

## **Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Three : The Rebuilding of the Altar of God — the Altar of Burnt Offering**

### **I. Overview:**

The first thing to be recovered for the church life is the altar. Before we can have the church life, we must put everything on the altar for God's satisfaction. We should not come back to Jerusalem yet maintain our life as it was in Babylon. God governs everything by the cross; all spiritual experience begins from the cross. The burnt offering typifies Christ not only in His living a life that is perfect and absolute for God but also in His being the life that enables God's people to have such a living. Christ is God's food, but He is not God's food in a direct way; rather, Christ is God's food served to God by us. We need to realize that we are not absolutely for God and that of ourselves we cannot be absolute; therefore, we need to take Christ as our burnt offering. The daily burnt offering in the Old Testament typifies that, in the New Testament, we who belong to God should offer ourselves daily to God. God wants us to worship Him with Christ as the reality of all the offerings; the offerings are for pleasing God and making Him happy.

### **II. Truth and Enlightenment:**

Day 1 —

A. Fellowship Ezra 3 revealing that the first thing recovered was the altar.

For the recovery of the house we need the recovery of the altar. The altar is the place to offer all things to the Lord. This is the recovery of the real consecration. According to Ezra 3, they did not offer anything except the burnt offering upon the altar. We all know that the burnt offering is for God's satisfaction. The sin offering is for our sins, the trespass offering is for our trespasses.

B. Expound the recovery of the altar also needed the recovery of the house.

To recover the house is for God's satisfaction. Therefore, we must offer nothing but the burnt offering. In other words, we must put all that we have, all that we are, and all that we can do on the altar for God's satisfaction. This is the start of the church life. Before we can have the church life, we must put everything on the altar.

Day 2 —

A. Expound in God's economy He gives us one person and one way.

The one person is the preeminent, all-inclusive Christ, and the one way is the cross. As the all-inclusive One, Christ is everything to us. He is God, man, and the reality of every positive thing in the universe. The one way, the cross, is the center of God's government. God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross.

B. Share the experiences of the cross in the daily lives.

When we go to bed at night, we should pass through the cross. This means that no matter what we have done during the day or what has happened to us, the cross takes care of everything. This indicates that our way is the cross, not asceticism or any severe treatment of the self. Realizing that we have already died in Christ, we should go to bed at night with a consciousness of the cross.

Day 3 —

A. Expound God's food in Numbers 28.

God seemed to say to the people, "Do you have everything you need? Are you satisfied and happy? How about Me and My satisfaction? You need to take care of My food. I have been taking care of you for years. I have prepared everything for you in a new, complete way, and I ask you not to forget Me. My food is the offerings you present to Me. These offerings are My satisfying fragrance."

B. Fellowship God's food coming from His people.

God is hungry and wants to eat. Although He is almighty, He cannot provide Himself something to eat. His food must come from His people. All the offerings in Numbers 28, which are God's food, point to Christ. This indicates that Christ is not only our food but also God's food. God and we enjoy the same food—Christ.

Day 4 —

A. Expound the meaning of the word "burnt offering", and how to apply it.

The Hebrew word translated “burnt offering” literally means “that which goes up” and thus denotes something that ascends to God. The only thing that can ascend to God from earth is the life lived by Christ, for He is the unique person to live a life absolutely for God. Whatever comes out of our being is dirty; for this reason, even when we come to God to do the most holy thing, we still need the sin offering and the trespass offering.

B. Why do we need Christ first as our burnt offering?

The burnt offering indicates a life absolutely for God. Such a life is absolutely out of a pure source, with no element of the fall and no sin. In ourselves we cannot live this kind of life. Every part of our substance, our essence, our fiber, our element, is dirty. We could never be a burnt offering to God. Therefore, we must take Christ as our burnt offering.

Day 5 —

A. Expound Leviticus 1:41, the offerer needs to bring the offering and also to lay his hand on the offering.

According to Leviticus 1:41, the offerer was not only to bring the offering but also to lay his hand on the offering. In the Scripture, the laying on of hands always signifies identification, union; it does not signify substitution. To lay our hand on the offering means that we are one with the offering and take the offering as being one with us. Hence, the laying on of hands makes the two parties one.

B. Explain what effects we have by laying our hands on Christ as our burnt offering.

We may realize that we are altogether unqualified and hopeless. This is our actual situation. But when we lay our hands on Christ, our weak points become His, and His strong points, His virtues, become ours. Furthermore, spiritually speaking, by such a union He becomes one with us and lives in us.

Day 6 —

A. Explain the meaning of consecration is to be a “sacrifice”.

In the Old Testament men offered bullocks and rams as sacrifices. The principle is this; the bullock originally lived in a corral and was used for plowing the field and drawing carts. Now it is taken out from the corral and brought beside the altar. There is a change in its position. Then it is killed, placed on the altar, and consumed by fire to be a sweet-smelling savor unto God. This is a change in its usage. Thus, this bullock becomes a sacrifice.

B. Expound what we offer the burnt offerings today is living sacrifices.

In the New Testament, we who belong to God should offer ourselves as a burnt offering daily to God for His satisfaction. The difference is that the Old Testament people offered dead sacrifices, whereas we offer living sacrifices. To offer ourselves to the Lord is to be a sacrifice for His satisfaction. What matters is not what we do for the Lord, but that we satisfy Him. This is the real significance of our consecration to the Lord.

### **III. Conclusion:**

The book of Ezra opens with the Lord stirring up a Gentile king, Cyrus, to order the rebuilding of the Temple of the Lord Jehovah in Jerusalem. Therefore, those who returned from the captivity, returning to Jerusalem, rebuilt the altar of God and offered burnt offerings on it before laying the foundation of the temple of God. This shows us that if we want to build the church as the house of God, we need the altar and the burnt offering, at same time we need to offer the burnt offering on the altar. If we are serious for the Lord, we must offer everything on the altar. The life in the Lord's recovery must absolutely be for the restoration of the building up of the churches. In our daily living, we must labor daily in Christ and gain many experiences of Christ. Then, when we come together, we offer Christ to the Father and allow Him to enjoy Christ with us.