

THE RECOVERY OF THE CHURCH

(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message Four

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

- Ezra 7:6 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.
- Ezra 7:7 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 in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.
- Ezra 7:8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king;
- Ezra 7:9 For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem according to the good hand of his God upon him.
- Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah and to do it and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.
- Ezra 7:21 And I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, make a decree to all the treasurers who are in the province beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, requires of you, it shall be done with all diligence,
- Ezra 7:27 Blessed be Jehovah, the God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this into the king's heart, to beautify the house of Jehovah, which is in Jerusalem,
- Ezra 7:28 And has extended lovingkindness to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the mighty officers of the king. And I was strengthened according to the hand of Jehovah my God upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel leading men to go up with me.
- Ezra 8:21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a straight way for ourselves and for our little ones and for all our possessions.
- Ezra 8:22 For I was ashamed to ask for troops and horsemen from the king to help us against the enemy in the way because we had spoken to the king, saying, The hand of our God is for good upon all those who seek Him, but His power and His wrath is against all those who forsake Him.
- Ezra 8:23 So we fasted and sought our God for this, and He was entreated by us.
- Ezra 10:1 Now while Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a very large gathering of men and women and children was gathered together to him out of Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.
- Neh 1:1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capital,
- Neh 1:2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came, he and some men from Judah; and I asked them about the Jews who had escaped, who were left from the captivity, and about Jerusalem.
- Neh 1:3 And they said to me, The remnant who are left from the captivity there in the province are in an exceedingly bad state and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire.
- Neh 1:4 And when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and I mourned for some days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven,
- Neh 1:5 And said, I beseech You, O Jehovah the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and lovingkindness with those who love Him and keep His commandments:
- Neh 1:6 Let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant, which I pray before You now day and night, concerning the children of Israel, Your servants, while I confess the

sins of the children of Israel that we have sinned against You. Indeed, I and the house of my father have sinned;

Neh 1:7 We have been most corrupt toward You and have not kept the commandments and the statutes and the ordinances that You commanded Moses Your servant.

Neh 1:8 Remember now the word that You commanded Moses Your servant, saying, If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples;

Neh 1:9 But if you return to Me and keep My commandments and perform them, though your outcasts are under the ends of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.

Neh 1:10 Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand.

Neh 1:11 I beseech You, O Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and to the prayer of Your servants, who take delight in fearing Your name; and cause Your servant to prosper today, and grant him to find compassion before this man. Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Neh 2:4 And the king said to me, What do you request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Neh 2:10 And when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard of this, it displeased them greatly that a man had come seeking the good of the children of Israel.

Neh 2:17 Then I said to them, You see the bad state we are in, that Jerusalem lies in waste and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach.

Neh 2:18 And I told them about the hand of my God, which was good upon me, and also about the king's words, which he had spoken to me. And they said, Let us rise up and build; and they strengthened their hands for the good work.

Neh 2:19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arabian heard of it, they mocked us and despised us; and they said, What is this thing that you will do? Will you rebel against the king?

Neh 2:20 And I answered them and said to them, The God of heaven Himself will make us prosper; therefore we His servants will rise up and build. But you have no portion nor right nor memorial in Jerusalem.

Neh 3:1 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests and built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and erected its doors; even as far as the Tower of the Hundred they consecrated it and as far as the Tower of Hananel.

Neh 3:2 And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

Neh 3:3 And the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate: They laid its beams and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

Neh 3:4 And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz made repairs. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel made repairs. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana made repairs.

Neh 3:5 And next to them the Tekoites made repairs, but their nobles would not put their necks to the service of their Lord.

Neh 3:6 And Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate: They laid its beams and set up its doors and its bolts and its bars.

Neh 4:4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised; and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them as spoil in the land of captivity;

Neh 4:5 And do not cover their iniquity and do not let their sin be blotted out before You, for they made provocations before the builders.

Neh 4:9 But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

Neh 5:10 And even I, my brothers, and my servants lend them money and grain. Let us now abandon such taking of interest.

Neh 5:14 Moreover from the time that the king appointed me to be governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, I and my brothers did not eat the food appointed for the governor.

Neh 5:15 But the former governors, who were before me, laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants tyrannized the people. But I

- did not do so, because of the fear of God.
- Neh 5:16 And I also applied myself to the work on this wall. And we did not acquire fields, and all my servants were gathered there for the work.
- Neh 5:17 And there were at my table one hundred fifty men, Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations that surrounded us.
- Neh 5:18 And what was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowl was prepared for me, as well as all kinds of wine in abundance every ten days. Yet for this I did not demand the food appointed for the governor, for the service was heavy upon this people.
- Neh 5:19 Remember me, O my God, for good, all that I have done for this people.
- Neh 8:1 And all the people gathered as one man in the open area that was before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel.
- Neh 8:2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.
- Neh 8:3 And he read in it before the open area that was before the Water Gate from first light until midday in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.
- Neh 8:4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a wooden platform that had been made for that purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah and Shema and Anaiah and Uriah and Hilkiyah and Maaseiah at his right hand; and at his left hand, Pedaiah and Mishael and Malchijah and Hashum and Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam.
- Neh 8:8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, interpreting and giving the sense, so that they understood the reading.
- Neh 8:9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who helped the people understand said to all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; do not mourn or weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.
- Neh 8:14 And they found it written in the law that Jehovah had commanded through Moses that the children of Israel dwell in booths during the feast in the seventh month,

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:

- Rev 17:1 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits upon the many waters,
- Rev 17:2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and those who dwell on the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.
- Rev 17:3 And he carried me away in spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.
- Rev 17:4 And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the unclean things of her fornication.
- Rev 17:5 And on her forehead there was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
- Rev 17:6 And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I marveled with great marvel when I saw her.
- Rev 18:2 And He cried with a strong voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a hold of every unclean spirit and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird;
- Rev 18:4a And I heard another voice out of heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people,...

- 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.

- Deut 12:5 But to the place which Jehovah your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name, to His habitation, shall you seek, and there shall you go.
- Deut 12:11 Then to the place where Jehovah your God will choose to cause His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I am commanding you, 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.
- Deut 12:12 And you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God, you and your sons and daughters, and your male servants and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no portion nor inheritance with you.
- Deut 12:13 Be careful that you do not offer up your burnt offerings in every place that you see;
- Deut 12:14 But in the place which Jehovah will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer up your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you.
- Psa 133 A Song of Ascents. Of David
- Psa 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is / For brothers to dwell in unity!
- Psa 133:2 It is like the fine oil upon the head / That ran down upon the beard, / Upon Aaron's beard, / That ran down upon the hem of his garments;
- Psa 133:3 Like the dew of Hermon / That came down upon the mountains of Zion. / For there Jehovah commanded the blessing: / Life forever.
- Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
- 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.**
- Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
- Gal 3:14 In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
- Deut 8:7 For Jehovah your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains;
- Deut 8:8 A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees with oil and of honey;
- Deut 8:9 A land in which you will eat bread without scarcity; you will not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and from whose mountains you can mine copper.
- Deut 8:10 And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless Jehovah your God for the good land which He has given you.
- Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
- Col 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,
- Col 2:7 Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
- 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.**
- Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
- Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,

- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- 1 Cor 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.
- 1 Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation, and another builds upon it. But let each man take heed how he builds upon it.
- 1 Cor 3:11 For another foundation no one is able to lay besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- 1 Cor 3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,
- 1 Cor 3:13 The work of each will become manifest; for the day will declare it, because it is revealed by fire, and the fire itself will prove each one's work, of what sort it is.
- 1 Cor 3:14 If anyone's work which he has built upon the foundation remains, he will receive a reward;
- 1 Cor 3:15 If anyone's work is consumed, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.
- 1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
- 1 Cor 3:17 If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, and such are you.
- 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.
- Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- Rom 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
- Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.
- Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
- Matt 6:14 For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also;
- Matt 6:15 But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.
- Matt 6:20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not dig through nor steal.
- Matt 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
- Matt 7:13 Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it.
- Matt 7:14 Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it.
- 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.
- Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

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

Ezra 7:6 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.

Ezra 7:7 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 in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

Ezra 7:8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king;

Ezra 7:9 For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem according to the good hand of his God upon him.

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah and to do it and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

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:

Ezra 7:21 And I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, make a decree to all the treasurers who are in the province beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, requires of you, it shall be done with all diligence,

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.

Ezra 8:21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a straight way for ourselves and for our little ones and for all our possessions.

Ezra 8:22 For I was ashamed to ask for troops and horsemen from the king to help us against the enemy in the way because we had spoken to the king, saying, The hand of our God is for good upon all those who seek Him, but His power and His wrath is against all those who forsake Him.

Ezra 8:23 So we fasted and sought our God for this, and He was entreated by us.

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.

Ezra 7:27 Blessed be Jehovah, the God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this into the king's heart, to beautify the house of Jehovah, which is in Jerusalem,

Ezra 7:28 And has extended lovingkindness to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the mighty officers of the king. And I was strengthened according to the hand of Jehovah my God upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel leading men to go up with me.

Ezra 10:1 Now while Ezra prayed and made confession, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a very large gathering of men and women and children was gathered together to him out of Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.

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.

Neh 8:1 And all the people gathered as one man in the open area that was before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel.

Neh 8:2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.

Neh 8:8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, interpreting and giving the sense, so that they understood the reading.

Neh 8:9 And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who helped the people understand said to all the people, This day is holy unto Jehovah your God; do not mourn or weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

4. Ezra spoke nothing new; what he spoke had been spoken already by Moses—Ezra 7:6; Neh. 8:14.

Ezra 7:6 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.

Neh 8:14 And they found it written in the law that Jehovah had commanded through Moses that the children of Israel dwell in booths during the feast in the seventh month,

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.

Matt 13:52 And He said to them, For this reason every scribe disciplined to the kingdom of the heavens is like a householder who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old.

2 Cor 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God,

2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

1 Tim 2:7 For which I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I speak the truth; I do not lie), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

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:

Neh 8:1 And all the people gathered as one man in the open area that was before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel.

Neh 8:2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.

Neh 8:3 And he read in it before the open area that was before the Water Gate from first light until midday in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

Neh 8:4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a wooden platform that had been made for that purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah and Shema and Anaiah and Uriah and Hilkiah and Maaseiah at his right hand; and at his left hand, Pedaiah and Mishael and Malchijah and Hashum and Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

Neh 8:8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, interpreting and giving the sense, so that they understood the reading.

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.

Isa 49:6 He says, It is too small a thing that You would be My Servant / To raise up the tribes of Jacob / And bring back the preserved of Israel; / I will also set You as a light of the nations / That You may be My salvation unto the ends of the earth.

Isa 60:1 Arise! Shine! For your light has come, / And the glory of Jehovah has risen upon you.

Isa 60:2 For, behold, the darkness will cover the earth, / And deep darkness the peoples; / But Jehovah will rise upon you, / And His glory will be seen upon you.

Isa 60:3 And nations will come to your light, / And kings to the brightness of your rising.

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.

- Zech 3:3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and was standing before the Angel.
Zech 3:4 And He answered and spoke to those standing before Him, saying, Remove the filthy garments from him. Then He said to him, See, I hereby make your iniquity pass from you and clothe you with stately robes.
Zech 3:5 And He said, Let them put a clean turban upon his head. And they put the clean turban upon his head and clothed him with garments while the Angel of Jehovah stood by.

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:

Neh 8:8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, interpreting and giving the sense, so that they understood the reading.

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.

Neh 8:1 And all the people gathered as one man in the open area that was before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel.

Neh 8:2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.

b. Ezra could help the people to know God not merely in a general way but according to what God had spoken—v. 8.

Neh 8:8 And they read in the book, in the law of God, interpreting and giving the sense, so that they understood the reading.

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:

Psa 119:2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, / Who seek Him with all their heart.

Psa 119:9 With what should a young man keep his way pure? / By guarding it according to Your word.

Psa 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet / And a light to my path.

Psa 119:130 The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple.

Psa 119:140 Your word is very pure, / And Your servant loves it.

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.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

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.

- 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
 2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

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:

- Isa 49:6 He says, It is too small a thing that You would be My Servant / To raise up the tribes of Jacob / And bring back the preserved of Israel; / I will also set You as a light of the nations / That You may be My salvation unto the ends of the earth.
 Isa 60:1 Arise! Shine! For your light has come, / And the glory of Jehovah has risen upon you.
 Isa 60:2 For, behold, the darkness will cover the earth, / And deep darkness the peoples; / But Jehovah will rise upon you, / And His glory will be seen upon you.
 Isa 60:3 And nations will come to your light, / And kings to the brightness of your rising.
 Zech 4:2 And he said to me, What do you see? And I said, I see that there is a lampstand all of gold, with its bowl on top of it and its seven lamps upon it, with seven pipes for each of the lamps on top of it;

- 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.

- 1 Pet 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people acquired for a possession, so that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

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.

- 2 Tim 2:2 And the things which you have heard from me through many witnesses, these commit to faithful men, who will be competent to teach others also.
 2 Tim 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, an unashamed workman, cutting straight the word of the truth.
 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

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.

- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
 Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

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.

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

Rev 22:3 And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;

- 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.

Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

- 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.

Neh 2:10 And when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard of this, it displeased them greatly that a man had come seeking the good of the children of Israel.

Neh 2:19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arabian heard of it, they mocked us and despised us; and they said, What is this thing that you will do? Will you rebel against the king?

Ezek 25:3 And you shall say to the children of Ammon, Hear the word of the Lord Jehovah: Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Because you said, Aha! against My sanctuary when it was desecrated, and against the land of Israel when it was desolated, and against the house of Judah when it went off into exile;

Ezek 25:8 Thus says the Lord Jehovah, Because Moab has said, Look, the house of Judah is just like all the other nations!

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.

Neh 2:17 Then I said to them, You see the bad state we are in, that Jerusalem lies in waste and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach.

Neh 2:18 And I told them about the hand of my God, which was good upon me, and also about the king's words, which he had spoken to me. And they said, Let us rise up and build; and they strengthened their hands for the good work.

- Neh 2:19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arabian heard of it, they mocked us and despised us; and they said, What is this thing that you will do? Will you rebel against the king?
- Neh 2:20 And I answered them and said to them, The God of heaven Himself will make us prosper; therefore we His servants will rise up and build. But you have no portion nor right nor memorial in Jerusalem.
- Neh 3:1 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests and built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and erected its doors; even as far as the Tower of the Hundred they consecrated it and as far as the Tower of Hananel.
- Neh 3:2 And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.
- Neh 3:3 And the sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate: They laid its beams and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars.
- Neh 3:4 And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz made repairs. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel made repairs. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana made repairs.
- Neh 3:5 And next to them the Tekoites made repairs, but their nobles would not put their necks to the service of their Lord.
- Neh 3:6 And Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate: They laid its beams and set up its doors and its bolts and its bars.
- Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings and grant Your slaves to speak Your word with all boldness,
- Acts 4:30 While stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may take place through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.
- Acts 4:31 And when they had so besought, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.
- 1 Thes 2:2 But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle.
- 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.
- 2 Tim 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord nor of me His prisoner; but suffer evil with the gospel according to the power of God;

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.

- Acts 26:21 Because of these things certain Jews seized me while I was in the temple and tried to slay me.
- 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,

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:

Neh 2:1 Then in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, while wine was being set before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence.

Neh 2:2 And the king said to me, Why is your face sad, since you are not ill? This is nothing other than sadness of heart. Then I was greatly frightened.

Neh 2:3 And I said to the king, May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in waste and its gates are consumed with fire?

Neh 2:4 And the king said to me, What do you request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Neh 2:5 And I said to the king, If it please the king and if your servant has found favor before you, that you would send me to Judah to the city of my fathers' graves that I may rebuild it.

Neh 2:6 And the king said to me (and the queen was sitting beside him), How long will your going be, and when will you return? So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a date.

Neh 2:7 Then I said to the king, If it please the king, let letters be given to me for the governors beyond the River, so that they will let me pass through until I come to Judah;

Neh 2:8 And a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the Park, which belongs to the king, so that he would give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace that belongs to the house and for the wall of the city and for the house that I will be entering. And the king gave these to me according to the good hand of my God, which was upon me.

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.

2 Tim 3:1 But know this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

2 Tim 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2 Tim 3:3 Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, not lovers of good,

2 Tim 3:4 Traitors, reckless, blinded with pride, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

2 Tim 3:5 Having an outward form of godliness, though denying its power; from these also turn away.

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.

Neh 1:1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now in the month Chislev, in the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capital,

Neh 1:2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came, he and some men from Judah; and I asked them about the Jews who had escaped, who were left from the captivity, and about Jerusalem.

Neh 1:3 And they said to me, The remnant who are left from the captivity there in the province are in an exceedingly bad state and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire.

Neh 1:4 And when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and I mourned for some days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven,

Neh 1:5 And said, I beseech You, O Jehovah the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and lovingkindness with those who love Him and keep His commandments:

Neh 1:6 Let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant, which I pray before You now day and night, concerning the children of Israel,

Your servants, while I confess the sins of the children of Israel that we have sinned against You. Indeed, I and the house of my father have sinned;

Neh 1:7 We have been most corrupt toward You and have not kept the commandments and the statutes and the ordinances that You commanded Moses Your servant.

Neh 1:8 Remember now the word that You commanded Moses Your servant, saying, If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples;

Neh 1:9 But if you return to Me and keep My commandments and perform them, though your outcasts are under the ends of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.

Neh 1:10 Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand.

Neh 1:11 I beseech You, O Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and to the prayer of Your servants, who take delight in fearing Your name; and cause Your servant to prosper today, and grant him to find compassion before this man. Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Neh 2:4 And the king said to me, What do you request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Neh 4:4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised; and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them as spoil in the land of captivity;

Neh 4:5 And do not cover their iniquity and do not let their sin be blotted out before You, for they made provocations before the builders.

Neh 4:9 But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

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.

Neh 5:19 Remember me, O my God, for good, all that I have done for this people.
 2 Cor 5:20 On behalf of Christ then we are ambassadors, as God entreats you through us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, Be reconciled to God.

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.

Neh 4:18 And as for the builders, each had his sword strapped to his side, and so they built; and he who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

Neh 5:10 And even I, my brothers, and my servants lend them money and grain. Let us now abandon such taking of interest.

Neh 5:14 Moreover from the time that the king appointed me to be governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, I and my brothers did not eat the food appointed for the governor.

Neh 5:15 But the former governors, who were before me, laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants tyrannized the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.

Neh 5:16 And I also applied myself to the work on this wall. And we did not acquire fields, and all my servants were gathered there for the work.

Neh 5:17 And there were at my table one hundred fifty men, Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations that surrounded us.

Neh 5:18 And what was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowl was prepared for me, as well as all kinds of wine in abundance every ten days. Yet for this I did not demand the food appointed for the governor, for the service was heavy upon this people.

Neh 5:19 Remember me, O my God, for good, all that I have done for this people.

- Neh 13:27 Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil by acting unfaithfully against our God in marrying foreign women?
- Neh 13:28 And one of the sons of Joiada the son of Eliashib the high priest was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite, so I chased him away from me.
- Neh 13:29 Remember them, O my God; for they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.
- Neh 13:30 Thus I cleansed them from everything foreign. And I appointed duties for the priests and the Levites, each in his work,

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:

- Rev 21:2a And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, ...
- Rev 21:10b ...and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
- 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
- 1 Pet 1:16 Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
- 2 Cor 6:14 Do not become dissimilarly yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?
- 2 Cor 6:15 And what concord does Christ have with Belial? Or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever?
- 2 Cor 6:16 And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, even as God said, "I will dwell among them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people."
- 2 Cor 6:17 Therefore "come out from their midst and be separated, says the Lord, and do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you";
- 2 Cor 6:18 And I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.
- 2 Cor 7:1 Therefore since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

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:

- Rev 21:18 And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
- Rev 21:19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald;
- Rev 21:20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.

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).

1 Pet 2:4 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious,

1 Cor 3:12a But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, ...

2) Precious stones indicate transformation; the more we are transformed, the more we are separated—Rom. 12:2.

Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the

renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

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.

1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

1 Cor 3:7 So then neither is he who plants anything nor he who waters, but God who causes the growth.

1 Cor 3:8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

1 Cor 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

1 Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation, and another builds upon it. But let each man take heed how he builds upon it.

1 Cor 3:11 For another foundation no one is able to lay besides that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 3:12a But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, ...

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.

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

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.

Rev 4:3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance, and there was a rainbow around the throne like an emerald in appearance.

Rev 21:18 And the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.