Message Four

The Ministry of Ezra—Purification, Education, and Reconstitution

Scripture Reading: Ezra 7:1-5; 9:1—10:14; Neh. 8:1-4, 6, 8, 13-18; 13:1-30a

I. We need to be clear concerning three situations: the world situation, the situation of Christianity, and our situation in the Lord's recovery—Rev. 4:2; 17:1-3; 18:4; 21:2, 10; 1:12.

II. The book of Ezra bears a strong intrinsic significance for the Lord's recovery today; we are in a situation that is typified by the situation at Ezra's time—Neh. 8:1-2, 8.

III. 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.

IV. Ezra purified the recovery by causing "the holy seed" to be separated from anything heathen—Ezra 9:1—10:14:

A. In the Lord's recovery there should never be any mixture; the recovery must be absolutely pure, single, and holy—9:1-2.

B. Before Ezra arrived, there was mixture because some of the Israelites had married heathen wives and had children born of this mixture; this is a type which we should apply spiritually, not literally.

C. In the Lord's recovery there is the need of purification to separate "the holy seed" from anything that is heathen—v. 2:

1. The Lord's recovery is the holy seed; we must be so pure that the holy seed will never be mingled with anything heathen.
2. When the recovery is holy, we will see the Lord's blessing—Ezek. 34:26.

D. In all the steps of the Lord's recovery, there is the need of purification—Ezra 9:1-2; 10:1-14; Neh. 13:1-30a:

1. After the building up of the house, we need purification, and after the building up of the city, we need to be purified again.

2. In the local churches we must be thoroughly purified of all mixture.
3. Anything common and anything contradictory to the heavenly nature of the Lord's recovery must be purged out—2 Tim. 2:19-22.

V. Ezra reconstituted the people of Israel by educating them with the heavenly truths that Israel could become God's testimony—Neh. 8:1-4, 8:

A. 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.

B. 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:
1. The Babylonian element had been wrought into them and constituted into their being—Zech. 3:3-5.
2. After they returned to the land of their fathers to be citizens of the nation of Israel, they needed a reconstitution.

C. 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:
1. 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.
2. Ezra could help the people to know God not merely in a general way but according to what God had spoken—v. 8.

D. In order to reconstitute the people of God, there was the need to educate them with the word which comes out of the mouth of God and which expresses God—Psa. 119:2, 9, 105, 130, 140:
1. 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—Col. 3:16.
2. 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.

E. 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:
1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The returned captives were reconstituted personally and corporately to become God's testimony.

F. 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.

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