

WEEK 4 — OUTLINE

The Recovery of the Church as God's House and God's City as Portrayed in Ezra and Nehemiah

Scripture Reading: Ezra 7:6-10, 21, 27-28; 8:21-23; 10:1; Neh. 1:1-11; 2:4, 10, 17-20; 3:1-6; 4:4-5, 9; 5:10, 14-19; 8:1-4, 8-9, 14

« DAY 1 »

I. The recovery of a remnant of the children of Israel from Babylon to Jerusalem for the rebuilding of the temple and the city signifies the Lord's recovery of a remnant of the church out of today's division and confusion back to the original ground of oneness for the building up of the church as the house of God and the kingdom of God (Rev. 17:1-6; 18:2, 4a):

- A. *God's people need to be recovered out of Babylon back to the unique ground of oneness (Deut. 12:5, 11-14; Psa. 133; Rev. 1:11).*
- B. *God's people need to be recovered back to the enjoyment of the unsearchably rich Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit, typified by the good land (Eph. 3:8; Gal. 3:14; Deut. 8:7-10; Col. 1:12; 2:6-7).*

« DAY 2 »

- C. *In the recovery of the church we are building up the Body of Christ, the temple of God, the house of God (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 3:9-17).*
- D. *In the recovery of the church we are living the kingdom life to reign in life in the reality of God's kingdom (Rom. 14:17; 5:17; cf. Matt. 5:3, 8; 6:6, 14-15, 20-21; 7:13-14).*

E. *This fulfills God's original intention to have a corporate man to express Him in His image and to represent Him with His dominion (Gen. 1:26).*

« DAY 3 »

II. The Lord raised up Ezra to strengthen and enrich His recovery (Ezra 7:6-10):

A. *Ezra was a priest and also a scribe, one who was skilled in the law of God; as such a person, Ezra had the capacity to meet the need (v. 21):*

1. A priest is one who is mingled with the Lord and saturated with the Lord; Ezra was this kind of person (8:21-23).
2. 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 desire, and God's economy (7:27-28; 10:1).
3. Ezra was one with the Lord by contacting Him continually; thus, he was not a letter-scribe but a priestly scribe (Neh. 8:1-2, 8-9).
4. Ezra spoke nothing new; what he spoke had been spoken already by Moses (Ezra 7:6; Neh. 8:14).

B. *In the Lord's recovery we need Ezras, priestly teachers who contact God, who are saturated with God, who are one with God and 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 Lord's recovery (Matt. 13:52; 2 Cor. 3:5-6; 1 Tim. 2:7).*

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C. *Ezra reconstituted the people of Israel by educating them with the heavenly truths so that Israel could become God's testimony (Neh. 8:1-4, 8):*

1. God's intention with Israel was to have on earth a divinely constituted people to be His testimony; in order for God's people to be His testimony, they had to be reconstituted with the word of God (Isa. 49:6; 60:1-3).
2. After the return from captivity, the people were still unruly, for they had been born and raised in Babylon and had become Babylonian in their constitution:
 - a. The Babylonian element had been wrought into them and constituted into their being (Zech. 3:3-5).
 - b. After they returned to the land of their fathers to be citizens of the nation of Israel, they needed a reconstitution.
3. 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 (Neh. 8:8):
 - a. Ezra was very useful at this point, 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).
 - b. Ezra could help the people to know God not merely in a general way but according to what God had spoken (v. 8).
4. 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):
 - a. 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).
 - b. When 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).

« DAY 5 »

5. 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):

- a. 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.
 - b. 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).
 - c. The returned captives were reconstituted personally and corporately to become God's testimony.
- D. In the Lord's recovery today, we need Ezras to do a purifying work and to constitute God's people by educating them with the divine truths so that they may be God's testimony, His corporate expression, on earth (2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 1 Tim. 3:15).*

III. The crucial point in the book of Nehemiah is that the city of Jerusalem with its wall was a safeguard and protection for the house of God within the city:

- A. *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; God's building of His house and of His kingdom go together (Matt. 16:18-19).*
- B. *The city of God is the enlarged, strengthened, and built-up church as the ruling center for God's reign in His kingdom; eventually, in God's economy the house of God becomes the holy city, the New Jerusalem, as God's eternal habitation and the ruling center of His eternal kingdom (Rev. 21:2-3, 22; 22:3).*
- C. *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. 1:22-23; 4:15; Rev. 22:1).

« DAY 6 »

D. Nehemiah's aggressiveness shows us the need for 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; 3:1-6; cf. Acts 4:29-31; 1 Thes. 2:2; 2 Tim. 1:7-8).
3. It is the aggressive ones who 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.
5. Nehemiah did not live in his natural man but in resurrection; he was a pattern of what a leader among God's people should be; he was aggressive (cf. Neh. 2:1-8), but his aggressiveness was accompanied by other characteristics:
 - a. 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) (cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-5).
 - b. 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).

- c. 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).
- d. In his relationship with the people, Nehemiah was altogether 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. 4:18; 5:10, 14-19; 13:27-30).

E. The great and high wall of the holy city is for our separation unto God, the protection of God's interests, and the expression of God:

- 1. The function of the wall of the city is to separate, to sanctify, the city unto God from all things other than God, thus making the city the holy city (Rev. 21:2a, 10b; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 2 Cor. 6:14—7:1):
 - a. The wall of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is built with jasper, and the foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every precious stone (Rev. 21:18-20):
 - (1) By our growth in the divine life in Christ as the precious stone (1 Pet. 2:4), we are transformed into precious stones (1 Cor. 3:12a).
 - (2) Precious stones indicate transformation; the more we are transformed, the more we are separated (Rom. 12:2).
 - b. While the transformation work of the Spirit is going on in the divine life, we, the transformed precious stones, are being built up together to be one complete wall with its foundations (1 Cor. 3:6-12a).
- 2. The function of the wall of the city is to protect the interests of the riches of God's divinity on the earth and the attainments of Christ's consummation; we must put out the pure truth from the Word for this protection (cf. John 17:17).
- 3. The function of the wall of the city is to express God; God's appearance is like jasper, and the jasper wall signifies that the whole city, as the corporate expression of God in eternity, bears the appearance of God (Rev. 4:3; 21:18).

« WEEK 4 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Deut. 12:5 ...To the place which Jehovah your God will choose,...to His habitation,...there shall you go.

11-12 Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring...your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the heave offering of your hand and all your choice vows which you vow to Jehovah. And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God...

Recovery means the restoration or return to a normal condition after a damage or a loss has been incurred. When we speak of the recovery of the church, we mean that something was there originally, that it became lost or damaged, and that now there is the need to bring that thing back to its original state. Because the church has become degraded through the many centuries of its history, it needs to be restored according to God's original intention. Concerning the church, our vision should be governed not by the present situation nor by traditional practice but by God's original intention and standard as revealed in the Scriptures.

The recovery of the church is typified by the return of the children of Israel from their captivity (Ezra 1:3-11)...The entire history of the nation of Israel is a full type, an all-inclusive type, of the church. The nation of Israel began with the exodus....Eventually, the people of Israel crossed the Jordan and entered into Canaan, the good land. After conquering the people and gaining the land, they built the temple....However,...mainly due to the failure of Solomon, the temple was destroyed, and the children of Israel were taken to Babylon as captives. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2447-2449)

Today's Reading

Spiritually speaking, the church, due to its degradation, has been in captivity. God's people have been divided, scattered, and carried away from the proper ground of unity to a wrong ground. In the Old Testament type, the children of

Israel were centered around Jerusalem, but later they were scattered and carried away to many places, in particular, to Babylon. This portrays the situation among many of today's Christians. In a very real sense, the believers today are more scattered than the children of Israel were. Therefore, we need to be recovered. We need not only revival but also recovery.

The recovery of the children of Israel was not only from Babylon but back to Jerusalem, the God-ordained unique ground. Jerusalem was the place the Lord had chosen (Deut. 12:5). Jerusalem, therefore, was the center for God's people to worship Him, and this unique center preserved the unity of the people of God. Without such a center, after the children of Israel had entered the good land, they would have been divided. Foreseeing this problem, God repeated the commandment again and again concerning the place of His choosing (Deut. 12:5, 11, 13-14). The people of Israel had no right to choose their own place to worship....God's choice became the center of the gathering of His people, and this is the unique ground of unity. For this reason, it was necessary for God's people in the Old Testament to be brought back to Jerusalem, the unique ground ordained by God.

Today's Babylon has not only captured God's people but also robbed all the riches from God's temple. The vessels, signifying the riches of Christ, have been carried away. This is the reason that in Roman Catholicism and in the Protestant denominations very little is said, if anything, concerning the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). The believers are not encouraged to eat Christ, to drink Christ, to feast with Christ, to enjoy Christ in full. The reason there is little or no enjoyment of the riches of Christ is that all the vessels in the temple have been carried away by Babylon the Great. Now the Lord wants to recover the experience of the riches of Christ. He wants not only to call His faithful people out of Babylon and back to the proper church life but also to recover and bring back all the different aspects of Christ which have been lost. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2449, 2451-2453)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 230

« WEEK 4 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezra 1:2-3 Thus says Cyrus the king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth has Jehovah the God of heaven given to me; and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him; and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and let him build the house of Jehovah the God of Israel—He is God—who is in Jerusalem.

The recovery of the church is also typified by the rebuilding of the temple of God, the house of God, in Jerusalem after the return of God’s people from Babylon. Ezra 1:3 says, “Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him; and let him go up to Jerusalem,...and let him build the house of Jehovah the God of Israel...” Verse 5 goes on to say, “Then the heads of the fathers’ houses of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites rose up, even everyone whose spirit God had stirred up to go up to build the house of Jehovah, which is in Jerusalem.” These verses indicate that the recovery is not only a matter of going back to Jerusalem with the vessels of the temple of God but also of rebuilding the temple of God, which had been destroyed. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2453)

Today’s Reading

The recovery of the church is typified in the Old Testament by the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:11, 17). After the recovery of the building of the temple, there was still the need to build up the city. Without the city, there would have been no protection for the temple. The temple, the place of the Lord’s presence, needed protection. The wall of the city was the defense to the temple.

This also is an aspect of the type that we must apply in the New Testament. Ephesians 2:19 and 1 Timothy 3:15 speak of the church as the house of God. But in the last two chapters of Revelation, there is a city, and in this city there is no temple (Rev. 21:22), because the city has become the enlargement of the temple.

Eventually, the whole church becomes the city. Because the temple has become the city, Revelation 21:22 tells us that there is no temple in the city of New Jerusalem. The city is the tabernacle, the dwelling place (Rev. 21:2-3). Hence, the city is the enlargement of the temple, the development of the house, to the uttermost.

The building of the house and the city is the center of God's eternal purpose. This building is actually the mingling of God with man. The church, therefore, is the mingling of divinity with humanity. When this mingling is enlarged and consummated to the fullest extent, that is the city. The city, then, eventually becomes the mutual building, the mutual habitation, of God and man, for God dwells in us and we dwell in God. This is the universal, eternal mingling of God with man. On a small scale, this is the house, and on a large scale, it is the city.

Finally, the recovery of the church involves the establishing of the kingdom life. This is indicated by Paul's word in Romans 14:17. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." This verse reveals that the kingdom of God is the living of the church. According to the context of Romans 14, the kingdom is today's church life. The reality of the church life is the kingdom. Romans 12 speaks of the Body life and Romans 14 of the kingdom life. This indicates that, according to Romans, the kingdom life is the reality of the Body life.

The kingdom of God as the living of the church is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. When the authority of God's kingdom operates in us, righteousness, peace, and joy will characterize our daily life. To have such a living is to establish the kingdom life as typified in the book of Nehemiah by the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Therefore, in the recovery of the church, we are building up the church as God's house and city. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2453-2454, 2496)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 234

« WEEK 4 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Ezra 7:6-7 This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which Jehovah the God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all his request according to the hand of Jehovah his God upon him. Some of the children of Israel and some of the priests, and the Levites and the singers and the gatekeepers and the temple servants also went up to Jerusalem...

By the time Ezra returned, everything was recovered, but there was the need of strengthening and enrichment. The remnant of the people who returned was still small; the number needed to be increased, so Ezra brought back a good number. Today we really need more Ezras. The number we have today in the Lord's recovery is still too small; we need some Ezras to come back from Babylon to strengthen the recovery in number. So many priests, leaders, Levites, singers, and gatekeepers are still there in Babylon. They must be for the Lord's recovery. They may have been born in Babylon, but they were not born for Babylon. They were saved in the denominations, but they were not saved for the denominations; they were saved for the Lord and His recovery. (CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Recovery of God's House and God's City," p. 372)

Today's Reading

The first return from Babylon to Jerusalem was initiated by God (Ezra 1:1, 5). The second return was initiated by Ezra, who went to the king and appealed to him to grant his request. Ezra realized that the first return was not perfect, not complete. He realized that there was the need for someone who was skilled in the law of God and who knew God's heart, God's desire, and God's economy, to help the people to know God not merely in a general way but according to what God had spoken. Ezra had such a capacity, so he volunteered to go to the king and to request a decree from the king permitting the Jews to return to the land of their fathers. (Ezra 7:6, footnote 1)

Ezra was a priest, a descendant of Aaron, and he was also a scribe. The scribe

in the Old Testament equals the teacher in the New Testament....The prophet is one who speaks directly from God, and the teacher is one who teaches the things spoken by the prophet....Haggai and Zechariah were prophets because they spoke directly from God. What was spoken by Haggai was new; it was never revealed to anyone else. Zechariah's message is even more marvelous. He said that Christ is the shoot, the foundation stone with seven eyes, and the topstone....Zechariah was not a teacher but a prophet, speaking from God's instant, present, up-to-date inspiration. Ezra spoke nothing new. What he spoke had been already spoken by Moses. He was a scribe and a teacher. But according to the principle in God's recovery, we do not need an old teacher, but a priestly teacher. Ezra was also a priest.

A priest is one who is mingled with the Lord, saturated with the Lord, feeding upon the Lord, and breathing Him in all day long. Whatever he speaks is just the Lord Himself. This is exactly what the teachers in the Lord's recovery must be. Ezra was this kind of person. He proclaimed a fast, and he fasted; he was simply one with the Lord by contacting the Lord continually. He was not a letter-scribe, but a priestly scribe.

He put his trust in the Lord. This is the kind of person who is qualified to be a teacher in the Lord's recovery....Mere knowledge does not build; it kills. It is the priestly teacher who builds. This is the kind of person who can strengthen the recovery with an increase of numbers and enrich it with the rich experiences of Christ. Praise the Lord there are such Ezras, and I have full assurance that the Lord is going to bring in more and more Ezras—those who are one with God, saturated with God, filled with God, and skillful in the work of God. These persons are the right ones to bring in a good number of returned captives and to bring more riches of Christ into the recovery of the Lord. (CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Recovery of God's House and God's City," pp. 374-375)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1969, vol. 2, "The Recovery of God's House and God's City," chs. 1-3, 5-8

« WEEK 4 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Neh. 8:1-3 And all the people gathered as one man....And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly....And he read in it....And the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

7-8 ...And the Levites helped the people understand the law;...and they read in the book, in the law of God, interpreting and giving the sense, so that they understood the reading.

In order to be reconstituted, we need to come back to God by coming back to His law, that is, His word (Neh. 8). Suppose a fallen person wants to come back to God. If he would come back to God, he must come back to God's word. No one can come back to God without coming back to His word.

God's word reconstitutes us. We all have our own kind of disposition and habitual behavior, but God is able to reconstitute us through His word. This is why we need to read the Bible. God's word gradually changes our mind and our way of thinking. The word of God is one with the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). When the word of God works within us, the Spirit, through the word, spontaneously dispenses God's nature with God's element into our being. We may not even be aware that such a dispensing is taking place within us. By this way we are reconstituted. (Life-study of Nehemiah, p. 17)

Today's Reading

The constitution of a person provides the foundation for the constitution of a nation. A proper nation is not merely an organization but also a constitution.

Most of those who had returned to Jerusalem from the captivity in Babylon had been born not in Israel but in Babylon, and they were raised in Babylon. The Babylonian element had been wrought into them and constituted into their being. Therefore, after they returned to the land of their fathers to be citizens of the nation of Israel, they needed a reconstitution. Ezra was very useful at this point,

for he was one through whom the people could be reconstituted with the word of God.

God's intention with Israel was to have on earth a divinely constituted people to be His testimony....Under Ezra and Nehemiah the returned people of Israel were collectively constituted by and with God through His word to be a nation as God's testimony. (Life-study of Nehemiah, pp. 18, 17-18)

[After the return from captivity], the people were still unruly for they had become Babylonian in their constitution. Therefore, there was the need for an Ezra, a priest who served God, and also a scribe, a scholar, who was skilled in the Word of God, skilled in the law of Moses (Ezra 7:6, 11). He bore the totality of the heavenly and divine constitution and culture. Ezra called the people together and confessed not only his own sin but also the sin of Israel, to bring them back to the Word of God. (Life-study of Ezra, p. 33)

In order for God to have a house and a kingdom on the earth, three sections of work were needed. First, there was a need for some of the captivity to come back from Babylon to Jerusalem to lay a foundation for the formation of a nation. This required a strong government, a strong administration. Second, there was the need of teaching and education to bring the people of God into a culture that was according to God. Such a culture was not an Egyptian kind nor a Canaanite kind nor a Babylonian kind but was God's kind, a culture that expressed God. This kind of culture required a great deal of education. Third, there was the need to constitute the nation organically. This section of the work was concerned with the constitution of God's people.

In our usage, the word constitution refers to something organic which has a number of elements. If the government of a country is constituted not only organizationally but also organically, that government will not be lifeless. On the contrary, such a government will be something that is living and organic. (Life-study of Nehemiah, pp. 9-10)

Further Reading: Life-study of Ezra, msgs. 1, 4-5; Life-study of Nehemiah, msgs. 2-4

« WEEK 4 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Neh. 13:30 Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign. And I appointed duties for the priests and the Levites, each in his work.

Psa. 46:4-5 There is a river whose streams gladden the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she will not be moved...

Rev. 5:10 And have made them a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.

In order to reconstitute the people of God, there is the need to educate them with the word that comes out of the mouth of God, which expresses God. This means that to reconstitute the people of God is to educate them by putting them into the Word of God that they may be saturated with the Word.

The Israelites had been in Egypt for at least four hundred years. During those years they must have been constituted with Egyptian learning. Then they were brought to Babylon for seventy years. Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah were all born and raised among the Babylonians. After the people of Israel returned from Babylon, they mixed themselves with the Canaanites. Thus, the Israelites were constituted with the Egyptian, Babylonian, and Canaanite culture. Nevertheless, they returned to be the testimony of God. But how could a people with a constitution of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Canaanite culture be God's testimony, the expression of the God-man? Such a people were not the God-men. How could they express God? In order to be the testimony of God, His expression, they needed to be re-educated in the Word of God. (Life-study of Nehemiah, p. 32)

Today's Reading

Before Nehemiah came back, the nation of Israel was a mess. The duties of the priests were not certain, and no one was taking care of the Levites and the serving ones. The singers were there, but no one had opened the way for

them to sing and to be formed into companies. Nehemiah, with the help of Ezra, totally reconstituted the nation. Then Israel became a particular nation, a nation sanctified and separated unto God, expressing God. They were transfused with the thought of God, with the considerations of God, and with all that God is, making them God's reproduction. Everyone became God in life and in nature by this kind of divine constitution. As a result, they became a divine nation on earth expressing the divine character. They were reconstituted personally and corporately to be God's testimony. The returned captives became God's testimony through the reconstitution which took place under the leadership of Nehemiah.

The crucial point of the book of Nehemiah is that the city of Jerusalem was a safeguard and protection for the house of God, which was in the city. 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. 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. God's building of His house and His building of His kingdom go together (Matt. 16:18-19). The house of God on the earth needs His kingdom to safeguard the house and to carry out His eternal economy. (Life-study of Nehemiah, pp. 33, 2)

The king in Psalm 45 typifies Christ as the King; the city in this psalm, and often in the Bible as a whole, signifies a kingdom. As the King, Christ needs a city in which to rule and reign. The city of God is the enlarged, strengthened, and built-up church as the ruling center for God's reign in His kingdom. The church as the house of God (23:6; 26:8; 27:4; 36:8; 1 Tim. 3:15) must be enlarged to become the church as the city, the kingdom, of God (Rev. 5:9-10). Eventually, in God's economy the house of God becomes the holy city, New Jerusalem, as God's eternal habitation and the ruling center of His eternal kingdom (Rev. 21:2-3, 22; 22:3). (Psa. 46:4, footnote 2)

Further Reading: Life-study of Nehemiah, msgs. 1, 5

« WEEK 4 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Neh. 2:20 ...The God of heaven Himself will make us prosper; therefore we His servants will rise up and build...

Acts 26:22 Having therefore obtained the help which is from God, I have stood unto this day, testifying both to small and great, saying nothing apart from the things which both the prophets and Moses have said would take place.

The leaders of the Moabites and Ammonites were greatly displeased about Nehemiah's seeking the good of the children of Israel (Neh. 2:10). The Moabites and the Ammonites, descendants of sons born of Lot, hated and despised the children of Israel.

[Nehemiah's] answer [v. 20] indicates that Nehemiah was very aggressive. He surely was not cowardly. Anyone who is cowardly cannot be a servant of God....Nehemiah trusted in God by praying that God would return their reproach to themselves. Thus the Jews built the wall, and all the wall was joined together to half its height, for they had a heart to work (4:4-6). Today, no matter how much we may be mocked and despised, we should have a heart to build and should be aggressive....In a very real sense, God will help those who help themselves. If you do not help yourself, God will not help you. According to history, God does not help the cowardly. It is the aggressive ones who have received help from God. (Life-study of Nehemiah, pp. 3-5)

Today's Reading

Nehemiah's aggressiveness, as a virtue in his human conduct, shows that our natural capacity, natural ability, and natural virtues must pass through the cross of Christ and be brought into resurrection, that is, into the Spirit as the consummated Triune God (John 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:45), to be useful to God in the accomplishing of His economy.

Nehemiah was one who lived not in his natural man but in resurrection. He was aggressive, but his aggressiveness was accompanied by other characteristics. 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). As a person who loved God, Nehemiah prayed to God to contact Him in fellowship (Neh. 1:4; 2:4b; 4:4-5, 9). Furthermore, Nehemiah trusted in God and even became one with God. As a result, he became the representative of God. In his relationship with the people, Nehemiah was altogether unselfish; with him, there was no self-seeking or self-interest. He was always willing to sacrifice what he had for the people and for the nation (5:10, 14-19). (Neh. 2:3, footnote 1)

The first function [of the holy city's wall and its foundations (Rev. 21:12a, 14)] is to separate, to sanctify, the city unto God from all things other than God, thus making the city the holy city (21:2a, 10b).

The second function of the wall of the holy city with its foundations is to protect the interest of the riches of God's divinity on the earth and the attainments of His consummation. What are the riches of God's divinity, which need to be protected? Today God's divinity has been mocked. Some say that it is a heresy to believe that we are born of God to be His children and that we are God's family and have become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. To oppose this great truth is to mock the interest of the riches of God's divinity on the earth....We must put out the pure truth from the Word to protect the interest of the riches of God's divinity.

The third function of the wall is to express God. God's appearance is like jasper and the light of the New Jerusalem is like jasper, so the whole city will express God [Rev. 21:11]....Today, the function of the Body of Christ which consummates in the New Jerusalem is to express Christ. (The Application of the Interpretation of the New Jerusalem to the Seeking Believers, pp. 32-33, 35)

Further Reading: The Application of the Interpretation of the New Jerusalem to the Seeking Believers, msg. 3; CWWL, 1984, vol. 3, "God's New Testament Economy," ch. 36

« WEEK 4 — HYMN

Recall how David swore The Church — Consecration for the Church

1248

The musical score is written in G minor (three flats) and common time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: "1. Re - call how Da - vid swore, 'I'll not come in - to my house, Nor go up to my bed, Give slum - ber to mine eye - lids, Un - til I find a place for Thee, A place, O Lord, for Thee.' Our might - y God de - sires a home Where all His own may come."

2. How blinded we have been,
Shut in with what concerns us;
While God's house lieth waste—
Lord, break through, overturn us;
We'll go up to the mountain,
Bring wood and build the house;
We'll never say, "Another day!"
It's time! We'll come and build!

4. Within those whom You'd call
Put such a restless caring
For building to give all—
These times are for preparing;
The gates of hell cannot prevail
Against the builded Church!
The hours are few, the builders too—
Lord, build, O build in us!

3. O Lord, against these days,
Inspire some for Your building,
Just as in Ezra's day—
A remnant who are willing
To come and work in Your house,
Oh, what a blessed charge!
Your heart's desire, is our desire—
We come, O Lord, to build.

(Repeat the last four lines)

