

THE BUILDING OF GOD

Message One

The Vision of the Building of God

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16; Rev. 21:2-3

- I. The entire Bible is a book of building; the main subject of the Bible is the building of God—Gen. 28:10-22; Matt. 16:18; Rev. 21:2-3.**
- II. The central and divine thought of the Scriptures is that God is seeking a divine building as the mingling of Himself with humanity—a living composition of persons redeemed by and mingled with Himself—Exo. 25:8:**
 - A. God's intention is to have a group of people built up as a spiritual building to express God and to represent God by dealing with His enemy and recovering the lost earth—Gen. 1:26; Eph. 2:21-22.
 - B. Whatever God is doing today—in preaching the gospel, edifying the saints, or establishing churches—is part of His building work; these activities are part of God's main work, the work of building—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:16.
 - C. We need to be enlightened by and fully saturated with the thought that in this universe God is doing only one thing—building His eternal habitation—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; Rev. 21:2-3.
 - D. For the sake of His coming back, the Lord needs the church to be built up; only the church built up according to the Lord's desire can be the stepping stone into the age of the kingdom—Matt. 16:18, 27-28.
 - E. To be built up with fellow believers is the Lord's supreme and highest requirement of His faithful seekers according to the divine oneness of the Divine Trinity—John 17.
 - F. Being built up with fellow partakers of the divine life is the highest virtue of one who pursues after Christ according to God's eternal economy—Phil. 3:7-12.
- III. The building of God is the Triune God as life wrought into us continually so that under His transfusion and infusion we become His corporate expression—Eph. 3:17a, 19b, 21:**
 - A. God's building is the mingling of God with man, that is, God mingling Himself with us; thus, the church is

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God's building composed of Himself as the divine material mingled with man as the human material—John 14:20; 15:4a; 1 John 4:15; Eph. 3:17; 1 Cor. 3:9, 11.

- B. God's building is the corporate expression of the Triune God—1 Tim. 3:15-16; John 17:22; Eph. 3:19b, 21.
- C. God's building is the enlargement, the expansion, of God to express God in a corporate way—John 3:29a, 30a; Col. 2:19.

IV. Because the building is what God desires, the entire Old Testament is on the subject of God's building:

- A. The account of Jacob's dream at Bethel is the most crucial word in the revelation of God, including the whole Bible in its scope and requiring the rest of the Bible to explain it—Gen. 28:10-22; Matt. 16:18; 1 Tim. 3:15:
 - 1. Genesis 28:10-22 is the first place in the Scriptures where God reveals that His intention is to build Himself together with man and to have a dwelling place, a Bethel, on earth.
 - 2. In Genesis 35 the vision of Bethel came again, not as a dream but as a reality; in Genesis 35 there is a crucial and radical turn from the individual experience of God to the corporate experience of God—the experience of God as the God of Bethel (v. 7)—Eph. 3:17-21; 4:4.
- B. According to the book of Exodus, God's building is the desire of God's heart and the goal of God's salvation—25:8-9; 40:1-38:
 - 1. The purpose of Exodus is to show that the goal of God's full salvation is the building up of His dwelling place—1 Pet. 2:2, 4-5; Eph. 2:1-22.
 - 2. God's chosen people are to be built up together into one entity, the tabernacle, where God and man may mutually meet, communicate, and dwell.
 - 3. In Christ we and God, and God and we, are built together, meet together, and dwell together; this is the central thought of the book of Exodus.
 - 4. God's dwelling place must be built according to the pattern revealed on the mountain—Exo. 25:8-9; Heb. 8:5.

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- C. The tabernacle and the temple typify two aspects of the church:
1. The tabernacle was designed for the wilderness and was transitory in nature; the temple was designed for the kingdom and was eternal in nature—Exo. 40:2; 1 Kings 6:2.
 2. The tabernacle typifies God's church on earth, whereas the temple typifies the church as Christ's unique Body; the church appears in different localities, yet the spiritual reality of the church is still one Body, which is unique and eternal—Rev. 1:11; Eph. 1:22-23.
 3. The temple is a type of Christ and also of the Body of Christ:
 - a. The temple first typifies Christ and then the church, as the unique building of God in the universe—Matt. 12:6; 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21-22.
 - b. These two—Christ and His Body, the church—are the center, the reality, and the goal of God's eternal economy—5:32.
 4. The temple replaced the tabernacle as God's dwelling on earth; thus, the tabernacle was mingled with the temple—1 Kings 6:2; 8:1-11.
- D. God charged Ezekiel to show the people of Israel the pattern of His house, because He intended to examine their living and conduct according to His house as a rule and pattern—Ezek. 43:10:
1. The building of God is a pattern, and we need to examine ourselves in light of this pattern—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22.
 2. Our behavior and conduct should be examined not only according to moral regulations and spiritual principles but also according to the house of God—1 Cor. 14:26.
 3. The Lord's requirement is according to His house, and we must all be measured and checked according to the building of God—Eph. 2:21-22.
 4. The Body life is the greatest test of our spirituality; if we cannot pass the test of the Body life, our spirituality is not genuine—1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19.