

Message Eleven

**The Intrinsic Significance of Ezra's Ministry and Nehemiah's Leadership—
to Build Up the Church as the House of God and the Kingdom of God
by Living Out and Working Out the New Jerusalem**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 21:2, 9-11, 18; 22:1

- I. **The intrinsic significance of Ezra's ministry is embodied in the words *purification*, *education*, and *reconstitution*; the intrinsic significance of Nehemiah's leadership is embodied in the words *separation*, *protection*, and *expression*; we need to cooperate with the Lord in His heavenly ministry to build up the church as the house of God and the kingdom of God by living out and working out the New Jerusalem according to this intrinsic significance—1 Kings 8:48; Psa. 48:1-2; 1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:21-22.**

- II. **To live and serve God according to the vision of the age in the ministry of the age is to live out and work out the New Jerusalem: “the building work of its wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass”—Rev. 21:18; Acts 26:19; 22:15; Rev. 21:2, 9-11:**
 - A. The city being pure gold, like clear glass, signifies our need of *purification* with God in His holy nature and of enlightenment through *education* by applying the Bible teachings to our mind for the renewing and enlightenment of our mind to make us clear with the thoughts, considerations, and ways of God—cf. Matt. 5:8; Eph. 4:23; John 17:17.
 - B. “The building work” is God's unique work for our *reconstitution* with the Triune God so that we may be rebuilt with Him and minister Him into others for Him to build Himself into their being to make them beings in the New Jerusalem—1 Cor. 3:9, 12; Eph. 3:16-19; Rev. 3:12; S. S. 6:4; Heb. 11:10.
 - C. The city with its wall signifies the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God under the headship of God for the *separation* of God's people and the *protection* of God's interests—Neh. 4:17; Eph. 5:26.
 - D. The wall of the city being jasper (God's life in its richness) and the city being gold (God's divine nature) reveal that God's eternal economy is to make us the same as He is in life and in nature but not in the Godhead for His unique *expression*—Gen. 1:26; John 10:10b; 2 Pet. 1:4; Rev. 4:3; 21:10-11, 18.

- III. **To live out and work out the New Jerusalem is to live and serve in the intrinsic significance of Ezra's ministry and Nehemiah's leadership:**
 - A. We need to stay in the process of being purified from all mixture, taking the Lord and the interests of His eternal economy as our unique goal—Ezra 9:2; Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:4a, 6; Luke 9:54-55; Heb. 4:12; 1 Kings 8:48:
 1. We can be purified through the process of God's enlightenment, exposure, and judgment, through the termination and elimination of the cross, through the cleansing and washing of the blood, and through the flowing and saturating of the Spirit—Psa. 139:23-24; 51:7, 10; Rev. 22:1.
 2. We can be purified through the washing process of the water of life in God's pure word; the more a person is in the word of God, the purer he becomes—Psa. 12:6; 119:9, 140; Eph. 5:26; Isa. 55:8-11.

3. Leviticus 19:19 reveals that God wants everything to be according to its kind, without any mixture—Rev. 17:3-6; Deut. 22:5, 9-11; cf. Gen. 1:11, 21, 24-26; 2:7-9:
 - a. Breeding cattle without mixture signifies that life is not allowed to be mixed; those living by the life of God must not live by the flesh—cf. Gal. 5:16.
 - b. Sowing seed without mixture signifies that in the ministry of the word only one kind of seed, one kind of teaching, should be sown—the unique teaching of God’s eternal economy—Deut. 22:9; 1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3.
 - c. Making a garment without mixing materials signifies that our conduct is not allowed to be mixed; those living in the life of the New Testament should not live by the ordinances of the Old Testament (Gal. 2:19-20; 5:1-6), and those who belong to the Lord should not live according to the customs of the Gentiles (Lev. 20:23; 18:3; cf. Eph. 4:17; Rom. 12:2a).
4. First Peter 1:22 says, “Since you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned brotherly love, love one another from a pure heart fervently”:
 - a. This means that to have our soul (our mind, emotion, and will) purified is to have it delivered from all things other than God and fixed on God as the sole object and unique goal (1 Cor. 2:9-10; 2 Thes. 3:5); when we obey the truth, the content and reality of our faith in Christ (2 Tim. 4:7; Titus 1:1), our entire soul is concentrated on God and is thus purified from all things other than God.
 - b. Since the purifying of our souls causes our entire being to be concentrated on God so that we may love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind (Mark 12:30), such purifying issues in unfeigned brotherly love, our loving from the heart fervently those whom God loves (John 13:5, 14-17, 34-35; 2 Pet. 1:5, 7; Rom. 12:9-11; 2 Tim. 1:6-7; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9-10; Heb. 13:1; 1 John 2:5-8; 3:11, 23; 4:7-8, 16-21).
- B. We need to be educated to educate others with the truth for God’s testimony, His corporate expression—2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:15-16; 6:3; 1 Cor. 14:31:
 1. The twelve foundations of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, bear the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, indicating that the New Jerusalem is built according to the apostles’ teaching, the healthy teaching of God’s economy—Rev. 21:14; Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 1:15; Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:2.
 2. Ezra was skilled in the law of God, which is linked to God’s economy; the law is a type of Christ as God’s Word, God’s testimony, God’s portrait, God’s expression—Exo. 16:34; 34:28; cf. Rev. 1:2.
 3. By coming to Christ as the living word in the written word, He can become the applied word for us to be infused with Him to become the testimony of Jesus—John 1:1; Rev. 19:13; John 5:39-40; 6:63; Rev. 1:2, 10-11.
 4. By remaining in the unique ministry of the teaching of God’s economy, we can apprehend the Word’s intrinsic significance to be filled with the light of life—Neh. 8:8, 13; Matt. 4:12-16; John 1:4-5.
 5. We must learn to use the new language, “the language of Judah,” in the new culture, the God-man culture of the new man—Neh. 13:23-24.
- C. We need to be reconstituted with grace, which is the processed Triune God becoming life and everything to us—1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 10:29:
 1. The twelve apostles represent the grace of the New Testament, signifying that grace is the source, the element, and the means for producing the New Jerusalem—Rev. 21:14.

2. We need to be constituted with grace upon grace, labor by grace, dispense grace, and minister the word of grace—John 1:16; 1 Cor. 15:10; 1 Pet. 4:10; Acts 20:32.
 3. The New Jerusalem is built by God's constituting Himself into man to make man the same as He is in life and nature but not in the Godhead so that God and man may become a corporate entity and be a mutual dwelling place—Rev. 21:2-3, 10-11, 18-22.
 4. We should do only one work, which is the work of the New Jerusalem; we need to be one with our inner operating God as He proceeds to bring His chosen ones through the major steps of His organic salvation—regeneration, sanctification, renewing, transformation, and conformation unto glorification.
 5. In this way we ascend level by level until we reach the highest point, where we become the same; there is no more flesh and no more natural being; all are in the spirit, and all are beings of the New Jerusalem; this is the highest point of God's work, and we are His fellow workers—John 5:17; Phil. 2:13; Rev. 4:3; 21:11; 1 Cor. 3:9, 12; 2 Cor. 6:1; 1 Thes. 3:2.
 6. "The processed and consummated Triune God, according to the good pleasure of His desire and for the highest intention in His economy, is building Himself into His chosen people and His chosen people into Himself, that He may have a constitution in Christ, as a mingling of divinity and humanity to be His organism, and the Body of Christ, as His eternal expression and the mutual abode for the redeeming God and the redeemed man. The ultimate consummation of this miraculous structure of treasure will be the New Jerusalem for eternity"—Witness Lee.
- D. We need to be fully separated unto God to be fully saturated with God, living a holy life for the church life to make us the holy city—Rev. 21:2; 2 Pet. 1:4:
1. The renewing of the mind and the resulting transformation separate and save us from our nature and living that are soaked with the element of the world—Rev. 21:12a; Rom. 8:5-6; 12:2, 5-11; Eph. 4:23.
 2. By living in our spirit and eating Christ as the hidden manna, we can overcome the world to become God's building—1 John 5:4, 18-19, 21; Rev. 2:12-17; cf. John 14:30.
 3. We need to be fully separated from the idolatrous world of Babylon, which is characterized by the wickedness of business, or commerce, involving covetousness, deceit, and the love of money; our Christian life should be without the love of money, and our Christian work should not be a money-making trade—Zech. 5:5-11; 1 Tim. 3:3, 8; 6:5-10; Acts 11:29-30; 20:33-34; 2 Tim. 3:2-4; Heb. 13:5; 2 Cor. 2:17; 12:15; cf. 2 Kings 5:15-27:
 - a. Satan is a businessman, a merchant, and his thought is according to his commercial principle, which is versus God's purpose in creating man—Ezek. 28:16, 18; Job 1:9; cf. Phil. 3:7-8; Gen. 1:26.
 - b. Of the cargo sold by Babylon, the first item is gold and the last is the souls of men; *souls of men* refers to men who sell themselves for employment—Rev. 18:12-13; cf. 2 Pet. 2:3, 15.
 - c. This depicts not only the coming Babylon but also today's world; people sell their soul, their life, that is, themselves, to their occupation, neglecting God and their eternal destiny—cf. Luke 12:13-21.
 - d. God's sovereignty will cause the wickedness in business, which the people of Israel learned from the Babylonians in their captivity, to go back to Babylon (the land of Shinar)—Zech. 5:10-11; Gen. 11:2, 9.

- E. We need to build up the wall to protect the church as the house of God:
1. We can build up the wall through the overcoming blood of the Lamb, applied to us through our repenting, confessing our sins, and asking God for His purging—Rev. 12:11; Psa. 51:18.
 2. We must shepherd the flock of God by sounding the one trumpet of the unique New Testament ministry, declaring to them all the counsel of God to complete the word of God with the Lord’s protective warning and healthy teaching, so that they may be full-grown in Christ—1 Cor. 14:8; Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:26-35; Ezek. 33:1-11; 34:25; Col. 1:24-29.
 3. We must build up the wall to protect the church by fighting the battle in the Body—Rom. 16:20:
 - a. The Body puts on the whole armor of God and renders protection to every member; we must seek the counsel and covering of the Body to receive the Body’s protection and safeguard—Eph. 6:10-20; Matt. 16:18; Acts 21:4, 11-12.
 - b. Spiritual warfare is in this principle—one will chase a thousand, and two will put ten thousand to flight—Deut. 32:30; Eccl. 4:9-12; Exo. 17:11-13.
 4. We must build up the wall to protect the interest of the riches of God’s divinity on the earth and the attainments of His consummation—cf. John 1:12-13; Isa. 9:6; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:17; 4:5; Col. 1:18; Acts 2:36; 5:31; Heb. 4:14; 9:15; 7:22; 8:2; 1 John 2:1; John 15:26; Rom. 8:34, 26.
- F. We need to live by Christ and to live out Christ, thus magnifying Christ, so that we can build up the church as the expression of God—Exo. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:1-11; Rom. 13:14, 12; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Phil. 1:19-21a; Rev. 21:3, 22, 10-11:
1. The wall of the city is for the expression of God; thus, to “build up the wall” (Neh. 2:17) is to build up the church as the expression of God (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20-22; 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 3:9-17; Rev. 4:3; 21:11, 18-19).
 2. Today in His recovery the Lord is working to restore the normal condition of Christ within the proper church as His expression—Eph. 3:16-21; Rev. 4:3; 21:11, 18-19.
 3. 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. 12:24-25.
 4. 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—v. 24; Eph. 5:26-27.