. 5.
- C. Psalm 2:8-9, Revelation 2:26-27, and Revelation 12:5 indicate that the Lord Jesus as God's Anointed, the overcomers in the churches, and the man-child will rule the nations with an

iron rod, thus proving that the Lord Jesus, the overcomers, and the man-child are one; the Lord as the leading Overcomer (3:21) is the Head, center, reality, life, and nature of the man-child, and the man-child, as the following overcomers, is the Lord's Body.

- D. Through the Lord's death on the cross, Satan, the old serpent, was judged, cast out (John 12:31; 16:11); that judgment and sentence will ultimately be carried out and executed by the overcomers as the man-child, the corporate seed of the woman; the war waged by the overcoming believers against Satan is actually the executing of the Lord's judgment upon him for him to eventually be cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:7-9).
- E. The man-child consists of the overcomers who stand on behalf of the church, take the position that the whole church should take, and do the work for the church—2:7b, 11b, 17b, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21; 12:5, 11:
  - 1. All of God's people should have a part in His eternal purpose, but not all assume their rightful responsibility; therefore, God chooses a group from among them—the man-child brought forth by the woman.
  - 2. In the Bible the stronger ones among God's people are considered a collective unit fighting the battle for God and bringing God's kingdom down to earth—Rev. 12:5, 10-11.
  - 3. God will use the man-child to fulfill His economy and to accomplish His purpose—1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11.
  - 4. God needs the man-child to defeat His enemy and to bring in His kingdom so that His eternal purpose may be accomplished; the Lord's recovery is the practicality of God's economy today, and His economy can be carried out only by the man-child—Rev. 12:10.
- F. The rapture of the man-child is a transaction that causes Satan to have no more position in heaven; we must be raptured to fulfill God's need by executing His judgment upon His enemy—vv. 5, 7-10.
- G. Those who constitute the man-child overcome the devil (the accuser, the slanderer), who is Satan, the adversary of God, because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they love not their soul-life even unto death—vv. 10-11.
- H. The entire being of the man-child is saturated and permeated with the element of Christ, because they are daily strengthened into their inner man so that Christ may build Himself into their hearts, they are being nourished with the unsearchable riches of Christ, and they put on Christ as the whole armor of God—Eph. 3:16-18, 8; 6:10-11.

### **III. When Israel was taken into captivity for seventy years, God still had a dispensational move because of Nehemiah, who was a true overcomer; he is a pattern of someone who has dispensational value to God—Neh. 1:1-11; 2:9-20; 4:4-5, 9; 5:10, 14-19; 8:1-10; 13:14, 29-31:**

- A. The crucial point in the book of Nehemiah is that the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem with its wall was both a continual recovery among His elect for His testimony as the accomplishment of God's economy and a safeguard and protection for the house of God within the city:
  - 1. This signifies that the house of God as His dwelling and home on the earth needs His kingdom to be established as a realm to safeguard His interest on the earth for His administration to carry out His economy—cf. Rom. 14:17.
  - 2. The rebuilding of the house of God typifies God's recovery of the degraded church, and the rebuilding of the wall of the city of Jerusalem typifies God's recovery of His kingdom; the building of God's house and His kingdom go together—Matt. 16:18-19.
- B. When we realize and enjoy Christ as our life, we have the church as the house of God; if we

- go further and realize His headship, the house will be enlarged to be the city, the kingdom of God—Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15; Rev. 22:1.
- C. Nehemiah shows the need for us to have the proper aggressiveness in the Lord's recovery today:
1. The leaders of the Moabites and Ammonites were greatly displeased about Nehemiah's seeking the good of the children of Israel; these descendants of the impure increase of Lot hated and despised the children of Israel—Neh. 2:10, 19; cf. Ezek. 25:3, 8.
  2. In relation to the mocking, despising, and reproach of these opposers, Nehemiah was very pure and aggressive, not cowardly—Neh. 2:17-20; 4:1-23; cf. Acts 4:29-31; 1 Thes. 2:2; 2 Tim. 1:7-8.
  3. The aggressive ones receive help from God; like Nehemiah, the apostle Paul was allied with God and realized God's assistance in this alliance—Acts 26:21-22.
  4. Nehemiah's aggressiveness, as a virtue in his human conduct, shows that our natural capacity, ability, and virtues must pass through the cross of Christ and be brought into resurrection, into the Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God, to be useful to God in the accomplishing of His economy.
- D. Nehemiah did not live in his natural man but in resurrection; he was aggressive, but his aggressiveness was accompanied by other characteristics:
1. In his relationship with God, he was one who loved God and also loved God's interests on the earth, including the Holy Land (signifying Christ), the holy temple (signifying the church), and the holy city (signifying the kingdom of God)—1 Kings 8:48; cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-5.
  2. As a person who loved God, Nehemiah prayed to God to contact Him in fellowship; for the rebuilding of the wall, Nehemiah stood on God's word and prayed according to it—Neh. 1:1-11; 2:4; 4:4-5, 9.
  3. Nehemiah trusted in God and even became one with God; as a result, he became the representative of God—5:19; cf. 2 Cor. 5:20.
  4. In his relationship with the people, Nehemiah was unselfish, without any self-seeking or self-interest; he was always willing to sacrifice what he had for the people and for the nation—Neh. 5:10, 14-19.
- E. Nehemiah, as the governor, in the position of a king, was a man with a pure heart for the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall in carrying out God's economy; he was a pattern of what a leader among God's people should be—cf. 1 Tim. 3:2-7; 1 Pet. 5:1-3:
1. Unlike many of the kings of Israel and Judah, he was not selfish, did not seek his own interests, and was not indulgent in sexual lust.
  2. As the commander in chief, Nehemiah was among those who were ready to fight against the enemy, and he took part in the night watch; he did not leave these matters to others but participated in them himself—Neh. 4:9-23.
  3. He and his brothers did not eat the food appointed for the governor for twelve years because of the fear of God—5:14-15.
  4. He applied himself to work on the city wall without any kind of payment; instead of being self-seeking, he fed others for the purpose of building up the wall—vv. 16-18.
- F. Although Nehemiah was the ruler, he was altogether not ambitious; this is indicated by the fact that in reconstituting the nation, he recognized his need of Ezra for the reconstitution of the people of God with the word of God—8:1-10; Phil. 2:3-4.
- G. Nehemiah was the perfect leader, the best leader in human history and the best example of what an elder should be; it is surely worthwhile for us, especially the leading ones in the churches, to consider his example so that we may be a pattern of gaining God and flowing

out God to others in order to turn the age—Neh. 5:19; 13:14.



Message Eight  
**Building the Wall of the City  
for the Protection of the Church as the House of God**

Scripture Reading: Neh. 1:3; 2:9-20

**I. The book of Ezra is a history of the return of Israel's captivity and the rebuilding of the temple; the book of Nehemiah is a history of the rebuilding of the wall of the city of Jerusalem—Neh. 2:17-20:**

- A. The city of Jerusalem was a safeguard and protection for the house of God, which was in the city—v. 13:
  - 1. This signifies that the house of God as His dwelling and home on the earth needs His kingdom to be established as a realm to safeguard His interests on the earth for His administration that He may carry out His economy—v. 15.
  - 2. The rebuilding of the house of God typifies God's recovery of the degraded church, and the rebuilding of the wall of the city of Jerusalem typifies God's recovery of His kingdom—vv. 17-20.
- B. God's building of His house and His building of the kingdom go together—Matt. 16:18-19.

**II. The first section of the book of Nehemiah, chapters 1 through 7, is on the rebuilding of the wall of the city of Jerusalem under Nehemiah:**

- A. Nehemiah received the report that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the gates had been burned with fire—1:3b.
- B. Nehemiah 2:9-16 speaks of Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem and his personal observation of the condition of the wall of the city of Jerusalem.
- C. Nehemiah 2:17-20 is a word concerning the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem:
  - 1. The temple is the place of the Lord's presence, where we meet and serve the Lord, but it needs protection.
  - 2. The wall of the city is the defense to the temple; without the wall of the city, there is no protection.
  - 3. The wall of the city is not only for protection but also for separation.
  - 4. The book of Nehemiah tells us that we all must build up our part of the wall; everyone should build up his own part—4:6, 19.
- D. We need to intrinsically follow Nehemiah's pattern to "build up the wall," to build up the church as the kingdom of God, for the protection of the church as the house of God, His dwelling place—2:4, 10, 17-20; Eph. 2:21-22.

**III. The purpose of the building of the wall is to bring us all into the proper order in life under the headship of Christ—1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 2:19:**

- A. Christ is both the Head of the Body, the church, corporately and of all the believers individually; He is the Head of every one of us directly—1:18; 1 Cor. 11:3.
- B. The church life is a life of being headed up under the unique headship of Christ—Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15-16; Col. 2:19.
- C. If we honor the unique headship of Christ, then in the Lord's recovery the church will be not only the house but also the city—Heb. 11:10; Ezra 1:2-3; Neh. 1:9; 2:5, 17; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 21:2, 10-11:
  - 1. The church as the house is mainly with Christ as life, and the church as the city is mainly with Christ as the Head—1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 5:14; Col. 3:4; 1:18:

- a. When we experience and enjoy Christ as life, we have the church as the house; when we realize the unique headship of Christ, the church will be enlarged as the city, which signifies the kingdom of God—Matt. 16:18-19.
- b. The church as the city is built not only with Christ as life but also with the headship of Christ; thus, Christ must be not only our life but also our Head—Col. 3:4; 1:18; 2:19.
2. If we honor the unique headship of Christ, the church will be enlarged from the house to the city for the King and His kingdom—Psa. 48:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Rev. 21:2, 10-11, 14; 11:15.

#### **IV. We need to build the wall to protect the church from differing teachings, which are contrary to the teaching of the apostles—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-4:**

- A. Differing teachings refer to teachings that are not in line with the economy of God—6:3.
- B. The differing teachings in 1:3-4, 6-7; 6:3-5, 20-21 and the heresies in 4:1-3 are the seed, the source, of the church's decline, degradation, and deterioration.
- C. Teaching differently tears down God's building and annuls God's economy; even a small amount of teaching in a different way destroys the recovery.
- D. For the administration and shepherding of a local church, the first thing needed is to terminate the differing teachings of the dissenting ones, which distract the saints from the central line of God's economy—Titus 1:9.
- E. We must avoid differing teachings and concentrate on God's economy concerning Christ and the church—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:9; 5:32.

#### **V. If the wall is built up in the church, we will be protected from those who are used by the enemy to destroy God's building work:**

- A. The destroyers of the divine building are those who preach and teach heresies—2 Pet. 2:1; 2 John 7-11:
  1. Those who teach heresies concerning the person of Christ are antichrists, denying both the person of the Lord as the Master and His redemption, by which the Lord purchased the believers; to deny that the man Jesus is God is a great heresy—v. 7; 1 John 2:18, 22-23; 4:2-3.
  2. The apostle warned the believers to watch for themselves lest they be influenced by the heresies and lose the things of the truth; we must reject those who deny the conception and deity of Christ, not receiving them into our house or greeting them—2 John 8-11.
- B. The destroyers of the divine building are those who are factious, sectarian—Titus 3:10:
  1. A factious man is a heretical, sectarian man who causes divisions by forming parties in the church according to his own opinions; in order to maintain good order in the church, a factious, divisive person should be refused, rejected, after a first and second admonition—v. 10.
  2. Because such divisiveness is contagious, this rejection is for the church's profit so that contact with the divisive one may be stopped—cf. Num. 6:6-7.
- C. The destroyers of the divine building are those who make divisions—Rom. 16:17:
  1. In Romans 14 Paul was liberal and gracious regarding the receiving of those who differ in doctrine or practice; however, in Romans 16:17 he was unyielding and resolute in saying that we must "mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them."
  2. The Lord hates "one who injects discord among brothers"—Prov. 6:16, 19.

- D. The destroyers of the divine building are those who are ambitious for position—3 John 9:
  - 1. We should never hunt to be the first in any work for the Lord; this is the insidious work of hidden ambition to compete with others to be the first—v. 9.
  - 2. The destroyers of the divine building are those who are wolves, not sparing the flock, and those who speak perverted things to draw away the believers after them—Acts 20:29-30.

**VI. After the wall has been built, we will be able to resist the attack of death upon the church and to build up the Body of Christ in the resurrection life of Christ—Matt. 16:18; John 11:25; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16:**

- A. Death is the characteristic of Satan's work; the ultimate goal of his work is to saturate man with death—Heb. 2:15.
- B. Matthew 16:18 shows us from what source the attack upon the church will come—"the gates of Hades," that is, death:
  - 1. Satan's special object is to spread death within the church, and his greatest fear with regard to the church is her resistance to his power of death—Rev. 2:8, 10-11.
  - 2. The church that is built upon "this rock" can discern between death and life, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it—Matt. 16:18.
- C. We need to know Christ as the First and the Last—the ever-existing, unchanging One—and as the One who became dead and lived again—the One who is resurrection—Rev. 1:17-18; 2:8; John 11:25; Acts 2:24.
- D. We can build up the Body of Christ only in the resurrection life of Christ—Eph. 2:6, 21-22; 4:16; Rev. 1:18; 2:8; Phil. 3:10:
  - 1. The Body of Christ is in the resurrection life of Christ—John 11:25:
    - a. The nature of the church as the Body of Christ is resurrection—Acts 2:24; Eph. 1:19-23.
    - b. The church is a new creation created in Christ's resurrection and by the resurrected Christ—1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:6; Gal. 6:15.
  - 2. The Body of Christ is in resurrection, and the reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit—John 11:25; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
  - 3. The principle of resurrection is that the natural life is killed and that the divine life rises up to take its place—2 Cor. 1:9.
  - 4. When we do not live by the natural life but live by the divine life within us, we are in resurrection; the issue of such a living is the growth and building up of the church as the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10-11; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; 3:15.

Message Nine  
**Building and Fighting—  
the Need to Engage in Spiritual Warfare  
for the Building of the Church**

Scripture Reading: Neh. 4; Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6, 21-22;  
4:16, 23-24; 6:10-20

**I. Nehemiah chapter 4 describes the frustration of the enemy regarding the rebuilding of the city:**

- A. The enemies became angry and greatly enraged; they mocked the Jews and despised their building work—vv. 1-3:
  - 1. The enemies were angry because the building work was advancing, and they conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem—vv. 7-8.
  - 2. Nehemiah trusted in God by praying that God would return their reproach to themselves; thus, the Jews built the wall, for they had a heart to work—vv. 4-6.
- B. The Jews prayed to their God, and under Nehemiah's instruction and direction they set a watch against the enemy day and night:
  - 1. They were ready to fight with weapons under the encouragement of Nehemiah, who instructed them to remember the great and awesome Lord and to fight for their families—v. 14.
  - 2. Half of Nehemiah's servants labored in the work, and half of them held weapons, ready to fight—v. 16.
  - 3. On the one hand, the children of Israel were prepared to fight; on the other hand, they trusted in God, believing that He would fight for them—vv. 9-23.
  - 4. As the commander in chief, Nehemiah was among those who were ready to fight against the enemy; he took part in the night watch and did not leave these matters to others but participated in them himself—vv. 17-23.

**II. Building the church as the city of God is not an easy task; building can be carried out only by fighting—Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16; 6:10-20:**

- A. When the children of Israel returned from their captivity, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others rose up to rebuild the temple and the holy city through intense warfare.
- B. The Israelites who worked in the building with Nehemiah labored with one hand to build and with the other hand held their weapons for fighting the battle (Neh. 4:17); this reveals that whenever we labor on God's building, we will certainly be involved in a battle.
- C. Regarding the building up of God's dwelling place, there is a real conflict, a severe fighting between God and His enemy—vv. 1-3, 7-8:
  - 1. The enemy hates seeing the building of God's dwelling place going up in a good way.
  - 2. Satan will do everything that he can to interrupt, interfere, attack, and destroy—Matt. 16:18-19.
- D. We must build the church as the temple and fight the battle so that God may have the kingdom—6:10.
- E. When the saints migrate for the spreading of the church life, they are an army fighting the battle—cf. Acts 8:4-12.
- F. Those who build the church must build and fight at the same time—Neh. 4:14, 16-21.
- G. Without warfare and without a spirit of fighting, there is no building; building calls for grueling warfare.

### **III. For the building up of the church as the Body of Christ, there is the need for spiritual warfare—Eph. 6:10-20:**

- A. Regrettably, in the church today almost none of the believers know of this spiritual warfare; this is due to weakness in life, lack of spiritual strength, and insufficient clarity in the light of the truth.
- B. Spiritual warfare is based on the victory of Christ—Heb. 2:14; Col. 2:15; 1 John 3:8:
  - 1. The starting point of spiritual warfare is standing upon the victory of Christ; it is seeing that Christ has already defeated the enemy—S. S. 4:8; Rev. 3:21; 5:5-6:
    - a. The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil—1 John 3:8.
    - b. In His incarnation and human living Christ defeated Satan during the temptation in the wilderness—Matt. 4:1-11.
    - c. Through death the Lord Jesus destroyed the devil, who has the might of death; He abolished Satan, brought him to naught—Heb. 2:14.
  - 2. The work of the church on earth is to maintain Christ's victory; the Lord has already won the battle, and the church is here to maintain His victory—Eph. 6:11, 13.
- C. The warfare between the church and Satan is a battle between us who love the Lord and who are in His church and the evil powers in the heavenlies—v. 12:
  - 1. The principalities, the authorities, and the world-rulers of darkness are rebellious angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God and who now rule in the heavenlies over the nations of the world—Col. 1:13; Dan. 10:20.
  - 2. We need to realize that our warfare is not against human beings but against the evil spirits, the evil powers, in the heavenlies.
- D. Spiritual warfare is a matter of the Body of Christ; we must fight the battle in the Body—Eph. 1:22-23:
  - 1. Spiritual warfare is not an individual matter; it is a matter of the Body—4:12, 16; 5:30.
  - 2. The church is a corporate warrior, and the believers together make up this corporate warrior—6:10-20.
  - 3. If we read Ephesians from chapter 1 to chapter 6, we will see that warfare is a matter of the Body of Christ, and the Body is a new creation in Christ, in the Spirit, and in the heavenlies—2:6:
    - a. If we do not have the Body life, we are not adequate to engage in spiritual warfare.
    - b. In order to fight the battle, we must be in the reality of the Body—4:12, 16.
  - 4. After we have been formed corporately into an army, we will be able to fight against God's enemy—6:11-12.
- E. To deal with God's enemy, we need to be empowered with the greatness of the power that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the heavenlies, far above all the evil spirits in the air—v. 10; 1:19-22:
  - 1. The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that in ourselves we cannot fight the spiritual warfare against Satan and his evil kingdom; we can fight only in the Lord and in the might of His strength—6:10.
  - 2. The charge to be empowered implies the need to exercise our will; if we would be empowered for spiritual warfare, our will must be strong and exercised—S. S. 4:4.
- F. We need to know and apply the principles of spiritual warfare:
  - 1. The first principle of spiritual warfare is that we cannot use fleshly weapons, human schemes, and natural methods; since spiritual warfare is not against flesh but against spiritual forces (Eph. 6:12), the weapons should not be fleshly (2 Cor. 10:3-5).
  - 2. The second principle of spiritual warfare is to keep the position of ascension—Eph.

- 2:6:
- a. In fighting a battle, the position above the enemy is strategic.
  - b. Satan and his spiritual forces are in the air, but we are seated in the third heaven above them—v. 6.
  - c. Satan and his forces are under us, and it is their fate to be defeated by us.
3. The third principle of spiritual warfare is that we must use spiritual weapons—2 Cor. 10:3-5:
- a. The spiritual weapons are powerful to overthrow the strongholds of the enemy—vv. 4-5.
  - b. When we are fighting, all our activities must be of the spirit, touching the feeling from within our spirit; this is an extremely basic principle.
4. The fourth principle of spiritual warfare is to have fighting prayers—the prayers of spiritual warfare—Matt. 6:9-10, 13:
- a. Whenever and wherever there is the building up of the church, there is the activity of the gates of Hades against it; therefore, there is the need for fighting prayers—16:18-19.
  - b. If we see that the prayers of the greatest worth are prayers in ascension, then we can understand that prayer is a warfare, and we will utter prayers of warfare; such is the nature of the prayer spoken of in Ephesians 6:
    - 1) All prayers that are expressed in the heavenly realm and from the throne of God are prayers of warfare—Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5.
    - 2) If we are in the heavenly realm, we are able to pray prayers of ascension, prayers of warfare—Eph. 2:6; 6:18.
  - c. When we are strengthened, we are renewed; when we are renewed, we are filled; when we are filled, we are equipped to fight; it is in the fighting spirit that we pray fighting prayers of spiritual warfare—3:14-16; 4:23-24; 5:18b; 6:18.
  - d. We need to stand against the stratagems of the devil by fighting the battle in the Body with fighting prayers, praying at every time in spirit to put on the whole armor of God to build up the Body of Christ as the house of God for the glory of God and as the kingdom of God for the dominion of God for the complete fulfillment of the economy of God—vv. 10-20.



Message Ten  
**The Central and Crucial Point  
of the Recovery Books of Ezra and Nehemiah—  
the Proper and Adequate Leadership  
in the Lord's Recovery**

Scripture Reading: Neh. 8:1-10; 13:14, 29-31;  
Matt. 20:25-28; 23:8-13; Heb. 13:7

- I. In God's eternal economy and in the Lord's recovery, leadership depends upon spiritual capacity; the leadership is not official, permanent, organizational, or hierarchical—1 Thes. 1:5; 2:1-14; 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24:**
- A. The Lord's concept of leadership is the opposite of the natural concept; among God's people there is actually no leadership in the natural sense—Matt. 20:25-28; 23:8-13:
    - 1. In God's New Testament economy, leadership means slavery; anyone who would be a leader must be willing to be a slave—Mark 10:35-45.
    - 2. A leadership is shaped by the growth in life and is an issue of the need; if there is no need, no leadership can be manifested—1 Pet. 5:1-3.
    - 3. In order to set aside the human concept of leadership, God ordained that the leadership among His people should depend always upon spiritual capacity—Acts 13:2, 9; 14:12; Gal. 2:11-14.
    - 4. There is no organized leadership in the Lord's recovery, and there is no unifying organization; instead, there is one Head who gives orders to all the members directly, and there is one organism, the Body—Eph. 1:22-23.
  - B. According to the New Testament, the authority of the apostles is spiritual and is in their ministry of the word—Acts 2:42; 2 Cor. 13:5-6; 1 Thes. 2:13:
    - 1. They have no authority in position to interfere with the church affairs; only the word ministered by them has authority—Col. 4:16; Heb. 13:7.
    - 2. The churches follow the apostles because the apostles have the New Testament teaching—Phil. 2:12; Acts 20:17-36.
    - 3. If a church goes astray or is misled, the apostles have the obligation and responsibility to deal with the situation according to God's word, which has authority—vv. 26-27; 2 Cor. 10:6; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:2.
    - 4. The leadership is produced, strengthened, and restricted in the apostles' teaching—Titus 1:9.
  - C. In the New Testament there is one ministry with one leadership—Acts 1:17, 25; 2 Cor. 4:1:
    - 1. Today's Christianity is divided because there are so many leaderships; because the ministry is one, there should not be more than one leadership.
    - 2. There is one leadership since God, the Lord, and the Spirit are all one; the one leadership is for the keeping of the oneness of the Spirit for the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:3-6.
    - 3. The New Testament shows us God's delegated authority in the leading ones in the ministry, an authority that is for building up—2 Cor. 13:10:
      - a. God's delegated authority was in the teaching of the leading ones—1 Cor. 4:17b-21; 7:17b; 11:2; 16:1; 2 Thes. 3:6, 9, 12, 14.
      - b. Teaching the same thing everywhere in every church was the demonstration of

Paul's delegated authority—1 Cor. 4:17b.

- D. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is in the New Testament teaching more than in the leading ones of the New Testament ministry themselves—Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:10.

## **II. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is the leadership of the controlling vision of God's eternal economy, not the leadership of a controlling person; the apostle Paul declared, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"—Acts 26:19:**

- A. God's eternal economy was unveiled through the apostles, but because the believers lost the proper understanding of it, there is the need for it to be recovered by the Lord; God's eternal economy (Gk. *oikonomia*) is His household administration to dispense Himself in Christ into His chosen people so that He may have a house to express Himself, which house is the church, the Body of Christ—Eph. 3:2, 8-9; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 3:15; Eph. 1:10; 2:21-22; 1 Pet. 4:10.
- B. *Recovery* means the restoration or return to a normal condition after a damage or a loss has been incurred; *recovery* means to go back to God's original intention and standard as revealed in the Scriptures, which is according to the present advance of His recovery of the contents of God's eternal economy:
1. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of Christ as our center, reality, life, and everything in His full ministry of incarnation, inclusion, and intensification—Col. 1:17b, 18b; Psalms 80:1, 15, 17-19; John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 2:4-5, 7, 17; 3:7-8, 12-13, 17-22; 4:5; 5:6; John 6:57; 14:21, 23; 21:15-17; cf. Jer. 32:39.
  2. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the oneness of the Body of Christ—John 17:11, 21-23; Eph. 4:3-4a; Rev. 1:11.
  3. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the function of all the members of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:15-16; Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; 1 Cor. 14:1, 4b, 12, 26, 31, 39; Jer. 31:33-34 (see footnote 1 on v. 33).
- C. This vision must be renewed in us day by day to be the controlling vision of all our life, work, and activity—1 John 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:9; Isaiah 2:5; Psalm 119:105; 36:8-9.
- D. For a person to leave the Lord's recovery means that he has never seen what the Lord's recovery is; if we have not seen a vision of the Lord's recovery, we actually are not in the Lord's recovery—Acts 26:13-19; cf. Gen. 13:14-18.
- E. We in the Lord's recovery must have a clear vision of God's eternal economy and then be governed, controlled, and directed by this vision, for we are here to carry out God's eternal economy in His recovery.
- F. The leadership in the Lord's recovery is the leadership of the God-given vision of God's eternal economy that restricts us, directs us, and controls us so that confusion and division are avoided—Prov. 29:18a.
- G. Read the supplement from *The Vision of the Age*.

## **III. The central and crucial point of the recovery books of Ezra and Nehemiah is the proper and adequate leadership—Neh. 8:1-10:**

- A. In the Lord's recovery we have the leadership of the one controlling vision in the one ministry through those who bring in the vision—Eph. 3:3-5, 9; Col. 1:24-29:
1. Paul said that he and his co-workers were "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1); they were stewards, dispensing the heavenly vision of the mysteries of God to the believers; these mysteries are Christ as the mystery of God and the church as the mystery of Christ (Col. 2:2; Eph. 3:4; 5:32); this dispensing service, the stewardship, is the ministry of the apostles (3:2, 8-9).

2. “It is sought in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2); like Paul, we need to be “shown mercy by the Lord to be faithful” (7:25b; 1 Tim. 1:12) so that we may be faithful slaves, who habitually give the household of God spiritual food, ministering the word of God and Christ as the life supply to the believers in the church (Matt. 24:45-47); we want to be those who are faithful over the Lord’s work in this age so that we may participate in the Lord’s joy in the next age, with the realization that the Lord’s appraisal and reward are not related to the size and quantity of our work but to our faithfulness in using His gift to the fullest extent (25:21-23; cf. Rev. 3:8).
- B. Only under the leadership of faithful persons such as Nehemiah and Ezra could Israel be reconstituted to be the testimony of God, the expression of God on earth, a people absolutely different from the Gentile nations; this is a type of what God wants the church to be today—Neh. 13:14, 29-31; 1 Tim. 3:15.
- C. Nehemiah knew that without Ezra he could not reconstitute the people of God:
  1. In reconstituting the nation, Nehemiah realized that he did not know God’s Word.
  2. Ezra was renowned for his knowledge of the Word of God, and Nehemiah was willing to turn to him for help.
- D. According to the divine principle, the proper representation of the Body is always by those who are matched with others—1 Cor. 1:1; Exo. 4:14b-16:
  1. To be alone is to be individualistic, but to be sent forth with another is to be sent according to the principle of the Body—Luke 10:1; Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 12:5; 1 Thes. 1:1.
  2. To act individually is to violate the principle of the Body.
  3. In the Lord’s recovery there is an urgent need for the true work of building up the Body; however, this building work can be carried out only by co-workers who have been matched—Phil. 2:19-22.
- E. “The Lord has shown me that He has prepared many brothers who will serve as fellow slaves with me in a blended way. I feel that this is the Lord’s sovereign provision for His Body, and the up-to-date way to fulfill His ministry”—Witness Lee, March 24, 1997 (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 5, “A Letter of Fellowship with Thanks,” p. 525).

## Supplement from *The Vision of the Age*:

### CLOSELY FOLLOWING THE COMPLETED VISION OF THIS AGE

In order for us to serve God today, our vision must extend all the way from the first vision of Adam in Genesis to the ultimate vision of the manifestation of the church, the New Jerusalem. This and this alone is the complete vision. It is not until today that this vision has been fully opened to us.

In the National Palace Museum in Taipei, there is a painting on a long scroll called “The River Scene at Ching-Ming Festival.” It describes in detail the culture, life, and way of the Chinese people at the time of the painting. It is not enough to see only the first few portions of that long scroll. One has to go all the way from one end to the other end before he can have a clear picture, or “vision,” of the entire spectrum of life in China. In the same way we have our own painting, our “River Scene at Ching-Ming,” in our service to God. It begins from Adam’s vision of the tree of life in the garden of Eden and extends all the way to the New Jerusalem with the tree of life. The New Jerusalem is the last scene of the vision. After that there is nothing more to be seen.

...We are serving God according to the last scene, which includes all the previous scenes...

Since we have the up-to-date and ultimate vision, we should closely follow after it. We are absolutely not following a man; rather, we are following a vision. It is grossly wrong to say that we are

following a certain person. We are following a vision that belongs to the present age. It is God's consummate vision.

The Lord's recovery was brought to us through our dear Brother Nee. Because of this he became a target of attack. In 1934 he was married in Hangchow. Some took this opportunity to stir up a storm. He became very sad, so one day I went to him to comfort him, saying, "Brother Nee, you know that between the two of us, there is no natural relationship. I do not take the way that you are taking or preach what you are preaching out of a natural friendship with you. The two of us are widely separated from each other. I am a northerner, and you are a southerner. Today I am taking the same pathway not because I am following you as a person. I am following the way that you are taking. Brother Nee, I would like you to know that even if one day you do not take this way, I will still take this way." I said this because the storm affected some, and they decided not to take this way anymore. In other words, many people were following a man. When the man seemed to have changed, they turned away. But I told Brother Nee, "Even if one day you do not take this way, I will still take this way. I am not taking this way because of you, and I will not leave this way because of you. I have seen that this is the Lord's way. I have seen the vision."

Fifty-two years have passed. Today I do not regret at all what I have done. During the past fifty-two years I have seen the same story repeat itself again and again. Some people came and left. One scene changed, and another scene came along. Since the beginning of our work in Taiwan, during the past three decades we have witnessed some major crises. Even brothers whom I led to salvation and who went through my own training have left the Lord's recovery. The vision has never changed, but the persons have indeed changed, and those who follow the vision also have changed. I would say a sober word to all of you from the bottom of my heart. By the Lord's mercy I can stand here today to bring you this vision. I hope that you are not following me as a person; I hope that by the Lord's mercy you are following the vision that I have shown you...

I would like to relate to you one fact. It is the Lord's mercy that He has revealed to me the vision. I advise you not to follow me but to follow this vision, which Brother Nee and all the servants of the Lord throughout the ages have left to us and which I have handed to you. This is indeed the vision that extends from the first scene of Adam to the last scene of the New Jerusalem. (pp. 48-50)

Message Eleven  
**The Intrinsic Significance  
of Ezra's Ministry and Nehemiah's Leadership—  
to Build Up the Church  
as the House of God and the Kingdom of God  
by Living Out and Working Out the New Jerusalem**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 21:2, 9-11, 18; 22:1

- I. The intrinsic significance of Ezra's ministry is embodied in the words *purification*, *education*, and *reconstitution*; the intrinsic significance of Nehemiah's leadership is embodied in the words *separation*, *protection*, and *expression*; we need to cooperate with the Lord in His heavenly ministry to build up the church as the house of God and the kingdom of God by living out and working out the New Jerusalem according to this intrinsic significance—1 Kings 8:48; Psa. 48:1-2; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:21-22.**
- II. To live and serve God according to the vision of the age in the ministry of the age is to live out and work out the New Jerusalem: “the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass”—Rev. 21:18; Acts 26:19; 22:15; Rev. 21:2, 9-11:**
- A. The city being pure gold, like clear glass, signifies our need of *purification* with God in His holy nature and of enlightenment through *education* by applying the Bible teachings to our mind for the renewing and enlightenment of our mind to make us clear with the thoughts, considerations, and ways of God—cf. Matt. 5:8; Eph. 4:23; John 17:17.
  - B. “The building work” is God's unique work for our *reconstitution* with the Triune God so that we may be rebuilt with Him and minister Him into others for Him to build Himself into their being to make them beings in the New Jerusalem—1 Cor. 3:9, 12; Eph. 3:16-19; Rev. 3:12; S. S. 6:4; Heb. 11:10.
  - C. The city with its wall signifies the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God under the headship of God for the *separation* of God's people and the *protection* of God's interests—Neh. 4:17; Eph. 5:26.
  - D. The wall of the city being jasper (God's life in its richness) and the city being gold (God's divine nature) reveal that God's eternal economy is to make us the same as He is in life and in nature but not in the Godhead for His unique *expression*—Gen. 1:26; John 10:10b; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 4:3; 21:10-11, 18.
- III. To live out and work out the New Jerusalem is to live and serve in the intrinsic significance of Ezra's ministry and Nehemiah's leadership:**
- A. We need to stay in the process of being purified from all mixture, taking the Lord and the interests of His eternal economy as our unique goal—Ezra 9:2; Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:4a, 6; Luke 9:54-55; Heb. 4:12; 1 Kings 8:48:
    - 1. We can be purified through the process of God's enlightenment, exposure, and judgment, through the termination and elimination of the cross, through the cleansing and washing of the blood, and through the flowing and saturating of the Spirit—Psa. 139:23-24; 51:7, 10; Rev. 22:1.



2. We can be purified through the washing process of the water of life in God's pure word; the more a person is in the word of God, the purer he becomes—Psa. 12:6; 119:9, 140; Eph. 5:26; Isa. 55:8-11.
  3. Leviticus 19:19 reveals that God wants everything to be according to its kind, without any mixture—Rev. 17:3-6; Deut. 22:5, 9-11; cf. Gen. 1:11, 21, 24-26; 2:7-9:
    - a. Breeding cattle without mixture signifies that life is not allowed to be mixed; those living by the life of God must not live by the flesh—cf. Gal. 5:16.
    - b. Sowing seed without mixture signifies that in the ministry of the word only one kind of seed, one kind of teaching, should be sown—the unique teaching of God's eternal economy—Deut. 22:9; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3.
    - c. Making a garment without mixing materials signifies that our conduct is not allowed to be mixed; those living in the life of the New Testament should not live by the ordinances of the Old Testament (Gal. 2:19-20; 5:1-6), and those who belong to the Lord should not live according to the customs of the Gentiles (Lev. 20:23; 18:3; cf. Eph. 4:17; Rom. 12:2a).
  4. First Peter 1:22 says, "Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently":
    - a. This means that to have our soul (our mind, emotion, and will) purified is to have it delivered from all things other than God and fixed on God as the sole object and unique goal (1 Cor. 2:9-10; 2 Thes. 3:5); when we obey the truth, the content and reality of our faith in Christ (2 Tim. 4:7; Titus 1:1), our entire soul is concentrated on God and is thus purified from all things other than God.
    - b. Since the purifying of our souls causes our entire being to be concentrated on God so that we may love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Mark 12:30), such purifying issues in unfeigned brotherly love, our loving from the heart fervently those whom God loves (John 13:5, 14-17, 34-35; 2 Pet. 1:5, 7; Rom. 12:9-11; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9-10; Heb. 13:1; 1 John 2:5-8; 3:11, 23; 4:7-8, 16-21).
- B. We need to be educated to educate others with the truth for God's testimony, His corporate expression—2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; 6:3; 1 Cor. 14:31:
1. The twelve foundations of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, bear the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, indicating that the New Jerusalem is built according to the apostles' teaching, the healthy teaching of God's economy—Rev. 21:14; Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 1:15; Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:2.
  2. Ezra was skilled in the law of God, which is linked to God's economy; the law is a type of Christ as God's Word, God's testimony, God's portrait, God's expression—Exo. 16:34; 34:28; cf. Rev. 1:2.
  3. By coming to Christ as the living word in the written word, He can become the applied word for us to be infused with Him to become the testimony of Jesus—John 1:1; Rev. 19:13; John 5:39-40; 6:63; Rev. 1:2, 10-11.
  4. By remaining in the unique ministry of the teaching of God's economy, we can apprehend the Word's intrinsic significance to be filled with the light of life—Neh. 8:8, 13; Matt. 4:12-16; John 1:4-5.
  5. We must learn to use the new language, "the language of Judah," in the new culture, the God-man culture of the new man—Neh. 13:23-24.
- C. We need to be reconstituted with grace, which is the processed Triune God becoming life and everything to us—1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 10:29:
1. The twelve apostles represent the grace of the New Testament, signifying that grace is the source, the element, and the means for producing the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:14.

2. We need to be constituted with grace upon grace, labor by grace, dispense grace, and minister the word of grace—John 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:10; 1 Pet. 4:10; Acts 20:32.
  3. The New Jerusalem is built by God's constituting Himself into man to make man the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead so that God and man may become a corporate entity and be a mutual dwelling place—Rev. 21:2-3, 10-11, 18-22.
  4. We should do only one work, which is the work of the New Jerusalem; we need to be one with our inner operating God as He proceeds to bring His chosen ones through the major steps of His organic salvation—regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, and conformation unto glorification.
  5. In this way we ascend level by level until we reach the highest point, where we become the same; there is no more flesh and no more natural being; all are in the spirit, and all are beings of the New Jerusalem; this is the highest point of God's work, and we are His fellow workers—John 5:17; Phil. 2:13; Rev. 4:3; 21:11; 1 Cor. 3:9, 12; 2 Cor. 6:1; 1 Thes. 3:2.
  6. "The processed and consummated Triune God, according to the good pleasure of His desire and for the highest intention in His economy, is building Himself into His chosen people and His chosen people into Himself, that He may have a constitution in Christ, as a mingling of divinity and humanity to be His organism, and the Body of Christ, as His eternal expression and the mutual abode for the redeeming God and the redeemed man. The ultimate consummation of this miraculous structure of treasure will be the New Jerusalem for eternity"—Witness Lee.
- D. We need to be fully separated unto God to be fully saturated with God, living a holy life for the church life to make us the holy city—Rev. 21:2; 2 Pet. 1:4:
1. The renewing of the mind and the resulting transformation separate and save us from our nature and living that are soaked with the element of the world—Rev. 21:12a; Rom. 8:5-6; 12:2, 5-11; Eph. 4:23.
  2. By living in our spirit and eating Christ as the hidden manna, we can overcome the world to become God's building—1 John 5:4, 18-19, 21; Rev. 2:12-17; cf. John 14:30.
  3. We need to be fully separated from the idolatrous world of Babylon, which is characterized by the wickedness of business, or commerce, involving covetousness, deceit, and the love of money; our Christian life should be without the love of money, and our Christian work should not be a money-making trade—Zech. 5:5-11; 1 Tim. 3:3, 8; 6:5-10; Acts 11:29-30; 20:33-34; 2 Tim. 3:2-4; Heb. 13:5; 2 Cor. 2:17; 12:15; cf. 2 Kings 5:15-27:
    - a. Satan is a businessman, a merchant, and his thought is according to his commercial principle, which is versus God's purpose in creating man—Ezek. 28:16, 18; Job 1:9; cf. Phil. 3:7-8; Gen. 1:26.
    - b. Of the cargo sold by Babylon, the first item is gold and the last is the souls of men; *souls of men* refers to men who sell themselves for employment—Rev. 18:12-13; cf. 2 Pet. 2:3, 15.
    - c. This depicts not only the coming Babylon but also today's world; people sell their soul, their life, that is, themselves, to their occupation, neglecting God and their eternal destiny—cf. Luke 12:13-21.
    - d. God's sovereignty will cause the wickedness in business, which the people of Israel learned from the Babylonians in their captivity, to go back to Babylon (the land of Shinar)—Zech. 5:10-11; Gen. 11:2, 9.
- E. We need to build up the wall to protect the church as the house of God:
1. We can build up the wall through the overcoming blood of the Lamb, applied to us through our repenting, confessing our sins, and asking God for His purging—Rev.



- 12:11; Psa. 51:18.
2. We must shepherd the flock of God by sounding the one trumpet of the unique New Testament ministry, declaring to them all the counsel of God to complete the word of God with the Lord's protective warning and healthy teaching, so that they may be full-grown in Christ—1 Cor. 14:8; Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:26-35; Ezek. 33:1-11; 34:25; Col. 1:24-29.
  3. We must build up the wall to protect the church by fighting the battle in the Body—Rom. 16:20:
    - a. The Body puts on the whole armor of God and renders protection to every member; we must seek the counsel and covering of the Body to receive the Body's protection and safeguard—Eph. 6:10-20; Matt. 16:18; Acts 21:4, 11-12.
    - b. Spiritual warfare is in this principle—one will chase a thousand, and two will put ten thousand to flight—Deut. 32:30; Eccl. 4:9-12; Exo. 17:11-13.
  4. We must build up the wall to protect the interest of the riches of God's divinity on the earth and the attainments of His consummation—cf. John 1:12-13; Isa. 9:6; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; 4:5; Col. 1:18; Acts 2:36; 5:31; Heb. 4:14; 9:15; 7:22; 8:2; 1 John 2:1; John 15:26; Rom. 8:34, 26.
- F. We need to live by Christ and to live out Christ, thus magnifying Christ, so that we can build up the church as the expression of God—Exo. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:1-11; Rom. 13:14, 12; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Phil. 1:19-21a; Rev. 21:3, 22, 10-11:
1. The wall of the city is for the expression of God; thus, to “build up the wall” (Neh. 2:17) is to build up the church as the expression of God (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22; 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 3:9-17; Rev. 4:3; 21:11, 18-19).
  2. Today in His recovery the Lord is working to restore the normal condition of Christ within the proper church as His expression—Eph. 3:16-21; Rev. 4:3; 21:11, 18-19.
  3. In order to express God, we need to be saved from our natural disposition and from self-likeness by living a mingled life with the Divine Trinity in the blending life of the entire Body of Christ—Rom. 5:10; Lev. 2:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:24-25.
  4. In order to express God, we need to be daily sanctified and renewed by the washing of the water in the word to be presented to Christ, our Bridegroom, as His pure, glorious, God-expressing bride—v. 24; Eph. 5:26-27.

## Message Twelve

### A God Who Hides Himself—the Hidden God

Scripture Reading: Isa. 45:15; Eph. 3:16-17; Phil. 2:13; Luke 18:1-8

#### **I. “Surely You are a God who hides Himself,/O God of Israel, the Savior”—Isa. 45:15:**

- A. Hardly any of God’s children know that the Bible speaks of God as a God who hides Himself—v. 15:
  - 1. This proves that God’s children do not have an adequate knowledge of God as the One who hides Himself.
  - 2. We may know God as the mighty God, the righteous God, and the God who is full of grace and lovingkindness; however, we may not know God as the God who hides Himself—Luke 1:49; 1 Pet. 5:6; Rev. 15:3; Eph. 2:7; Psalms 17:7.
- B. Although our God is omnipresent, omnipotent, and full of forgiveness, He is also the hiding God, as the book of Esther indicates—4:14.
- C. God created the universe and then hid Himself within it, until we do not know where to find Him—Job 23:3.
- D. God did countless things in the midst of the children of Israel and countless things in their personal lives, yet He concealed Himself; He was ceaselessly working, yet He was always hidden—Isa. 45:15.
- E. We need to realize that the omnipotent God whom we are serving is still hiding Himself, especially when He is helping us—John 14:26; Romans 8:28:
  - 1. We cannot see Him, and apparently, He is not doing anything.
  - 2. Actually, in a hidden way He is doing many things for us, as He is strengthening us with power through His Spirit into the inner man so that Christ may make His home in our hearts—vv. 28, 34; Esther 4:14; Phil. 2:13; Eph. 3:16-17a.
- F. The God who hides Himself is operating within us silently yet mightily—Phil. 2:13:
  - 1. Our responsibility is to cooperate with Him by responding to the inner sense deep within us—Romans 8:6.
  - 2. Whenever we sense God living and acting within us, we should say Amen, for there, in the depths of our being, secretly and ceaselessly the God who hides Himself is working.
- G. If we study the Scriptures carefully, we will see that God has the kind of temperament that dislikes ostentation; He likes to work secretly rather than openly—Matthew 6:1-8.
- H. Our disposition is diametrically opposed to God’s disposition, a disposition that hides itself—Isa. 45:15:
  - 1. God likes concealment; we like display—Matthew 6:1.
  - 2. God does not crave outward manifestations; we cannot be content without them—v. 2.
  - 3. This divine disposition constitutes a great trial and test to us.

#### **II. The book of Esther supplies a vivid record of how the hiding God of Israel secretly took care of His oppressed elect in their dispersion and openly saved His persecuted elect in their captivity—1:1-22; 2:1-23:**

- A. The crucial point of this book is that the very God who chose Israel, the descendants of Abraham, as His elect, after He gave them into captivity to the Gentile nations, became a hidden God to them to take care of them secretly and save them openly while acting in secrecy—Isa. 45:15:
  - 1. This is the reason that the book of Esther does not mention the name of God even in

- places when the name of God should be mentioned—4:3, 16.
- 2. On the one hand, God used the Gentile nations as tools to discipline His people; on the other hand, the hiding God was with the people of Israel, caring for them.
- B. The hiding God did many things for Israel in a secret way:
  - 1. The hiding God established a top king in the Gentile world in power over a great empire extending from India to Ethiopia—1:1-2.
  - 2. The hiding God caused the top king to depose his queen because of her disobedience to his word—vv. 3-22.
  - 3. In His secret care the hiding God raised up Esther, a Jewish orphan virgin, to be crowned by the top king as his queen—2:1-18.
- C. During the years of the captivity, God was hiding, and He is still hiding; even today in the church age, God is hiding Himself—Isa. 45:15.

### **III. The significance of the parable in Luke 18:1-8 is profound, and we need to know God as He is revealed, as the hidden God:**

- A. The widow in verse 3 signifies the believers; in a sense, the believers in Christ are a widow in the present age because their Husband, Christ, is apparently absent from them—2 Cor. 11:2.
- B. Like the widow in the parable (Luke 18:3), we believers in Christ have an opponent, Satan the devil, concerning whom we need God's avenging:
  - 1. This parable indicates the suffering we have from our opponent during the Lord's apparent absence.
  - 2. During His apparent absence, we are a widow whose opponent is troubling her all the time.
- C. While our opponent is persecuting us, it seems that our God is not righteous, for He allows His children to be unrighteously persecuted—1 Pet. 2:20; 3:14, 17; 4:13-16, 19:
  - 1. Throughout the centuries, thousands upon thousands of honest and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus have suffered unrighteous persecution; even today many are undergoing unrighteous treatment—Rev. 2:8-10.
  - 2. Our God seems to be unjust, since He does not come in to judge and vindicate; because of this situation, the Lord Jesus used an unjust judge to signify God, who does not seem to do anything on behalf of His persecuted people—Luke 18:2-6.
- D. The widow in the parable kept coming to the unrighteous judge and asking him to avenge her of her opponent; we ought to pray persistently for this avenging and should not lose heart—vv. 1, 3:
  - 1. When our Husband is apparently absent and we are left on earth as a widow, temporarily our God seems to be an unrighteous judge—v. 6.
  - 2. Although He appears to be unrighteous, we still must appeal to Him, pray persistently, and bother Him again and again, for He will carry out quickly the avenging of His chosen ones, who "cry to Him day and night"—vv. 7-8a.
- E. Revelation 8:5 implies the answer to 6:9-11 and Luke 18:7-8:
  - 1. The prayers of the saints in Revelation 8:3-4 must be for the judgment of the earth, which opposes God's economy.
  - 2. God's judgment upon the earth—casting fire to the earth—is the answer to the prayers of the saints with Christ as the incense—vv. 3-5.
- F. "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"—Luke 18:8b:
  - 1. Literally, the Greek words rendered "faith" mean "the faith"; this denotes the persistent faith for our persistent prayer, like that of the widow.
  - 2. The faith through which we were saved is the initial stage of faith; the faith that

brought us into a life union with Christ is the linking faith—the faith that comes into us through our contacting the Triune God continually so that we may live by the Son of God—Rom. 1:17; Gal. 2:20; John 14:19.

3. The linking faith is the divine requirement for the overcomers to meet Christ in His triumphant return—Luke 18:8b:
  - a. Linking faith is the Triune God moving in us to link us to His unsearchable riches—Eph. 3:8.
  - b. Linking faith is the faith of the believers who have no trust in themselves; rather, their trust is in God—2 Cor. 1:9.
  - c. When the Lord Jesus returns, He will find a number of overcomers who are living by the linking faith and will regard them as treasures for His kingdom in the thousand years of His reign—Luke 18:8b; Rev. 20:4, 6.