

Message Eight

**Building the Wall of the City
for the Protection of the Church as the House of God**

Scripture Reading: Neh. 1:3; 2:9-20

I. The book of Ezra is a history of the return of Israel's captivity and the rebuilding of the temple; the book of Nehemiah is a history of the rebuilding of the wall of the city of Jerusalem—Neh. 2:17-20:

- A. The city of Jerusalem was a safeguard and protection for the house of God, which was in the city—v. 13:
 - 1. 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 interests on the earth for His administration that He may carry out His economy—v. 15.
 - 2. 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—vv. 17-20.
- B. God's building of His house and His building of the kingdom go together—Matt. 16:18-19.

II. The first section of the book of Nehemiah, chapters 1 through 7, is on the rebuilding of the wall of the city of Jerusalem under Nehemiah:

- A. Nehemiah received the report that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the gates had been burned with fire—1:3b.
- B. Nehemiah 2:9-16 speaks of Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem and his personal observation of the condition of the wall of the city of Jerusalem.
- C. Nehemiah 2:17-20 is a word concerning the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem:
 - 1. The temple is the place of the Lord's presence, where we meet and serve the Lord, but it needs protection.
 - 2. The wall of the city is the defense to the temple; without the wall of the city, there is no protection.
 - 3. The wall of the city is not only for protection but also for separation.
 - 4. The book of Nehemiah tells us that we all must build up our part of the wall; everyone should build up his own part—4:6, 19.
- D. We need to intrinsically follow Nehemiah's pattern to "build up the wall," to build up the church as the kingdom of God, for the protection of the church as the house of God, His dwelling place—2:4, 10, 17-20; Eph. 2:21-22.

III. The purpose of the building of the wall is to bring us all into the proper order in life under the headship of Christ—1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 2:19:

- A. Christ is both the Head of the Body, the church, corporately and of all the believers individually; He is the Head of every one of us directly—1:18; 1 Cor. 11:3.
- B. The church life is a life of being headed up under the unique headship of Christ—Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 4:15-16; Col. 2:19.
- C. If we honor the unique headship of Christ, then in the Lord's recovery the church will be not only the house but also the city—Heb. 11:10; Ezra 1:2-3; Neh. 1:9; 2:5, 17; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 21:2, 10-11:

1. The church as the house is mainly with Christ as life, and the church as the city is mainly with Christ as the Head—1 Tim. 3:15; Matt. 5:14; Col. 3:4; 1:18:
 - a. When we experience and enjoy Christ as life, we have the church as the house; when we realize the unique headship of Christ, the church will be enlarged as the city, which signifies the kingdom of God—Matt. 16:18-19.
 - b. The church as the city is built not only with Christ as life but also with the headship of Christ; thus, Christ must be not only our life but also our Head—Col. 3:4; 1:18; 2:19.
2. If we honor the unique headship of Christ, the church will be enlarged from the house to the city for the King and His kingdom—Psa. 48:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Rev. 21:2, 10-11, 14; 11:15.

IV. We need to build the wall to protect the church from differing teachings, which are contrary to the teaching of the apostles—Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 1:3-4:

- A. Differing teachings refer to teachings that are not in line with the economy of God—6:3.
- B. The differing teachings in 1:3-4, 6-7; 6:3-5, 20-21 and the heresies in 4:1-3 are the seed, the source, of the church's decline, degradation, and deterioration.
- C. Teaching differently tears down God's building and annuls God's economy; even a small amount of teaching in a different way destroys the recovery.
- D. For the administration and shepherding of a local church, the first thing needed is to terminate the differing teachings of the dissenting ones, which distract the saints from the central line of God's economy—Titus 1:9.
- E. We must avoid differing teachings and concentrate on God's economy concerning Christ and the church—1 Tim. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:9; 5:32.

V. If the wall is built up in the church, we will be protected from those who are used by the enemy to destroy God's building work:

- A. The destroyers of the divine building are those who preach and teach heresies—2 Pet. 2:1; 2 John 7-11:
 1. Those who teach heresies concerning the person of Christ are antichrists, denying both the person of the Lord as the Master and His redemption, by which the Lord purchased the believers; to deny that the man Jesus is God is a great heresy—v. 7; 1 John 2:18, 22-23; 4:2-3.
 2. The apostle warned the believers to watch for themselves lest they be influenced by the heresies and lose the things of the truth; we must reject those who deny the conception and deity of Christ, not receiving them into our house or greeting them—2 John 8-11.
- B. The destroyers of the divine building are those who are factious, sectarian—Titus 3:10:
 1. A factious man is a heretical, sectarian man who causes divisions by forming parties in the church according to his own opinions; in order to maintain good order in the church, a factious, divisive person should be refused, rejected, after a first and second admonition—v. 10.
 2. Because such divisiveness is contagious, this rejection is for the church's profit so that contact with the divisive one may be stopped—cf. Num. 6:6-7.
- C. The destroyers of the divine building are those who make divisions—Rom. 16:17:

1. In Romans 14 Paul was liberal and gracious regarding the receiving of those who differ in doctrine or practice; however, in Romans 16:17 he was unyielding and resolute in saying that we must “mark those who make divisions and causes of stumbling contrary to the teaching which you have learned, and turn away from them.”
2. The Lord hates “one who injects discord among brothers”—Prov. 6:16, 19.
- D. The destroyers of the divine building are those who are ambitious for position—3 John 9:
 1. We should never hunt to be the first in any work for the Lord; this is the insidious work of hidden ambition to compete with others to be the first—v. 9.
 2. The destroyers of the divine building are those who are wolves, not sparing the flock, and those who speak perverted things to draw away the believers after them—Acts 20:29-30.

VI. After the wall has been built, we will be able to resist the attack of death upon the church and to build up the Body of Christ in the resurrection life of Christ—Matt. 16:18; John 11:25; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16:

- A. Death is the characteristic of Satan’s work; the ultimate goal of his work is to saturate man with death—Heb. 2:15.
- B. Matthew 16:18 shows us from what source the attack upon the church will come—“the gates of Hades,” that is, death:
 1. 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—Rev. 2:8, 10-11.
 2. The church that is built upon “this rock” can discern between death and life, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it—Matt. 16:18.
- C. We need to know Christ as the First and the Last—the ever-existing, unchanging One—and as the One who became dead and lived again—the One who is resurrection—Rev. 1:17-18; 2:8; John 11:25; Acts 2:24.
- D. We can build up the Body of Christ only in the resurrection life of Christ—Eph. 2:6, 21-22; 4:16; Rev. 1:18; 2:8; Phil. 3:10:
 1. The Body of Christ is in the resurrection life of Christ—John 11:25:
 - a. The nature of the church as the Body of Christ is resurrection—Acts 2:24; Eph. 1:19-23.
 - b. The church is a new creation created in Christ’s resurrection and by the resurrected Christ—1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:6; Gal. 6:15.
 2. The Body of Christ is in resurrection, and the reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit—John 11:25; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
 3. The principle of resurrection is that the natural life is killed and that the divine life rises up to take its place—2 Cor. 1:9.
 4. When we do not live by the natural life but live by the divine life within us, we are in resurrection; the issue of such a living is the growth and building up of the church as the Body of Christ—Phil. 3:10-11; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19; 3:15.