

THE BUILDING OF GOD

Message Ten

The Accomplishment of the Divine Building

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 3:16-17;

Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:12, 16

- I. The accomplishment of the divine building is the church in many localities as the house of God to be God's dwelling place, the holy temple in the Lord—1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16-17:**
 - A. The divine building has both a universal aspect and a local aspect—Eph. 2:21-22:
 1. The phrase *all the building* in Ephesians 2:21 denotes the universal building, the building of the church throughout the universe:
 - a. In Christ all the building is fitted together and is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.
 - b. Since the building is living (1 Pet. 2:5), it is growing; the actual building of the church as the house of God is by the believers' growth in life—Eph. 4:15-16.
 - c. In speaking of the universal building, we must distinguish such building from organization; the churches will be built together universally, but they will not be universally organized—2:21.
 2. The words *you also* in Ephesians 2:22 indicate that the building in verse 21 is universal, but the building in verse 22 is local:
 - a. Universally, the church is uniquely one and is growing into a holy temple; locally, the church in a particular locality also is one, and the local saints are being built together into a dwelling place of God in their particular locality.
 - b. Universal building can be accomplished only through local building—1 Cor. 14:4-5, 12.
 - B. The building of God is not an ordinary building; it is the sanctuary of the holy God, the temple in which the Spirit of God dwells—3:16-17:
 1. The unique spiritual temple of God in the universe has its expression in many localities on earth; each expression is the temple of God in that locality—1:2; 3:16.

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2. The temple of God in verse 16 refers to the believers collectively in a certain locality—1:2.
 3. The temple of God in 3:17 refers to all the believers universally—Eph. 2:21.
- C. How much building we have universally and locally depends on how much we realize that Christ is everything in God's economy—Col. 3:10-11:
1. Christ is the all-inclusive One, and we should not hold on to anything in place of Him—1:18; 2:19; 1 Cor. 1:30; 3:11.
 2. If we hold to Christ as everything to us, we will experience the genuine building, first locally and then universally—Eph. 3:8; 1:22-23; 2:21-22.

II. The accomplishment of the divine building is the Body of Christ in the whole universe as the expression of Christ—1:23:

- A. The Lord's recovery is for the building up of the Body of Christ—4:16:
1. All the churches are one Body, and the co-workers should be doing not a regional work but a universal work for the universal Body—vv. 11-12.
 2. Whatever the co-workers and elders do locally or universally should be done with a full realization that they are building up the Body of Christ; thus, they should always keep a view of the Body—v. 16:
 - a. All the problems of the church today are due to the ignorance concerning the Body of Christ—1:17-23; 1 Cor. 12:24b-27.
 - b. Whenever we do something, we should have a proper consideration for the Body—Rom. 12:4-5, 15.
 3. In fact, all the believers in Christ have been baptized into one Body by the Spirit; in practicality, all the believers must be built together into the Body of Christ by the builders of the divine building throughout the age of the New Testament—1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:11-12.

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- B. Our work is the work of the Lord's recovery for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10; Eph. 4:12:
 - 1. The Body of Christ is organic, and it is not built up through natural methods or human work—vv. 15-16.
 - 2. "Whenever God's children see the oneness of the Body, they will also see the oneness of the work, and they will be delivered out of individualistic work into the work of the Body" (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 37, p. 244).
- C. The Body is universally one; for this reason the local churches should not be isolated from one another—Col. 4:14-16; Rev. 1:11; 2:1, 7a; 22:16a:
 - 1. Isolation is contrary to the truth concerning the oneness of the Body; because each local church is part of the Body universally, no church should be isolated from others—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27; Eph. 4:4.
 - 2. Because the Body is receiving a continual transfusion, to be isolated is to be cut off both from the transfusion and from the circulation of life in the Body; such a thing violates the law of the Body—1:22-23; 1 Cor. 10:16-17.
- D. The Body of Christ is the goal of God's economy, and the local churches are the procedure that God takes to accomplish the building up of the Body of Christ—Matt. 16:18; 18:17; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; 1:2; Rom. 12:4-5; 16:1, 3-5, 16b:
 - 1. We need to be in the local churches so that we can be ushered into the reality of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:12-13, 27.
 - 2. We should pay more attention to the Body of Christ than to the local churches—Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:4, 12, 16.
 - 3. In the Lord's recovery we are building up the local churches for the building up of the Body of Christ, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem—1 Cor. 14:4-5, 12; 12:27; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:16; Rev. 21:2.

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4. For the building up of the Body of Christ, there should be as much blending of all the local churches as practicality allows, without boundaries of states or nations—1 Cor. 12:27.
- E. The Lord Jesus has an urgent need for the Body to be expressed in the local churches; unless there is a substantial expression of the Body of Christ on earth, the Lord Jesus will not return—Matt. 16:18, 27; Eph. 5:23, 27; Rev. 19:7.