

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying
Message Four : The Recovery of the Church as God's
House and God's City as Portrayed in Ezra and Nehemiah

I. Overview :

The recovery of a remnant of the children of Israel from Babylon to Jerusalem for the rebuilding of temple and 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. The Lord raised up Ezra to strengthen and enrich His recovery; he was a priest and also a scribe, one who reconstituted the people of Israel by educating them with the heavenly truths so that Israel could become God's testimony. Nehemiah rebuilt the city of Jerusalem with its wall being a safeguard and protection for the house of God within the city; his aggressiveness showed us the proper pattern in the Lord's recovery today. 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.

II. Truth and Enlightenment :

Day 1 --

A. Expound that the recovery of the church is typified by the return of the children of Israel from their captivity.

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, then they crossed the Jordan, entered into the good land, and 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 recovery of the children of Israel was not only from Babylon but back to Jerusalem, the God-ordained unique ground.

B. The temple's destroyed; the vessels were carried away. What's the vessel?

All the vessels in the temple 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 concerning the unsearchable riches of Christ. 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.

Day 2 --

A. Explain the building up concerning the temple and the city.

The recovery of the church is typified in the Old Testament by the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. 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. Ephesians 2:19 speaks of the church as the house of God. But in Rev. 21:22, there is a city, and in which there is no temple, because it has become the enlargement of the temple.

B. Explain the recovery of the church including the living of the kingdom.

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. When the authority of God's kingdom operates in us, righteousness, peace, and joy will characterize our daily life.

Day 3 --

A. Describe the person of Ezra with his characteristics.

Ezra was a priest, a descendant of Aaron, and he was also a scribe. Ezra spoke nothing new. What he spoke had been already spoken by Moses. 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. Ezra was this kind of person; he was a priestly scribe.

B. Why is needed the kind of person like Ezra in the Lord's recovery?

Ezra 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. The Lord's recovery needs the kind of person who is one with God, saturated with God, filled with God, and skillful in the work of God.

Day 4 --

A. How are we reconstituted through God's word?

We all have our own kind of disposition and habitual behaviour, 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. 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. By this way we are reconstituted.

B. Which three sections of work were needed in order for God to have a house and a kingdom on the earth?

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. Second, there was the need of teaching and education to bring the people of God into a culture that was according to God. 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.

Day 5 --

A. Why'd Israelites need to be constituted in order to be God's testimony?

The Israelites had been in Egypt for at least for hundred years. During those years they must have been constituted with Egyptian learning. Then they were brought to Babylon for seventy years and were also constituted with the Babylon culture. However, in order to be the testimony of God, His expression, they needed to be re-educated in the Word of God for being saturated with His Word by educating them.

B. What is the crucial point of the book of Nehemiah?

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.

Day 6 --

A. Describe the characteristics of Nehemiah, his person.

The Moabites and Ammonites hated and despised the children of Israel. In Neh. 2:20 indicates that Nehemiah was very aggressive and not cowardly at all; he was one who lived not in his natural man but in resurrection. In his relationship with God, he loved God and also loved God's interests on the earth. Nehemiah trusted in God and even became one with God. In his relationship with the people, he was altogether unselfish, always willing to sacrifice what he had for the people and for the nation.

B. Which are the three functions of the holy city's wall and its foundations?

The first function is to separate, to sanctify, the city unto God from all things other than God, thus making the city the holy city. The second function is to protect the interest of the riches of God's divinity on the earth and the attainments of His consummation. The third function is to express God. God's appearance is like jasper, the whole city expressing God.

III. Conclusion :

The kingdom of Israel in the Old Testament is the greatest typified by the church. Whatever the God's chosen people experienced is the spiritual experience in today's church. They had been captured and taken to Babylon, then were brought back to rebuild the house of God with its wall; the section of this history is neglected by most of Christian. The recovery of the church is typified by the return of the children of Israel from their captivity. The entire history of the nation of Israel is a full type of the church. The recovery of the children of Israel was not only from Babylon but back to Jerusalem, the God-ordained unique ground of oneness for the building up of the house of God, the kingdom of God. There are the most need of two persons who are Ezra and Nehemiah in the building up the church; the former is a priestly scribe and the latter is a proper pattern of elders.