

Message Six

The Builders of the Divine Building

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18;
John 3:34; 14:23; Eph. 3:17a; 4:12, 16

I. Christ is the Builder of the church—Matt. 16:18:

- A. The Lord's word concerning the building up of the church is the greatest prophecy in the Bible—vv. 16-19.
- B. In His humanity Christ is the material for God's building, and in His divinity He is the Builder—John 3:13-16.
- C. After the Lord Jesus accomplished redemption, resurrected from the dead, and ascended to the heavens, the building of the church began—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:16.
- D. As the ascended One in the heavens, Christ is directing, managing, the building up of His church on earth—Rev. 5:6; Eph. 1:19-23.
- E. Christ, the Head, speaks the words of God, imparts the divine life, and gives the Spirit not by measure—John 3:29-36:
 1. The Lord Jesus ministers the instant and present spoken words of God and gives the Spirit not by measure to God's people; He gives the Spirit by speaking the words of God—v. 34.
 2. "It is blasphemy to keep a following under our control...The more we let go of our following, the more the Bible will be open to us, and the more the anointing will be on the Body" (*Life-study of John*, p. 128).
 3. If we would have a part in the divine building, we must be those who are listening to the Lord's word, partaking of His divine life, and sharing His Spirit immeasurably—vv. 15-16, 34, 36.

II. The gifted persons, especially the apostles and the prophets, perfect the saints for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:11-12:

- A. Christ does not build the church by Himself directly but through His gifted members—v. 11.
- B. The gifted persons have only one ministry—to minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ; this is the unique ministry in the New Testament economy—2 Cor. 4:1; 1 Tim. 1:12.
- C. Whatever the gifted persons do as the work of the

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ministry must be for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:16.

- D. In the Lord's recovery all the gifted persons should do the work of perfecting, which is for the direct building up of the organic Body of Christ by all the members of the Body—v. 12.

III. The perfected saints share the burden of the perfecting, gifted persons and build up the church directly—v. 12:

- A. All the saints who have been perfected by the gifted persons become the able members of the Body; such members can do the work of the New Testament ministry, which is to build up the Body of Christ—v. 12.
- B. The church in the Lord's recovery is built up by every perfected saint.
- C. In order to build up the Body of Christ, we need to hold to truth in love and to grow up into Christ the Head in all things—v. 15.

IV. The entire Body is a builder, building through every joint of the rich supply, through the operation in the measure of each one part, and by the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love—v. 16:

- A. Ephesians 4:12-16 occupies a special place in the New Testament because it shows the mystery concerning the building up of the Body of Christ.
- B. The growth of the Body of Christ is the increase of Christ in the church, which results in the building up of the Body by the Body itself—3:17a:
 - 1. When Christ enters into the saints and lives within them, the Christ within the saints becomes the church—Col. 3:10-11.
 - 2. The Body of Christ grows by the growth of Christ within us and is built up this way—1:18; 2:19.
- C. The love in which the Body builds itself up is not our own love but the love of God in Christ, which becomes the love of Christ in us, by which we love Christ and the fellow members of His Body—1 John 4:7-8, 11, 16, 19; Rom. 5:5; 8:39:

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1. Love is the inner substance of God; when we enter into God's inner substance, we enjoy God as love and enjoy His presence in the sweetness of the divine love, and thereby love others as Christ did—Eph. 5:25.
2. It is in such a love that we hold to truth, that is, to Christ with His Body, and are kept from being influenced by the winds of teaching and from bringing in elements that are foreign to the Body—4:14-15.

V. Christ makes His home in the hearts of the saints by strengthening them with power through the Spirit into their inner man unto the fullness of the Triune God for His expression—3:14-19:

- A. The church is the Divine Being wrought into human beings—vv. 17a, 21.
- B. The key to the building up of the church as the Body of Christ is the inner experience of Christ as our life—v. 17a; 4:16; Col. 1:27; 3:4, 15.
- C. Christ makes His home in our hearts through the operation of the Triune God; the Father is the source, the Spirit is the means, the Son is the object and goal, and the fullness of the Triune God is the issue—Eph. 3:14, 16-17a, 19.
- D. When Christ makes His home in our hearts, we are filled with the dispensing of the unsearchable riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God for the corporate expression of the Triune God—vv. 8, 17a, 19.

VI. The Triune God builds the abodes in the Father's house through the Spirit remaining within the lovers of Christ, and the Father and the Son visit the lovers of Christ to make the mutual abode—John 14:23:

- A. The Father's house is built up by the constant visitation to the lovers of Christ of the Father and the Son with the Spirit, who indwells them, to be the mutual dwelling place of the consummated Triune God and the believers—v. 23.
- B. The Father and the Son often come to visit us to do a building work in us, making an abode which will be a mutual dwelling place for the Triune God and us; this is the building up of the Father's house through the constant visitation of the Triune God.