

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophecy Message Eight : Building the Wall of the City for the Protection of the Church as the House of God

I. Overview:

The book of Ezra is a history of the rebuilding of the temple; the book of Nehemiah is a history of the rebuilding of the wall of the city of Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem was a safeguard and protection for the house of God. The house of God as His home needs His kingdom to safeguard His interests on the earth. The temple is the place of the Lord's presence, where we meet and serve the Lord, but it needs protection. The wall of the city is not only for protection but also for separation. We need to intrinsically follow Nehemiah's pattern to "build up the wall," to build up our part of the wall. The church will be not only the house but also the city; the church as the house is mainly with Christ as life, and the church as the city is mainly with Christ as the Head. Differing teachings refer to teachings that are not in line with the economy of God, which are the source of the church's decline, degradation, and deterioration. The destroyers of the divine building are those who are factious, sectarian to make divisions and causes of stumbling, and turn away from them. Satan's special object is to spread death within the church, and his greatest fear with regard to the church is her resistance to his power of death. The gates of Hades shall not prevail against the church that is built.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound that the building of the city is the center of God's eternal purpose.

This building is simply the mingling of God with man. When Christ comes into us, that is the mingling...Therefore, the church is a mingling of divinity with humanity. When this mingling is enlarged and consummated to the fullest extent, that is the city. So the city eventually becomes the mutual building, the mutual habitation, of God and man. God dwells in us, and we in God. This is the universal, eternal mingling of God with man.

B. Explain that the house is mainly with the life and the city is mainly with the Head.

The New Testament first tells us that Christ is our life, but eventually it says that Christ is our Head. When we realize that Christ is not only our life but also our Head, then Christ will have the second step of enlargement. Then the church will not only be the house, but also the city. The house is mainly with the life, and the city is mainly with the Head.

Day 2 —

A. Expound why the enemy hates the building up of the wall of the city.

This is why after Zerubbabel, Joshua, and Ezra, there is the need of Nehemiah for the building up of the wall of the city. The enemy hates this even more than the building of the temple. The enemy knows that the building of the house can be destroyed, but once the building of the city is completed, there is the safeguard of the wall as a defense to protect the house. So what we need for the long run is the building up of the wall.

B. Why must Christ not only be our life but also our Head?

Christ must not only be our life but also our Head; not only our enjoyment but also our authority. Brothers and sisters, under the headship we have no choice. We are under the divine authority. We must all see the life and the headship. Then we will not only have a house, but also a city with a strong and high walls.

Day 3 —

A. Explain the Bible tells us clearly that Christ is both our life and our Head.

In the last two chapters of the Bible, there is a city with a throne. Out of the throne proceeds the river of life with the tree of life growing on either side. Out of the throne proceeds life. The New Testament tells us clearly that Christ is both our life and our Head. The Gospel of John speaks of Christ as life, and the Epistles, especially Colossians, tell us that Christ is also our Head.

B. Expound that we must realize Christ as our life and also as our Head.

We must keep in mind that Christ is these two main items to us: our life and our Head. When we realize and enjoy Christ as our life, we have the church as the house. But if we go further and realize His headship, the church will be enlarged to the city. Then the church will be safeguarded. The city is the safeguard of the house.

Day 4 —

A. Expound the teaching of the apostles being concerned with God's economy.

The New Testament revelation, the teaching of the apostles, is concerned with God's economy. According to 1 Timothy 1:3-4, we may say that God's economy is the general term for God's New Testament revelation. Paul says that he left Timothy in Ephesus in order that he might charge certain ones not to teach different things. God's economy is the New Testament revelation, the teaching of the apostles.

B. Expound that teaching differently annuls God's entire economy.

Paul wrote 1 Timothy in the midst of a confusing environment and after many years of his work with his co-workers. This Epistle is altogether an inoculation. In the word of this Epistle, Paul's saying about not to teach different things seems so simple. We may not think that this is serious, but actually it is more than serious. It kills people to teach differently. To teach differently tears down God's building and annuls God's entire economy.

Day 5 —

A. Explain the destroyers of the divine building.

According to the New Testament, there are seven kinds of destroyers. First, those who blow the wind of divisive teachings. Second, those who preach and teach heresies. Third, those who are factious, sectarian. Fourth, those who make divisions. Fifth, those who are ambitious for position Sixth those who are wolves, not sparing the flock. Seventh, those who speak perverted things to draw away the believers after them.

B. Expound why we need to turn away from those who make divisions.

If we open to these ones to listen to their divisive talk, we might be poisoned. This poison will cause us to doubt about the recovery and will weaken our morale for the recovery. At the very least, these dissenting ones will make us lukewarm. The subject of 2 Timothy is the inoculation against the decline of the church. We need such an inoculation to preserve us against the germs of the satanic chaos of rebellion and division.

Day 6 —

A. Expound that the death is the characteristic of Satan's work.

Sin and death are "co-workers" of Satan. A man who spreads death is one who collaborates with Satan. Satan's goal is not only to cause man to sin and fall but also to bring man into the bondage of death. Death is the characteristic of Satan's work. The ultimate goal of his work is to saturate man with death. Today the important thing is that we have to overcome death in our meetings. We have to swallow up death and release life.

B. Explain what the main goal of the Lord for the church is.

The riches of God are in Christ. Since the church is the testimony of the riches of God, its characteristics must be the characteristics of Christ. The characteristics of Christ are encapsulated in the words, "I am the resurrection and the life". Since the church is the vessel of Christ on earth, it should express this life and resurrection. The church must be full of life for man to receive God's life and riches.

III. Conclusion:

Nehemiah tells us that each man must build his part of the wall. I cannot build it for you, and you cannot be building for me. Everyone has to build his part. The work of building the wall was mainly done by the stronger persons, for it was a matter of warfare. It is nothing to do with a matter of emotion, but a matter of will. Whether I like it or not, I must be building up walls. Whether it is easy or difficult, I still have to do it, and there is no choice for me. I must submit myself to the Head of Christ so that the wall may be built. The enemy can never overcome Jesus. The gates of Hades shall not prevail against the builded church. We need to see the Lord's victory. Not only the Lord Jesus Himself is victorious, but also the church. The church's responsibility on earth is to maintain Christ's victory.