Message Six

## Expression

Scripture Reading: Exo. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Eph. 3:21; 5:26-27; Rev. 4:3; 21:10-11, 18

**I. The Lord's recovery is the recovery of the expression of God; the central line in the divine revelation is that the Triune God desires to express Himself in humanity—Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Isa. 43:7; 2 Cor. 4:7; cf. Dan. 5:23:**

A. The entire Old Testament is composed of nine great men (Adam, Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) plus the tabernacle and the temple as God's dwelling place for God's expression—Gen. 1:26; 4:4, 26; 5:24; 6:8; 17:1-5; 24:4; 28:10-13; 50:26; Exo. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:1-11.

B. The entire New Testament is composed of a unique man who was God's tabernacle and temple plus the church as the enlargement of this unique man to be God's dwelling place for God's expression—John 1:14; 2:19-21; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6; Eph. 3:19-21; Rev. 21:3, 22, 10-11.

**II. The history of the tabernacle and the Ark portrays the desire of God's heart, the desolation of the church, and the recovery of the church for God's testimony, God's expression—Exo. 25:9-10; 26:26-30; 40:38:**

A. As the center and content of the tabernacle, the Ark signifies Christ as the center and content of the church as God's tabernacle, God's house, for God's corporate expression—25:22; 40:21; Col. 2:9; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Tim. 3:15.

B. In the first stage of its history, the Ark was in the tabernacle; this signifies that in the first stage of its history, the normal church was the expression of Christ, and Christ was the content of the church—Exo. 40:34-35; Acts 9:31.

C. Due to Israel's degradation, the Ark was captured by the Philistines and was separated from the tabernacle, leaving the tabernacle an empty vessel without the proper content; this signifies that in the second stage the church became degraded and lost the reality and presence of Christ—1 Sam. 3—4; Rev. 3:20:

1. In their degradation Israel should have repented, made a thorough confession, returned to God from their idols, and inquired of God as to what He wanted them to do; instead, having no heart for God's desire or for His eternal economy, they exercised their superstition to trust in the Ark based on their past victories—Num. 10:35; Josh. 6; cf. Phil. 3:13-14.
2. In their degradation they offended God to the uttermost; eventually, instead of the Ark saving Israel, the Ark itself was captured and the glory of God departed from Israel—1 Sam. 4:11a, 21-22; Psa. 78:61.
3. The Ark typifies Christ as the embodiment of God and as the presence of the Triune God with His people for the carrying out of His economy to establish His kingdom on earth; to bring out the Ark was to bring out the presence of God—Num. 10:33-36; 1 Sam. 4:4.
4. The children of Israel had no thought or concern for God's economy, and their bringing out the Ark indicated that they were usurping God, even forcing Him to go out with them for their safety, peace, rest, and profit.
5. Today men are replacing God's testimony with man's need; when man's need replaces God's testimony, degradation begins and problems arise.
6. In principle, we do the same thing whenever we pray for our prosperity without any consideration of God's economy; instead of usurping God, we

should pray, live, and be persons, like Samuel, who are according to God's heart and for His economy—1 Sam. 2:30b, 35; cf. 1 Kings 8:48; Jer. 32:39.

D. Later, the Ark was recovered and brought first to the house of Abinidab at Kiriath-jearim, where it remained for twenty years (1 Sam. 6:2—7:2), and then to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, where it stayed for three months (2 Sam. 6:1-11; cf. 1 Sam. 1:24; Josh. 18:1); this signifies that beginning from the second century a number of "Obed-edoms" were raised up, who had the Lord's presence (the Ark) but did not have the proper church life as the expression of Christ (the tabernacle).

E. David moved the Ark from Obed-edom's house to a tent that he had prepared for it in his own city, at Mount Zion, the choicest place in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12-19; 1 Chron. 15:1—16:1); this signifies that other believers who, like David, cared for God's interests, attempted to practice the church life according to their own choice, not according to God's revelation; these believers had Christ, but they had Him with an improper practice of the church life (typified by David's tent in Jerusalem).

F. Finally, after Solomon finished the building of the temple in Jerusalem, the Ark was moved into the Holy of Holies in the temple for a full recovery of the normal situation; today in His recovery the Lord is working to restore the normal condition of the Christ within the proper church as His expression—1 Kings 8:1-11; Eph. 3:16-21.

**III. The history of the destruction of the temple and the city of God due to Israel's degradation and the rebuilding of the temple and the city with its wall typify God's recovery of the degraded church for His glory, His expression:**

A. Solomon, the very one who had built the temple, took the lead to build up the high places again; these high places were related to lust, ambition, and idolatry, resulting in division—1 Kings 11:1-8, 43; 12:31:

1. Solomon was a wise man but not a spiritual man; a man of capability, not a man of life; a man whose wisdom was a gift, not a measure of life.
2. Capability apart from life is like a snake, poisoning God's people (cf. Exo. 4:2-4); life is like a dove, supplying God's people with life (John 1:32).

B. God's people in their degradation eventually set up idols in the temple and in their hearts; God's glory, His expression, is versus idols; an idol in our heart is anything within us that we love more than the Lord and that replaces the Lord in our life—Ezek. 2:3; 8:2-4, 10; 11:23; 14:3, 5; 40:1; 43:2, 10; 1 John 5:21.

C. After the destruction of the temple and the city because of Israel's idolatry, the temple and the city with its wall were rebuilt by the returned captives for the glory of God, the expression of God—Ezra 3:6b-13; 6:13-15; Neh. 4:1-23.

**IV. The wall of the city is for the expression of God; thus, to "build up the wall" is to build up the church as the expression of God—Rev. 4:3; 21:11, 18-19:**

A. In order to express God, we need to be saved from our natural disposition and from self-likeness by living a mingled life with the Divine Trinity in the blending life of the entire Body of Christ—Rom. 5:10; Lev. 2:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:24.

B. In order to express God, we need to be daily sanctified and renewed by the washing of the water in the word to be presented to Christ, our Bridegroom, as His pure, glorious, God-expressing bride—Heb. 2:10-11; Eph. 5:26-27; 3:21.

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