

GOD'S HOUSE AND OUR HOUSE

Message One

Our Vision Is the Building Up of God's House

Isaiah 66:1-2 Thus says Jehovah, / Heaven is My throne, / And the earth the footstool for My feet. / Where then is the house that you will build for Me, / And where is the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, / And so all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.

Matthew 16:16-18 And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in the heavens. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Ephesians 2:20-22 Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone; In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

1 Peter 2:4-5 Coming to Him, a living stone, rejected by men but with God chosen and precious, You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (See notes 4¹ and 5⁷)

I. The central thought of the entire Bible is life and building

- A. "Life is the Triune God embodied in Christ and realized as the Spirit dispensing Himself into us for our enjoyment"
- B. "Building is the church, the Body of Christ, God's spiritual house, as the enlargement and expansion of God for the corporate expression of God"
- C. The ultimate consummation of life and building is the New Jerusalem
[See note 1 in Genesis 2:12]

II. God's goal is to have a spiritual house built up with living stones

- A. Christ Himself is a living stone for building up God's house; He is both the foundation stone and the cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6-7)
- B. We also are living stones as the duplication of Christ through regeneration and transformation, for the building up of God's spiritual house as His dwelling place
- C. The Spiritual house is also a holy priesthood, a coordinated body of priests, for His service

III. "Coming to Him" is the way:

- A. We are born through regeneration and grow in the divine life through the milk of the word
- B. We experience Christ as the stone living in us and are transformed into living stones
- C. We are built together with others as a spiritual house upon Him as both the foundation and the cornerstone, and formed into a holy priesthood for His corporate service in coordination

References:

Crystallization-Study of 1 and 2 Peter and Jude, Message 5 Outline, I. A. and II. Life-Study of 1 Peter, Message Eighteen

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Message Two

Our Marriage Is for God's House

I. The man created by God was a corporate man, a couple, after God's kind

Genesis 1:26–27 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion . . . And God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

- A. The corporate man was created by God in His image to express God—Genesis 1:26
- B. The corporate man was created by God with His dominion to represent God on the earth to deal with God's enemy and to recover the earth—Genesis 1:26, 28; cf. Matthew 6:10

(Life-Study of Genesis, Message 6, pp. 65 ff., Message 7, pp. 77 ff.)

II. Adam was created and charged to bear responsibility to cooperate with God

Genesis 2:15 And Jehovah God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.

- A. To work the ground in the garden is for the growth and increase of life, especially the tree of life
- B. To keep (*guard*) the ground is to exercise God's authority leaving no opening for Satan
(Life-Study of Genesis, Message 14, p. 179)

III. To bear this responsibility man must take God as life by eating the tree of life

Genesis 2:9, 16 And out of the ground Jehovah God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, as well as the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, of it you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

IV. To bear this responsibility God said that it was not good for the man to be alone

Genesis 2:18 And Jehovah God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper as his counterpart.

- A. A man alone is incomplete in his being and in his ability to bear responsibility for God
- B. A man needs one prepared by God as both a complement and a helper

(Life-Study of Genesis, Witness Lee, Message 17, pp. 216–217)

V. Among all the living creatures, Adam could not find any to be a helper as his counterpart—Genesis 2:19–20

- A. The living creatures did not have the same life and nature as Adam
- B. The living creatures could not have the same purpose and living as Adam

VI. God must act to provide a proper wife for Adam—Gen. 2:21–25

- A. God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam
- B. While Adam slept, God prepared Eve to match him
- C. God brought Eve to Adam and when he awoke and saw Eve he said, *"this time this is bone of my bones / and flesh of my flesh"*—Genesis 2:23a
- D. When Adam and Eve were joined they became one flesh and they were not ashamed

E. A man must leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife

(Life-Study of Genesis; Message 17, pp. 218 ff.)

VII. God blessed the marriage of Adam and Eve for His purpose on the earth

Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

VIII. Marriage is a type of the union between Christ and the church—Ephesians 5:31–32

IX. Marriage is the consummation of both the old creation and the new creation—Genesis 1:26–28, 31; Revelation 19:7–9; 21:1–2; 22:17a

X. Some divine principles of marriage

A. Love—with the same love which Christ had for the church—Ephesians 5:25

B. Oneness—prepared by God for each other and brought together by God to be one—Genesis 2:22, 24;

C. Receiving grace—being “fellow heirs of the grace of life,” inheriting the grace of life together—1 Peter 3:7

D. A holy covenant—“Jehovah has been the witness between you and the wife of your youth, . . . she is your companion and your wife of covenant.”—Malachi 2:14

E. Serving together in the church life—“joined” and “yoked” together

Matthew 19:5–6 And said, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh”? So then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has yoked together, let man not separate.

References:

*Messages for Building Up New Believers, Vol. 2, Chapters 30 & 32, Watchman Nee
Life-Study of Genesis, Messages 6, 7, 14, 17, Witness Lee*

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Message Three

Our Children Are for God's House

I. God's blessing includes to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with "God's kind"

Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them; and God said to them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, . . .

II. Our children are given to us by God

A. Eve—Genesis 4:1 . . . *I have acquired a man, (with the help of) Jehovah. [Cain]*

B. Jacob—Genesis 33:5 . . . *Who are these with you? And he said, The children whom God has graciously given your servant. [children of four wives]*

C. Joseph—Genesis 48:9 *And Joseph said to his father, They are my sons, whom God has given to me here. [in Egypt]*

D. Solomon—Psalm 127:3 *Behold, children are the heritage of Jehovah, / The fruit of the womb a reward.*

III. Our children have the promise of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit

Acts 2:38–40 And Peter said to them, Repent and each one of you be baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God calls to Himself. And with many other words he solemnly testified and exhorted them, saying, Be saved from this crooked generation.

IV. Our children have the promise of God as life

Deuteronomy 30:19–20 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life that you and your seed may live, In loving Jehovah your God by listening to His voice and holding fast to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, that you may dwell upon the land which Jehovah swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

V. Our children are sanctified, the holy seed

1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the brother; otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

*Ezra 9:2m the **holy seed** have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands*

VI. Our children are the seed of God, the godly seed

Malachi 2:14–15 Because Jehovah has been the witness between you and the wife of your youth, . . . she is your companion and your wife of covenant. But did He not make them one? . . . And why the one? He sought the seed of God. Take heed then to your spirit . . .

VII. As our children are "the seed of God," we are responsible for them before God

A. We must believe that the promised blessing of God's full salvation is "to you and to your children" and that our children are chosen and sanctified—Acts 2:38–39; 1 Cor. 7:14

B. We must raise the children "from a babe" with the scriptures making them wise unto salvation

2 Timothy 3:14–15 But you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from which ones you have learned them and that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- C. We must train them in the way of the Lord

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.

- D. We must nurture them as a nursing mother and an exhorting father, teaching them and infusing them continually by the speaking of faith with God's word

1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11 But we were gentle in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. . . . Just as you know how we were to each one of you, as a father to his own children, exhorting you and consoling you and testifying,

2 Timothy 1:5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you.

Deuteronomy 6: 5-7 5 And you shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words, which I command you today, shall be upon your heart; 7 And you shall impress them upon your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you journey on the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.

VIII. We must be faithful stewards to preserve our children for His purpose

1 Corinthians 4:2 Here, furthermore, it is sought in stewards that one be found faithful.

- A. We must bring the children to the Lord and not hinder them so that He can receive them and bless them

Mark 10:13-14, 16 And they brought little children to Him so that He might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus, seeing it, was indignant and said to them, Allow the little children to come to Me. Do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . And taking them into His arms, He fervently blessed them, laying His hands on them.

- B. To care for a child in the Lord's name is to care for the Lord Himself

Matthew 18:5 And whoever receives one such little child because of My name, receives Me.

- C. To stumble a little one is to receive judgment

Matthew 18:6, 10 And whoever stumbles one of these little ones who believe in Me, it is more profitable for him that a great millstone be hung around his neck and he be drowned in the open sea. . . . See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in the heavens continually behold the face of my Father who is in the heavens.

- D. We must give the proper food at the proper time for their body, soul, and spirit

Matthew 24:45-46 Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

IX. Our stewardship is to the Lord

- A. The Lord gives the children to us

- B. Then we must give our children to the Lord, consecrating them to Him from their birth for His purpose in His economy

- C. After we give our children to Him, the Lord entrusts them to us to raise them up for His purpose

- D. After raising them up we must release our children back to the Lord for His purpose

- E. When the Lord comes, we must render an account to Him for our stewardship

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Message Four

Our Consecration for God's House

I. The unit of God's salvation is the household

- A. Noah—Genesis 7:1 *Then Jehovah said to Noah, Come into the ark, you and all your household*
- B. Israel: Exodus 12:3 *Speak to all the assembly of Israel, saying, On the tenth of this month each man shall take a lamb according to his fathers' house, a lamb for a household.*
- C. Rahab: Joshua 6:17b *Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in her house, because she hid the messengers we sent.*
- D. Zaccheus: Luke 19:9 *And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house*
- E. Cornelius: Acts 11:14 *Who will speak words to you by which you shall be saved, you and all your house.*
- F. Lydia: Acts 16:15a *And when she was baptized, as well as her household*
- G. Philippian Jailer: Acts 16:31 *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.*

II. The deliverance from Egypt included all ages

Exodus 10:9 And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old; we will go with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds, for we must hold Jehovah's feast.

III. The numbering of Israel for service in God's house included all ages

- A. From one month old and upward to keep the charge of the sanctuary—Numbers 3:28
- B. From 20 years old, those able to go forth to war—Numbers 1:3
- C. From 30 to 50 years old to do the work of the tent of meeting directly —Numbers 4:3
- D. Some from 25 years old to be trained in the work of the tent of meeting—Numbers 8:24
- E. Over 50 years old to cease the active service in the work of the tent of meeting but to minister to their brethren and to keep the charge of the sanctuary—Numbers 8:25–26
- F. Eleazar, the son of Aaron had the oversight of those (from one month old and upward) who keep the charge of the sanctuary—Numbers 3:32

IV. The encampment of Israel was by households centered on God's house

Numbers 2:2 The children of Israel shall encamp each by his own standard with the ensigns of their fathers' households; they shall encamp facing the Tent of Meeting on every side.

Exodus 33:8, 10 And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up and stand, every man at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses, until he entered the tent. . . . When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, every man at the entrance of his tent.

VI. The need of the head of each household to make a declaration

Joshua 24:15 . . . choose for yourselves today whom you will serve, . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

References:

Messages for Building Up New Believers, Vol. 2, Chapter 20, Watchman Nee
All Ages for the Lord's Testimony, Witness Lee