

2023 Metroplex Blending Conference

Message One

The Crystallization Study of First and Second Chronicles,
Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, Message 3:

The Rebuilding of the Altar of God— the Altar of Burnt Offering

Scripture: Ezra 3:2-3; Jn. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:14; Eph. 5:2; Lev. 6:9; Num. 28:2

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Conference Overview

- I. The depth and quality of the intrinsic, eternally envisioned, personal and affectionate life with the Lord that must characterize God's final recovery work is seen in the experiences of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.**
 - A. Ezra both personifies and records the foreshadow of this personal and affectionate life with the Lord in his account regarding the rebuilding firstly of God's altar and thereafter of God's house.
 - B. Nehemiah both personifies and records the foreshadow of this personal and affectionate life with the Lord in his account regarding the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem.
 - C. Esther enriches the foreshadow of this personal and affectionate life with the Lord through the implications involved in God being One who hides Himself, and in the magnificent account of His hidden operation in His sovereignty on behalf of His people, personally and corporately.
- II. Conference message 1:**
 - A. The books of 1, 2 Chronicles highlight our opportunity to live in dynamic, unbroken experiential union with the Lord as brought forth through the account of the most notable of the kings of Judah.
 - B. The book of Ezra highlights our opportunity to live in dynamic, unbroken experiential union with the Lord as seen in the recovery of the altar of burnt offering, which was "set upon its bases," with the morning and evening burnt offerings presented upon it to become the very context of their living, with the realization that everything around us opposes our doing so— 3:2b-3.
 - C. Ezra's mentioning first the altar of burnt offering indicates that a believer's experience of Christ as the One absolute for God brings forth the temple (the church) as the house of God, with the believers' enjoyment of His presence as the distinctive feature of their living.
- III. Conference message 2:**
 - A. The book of Nehemiah highlights our opportunity to live in dynamic, unbroken experiential union with the Lord as seen in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and in the reconstitution of the nation through God's Word.

Message Three (continuation)

- B. This book indicates that a believer's enlarging experience of Christ as life for the temple as the house of God culminates in the enjoyment of Him as their Head, bringing them into the experience of the church as the city, the kingdom of God.

IV. Conference message 3:

- A. The book of Esther highlights our opportunity to live in dynamic, unbroken experiential union with the Lord as the hiding God, enabling Him, as the Son of Man, to return to "find faith on the earth."
- B. This book indicates that as His lovers enjoy Him as their Head, their King and their Husband in the church as the city, the kingdom of God, He as the otherwise hidden God is manifested to them amid a routine, yet perhaps increasingly challenged daily living, bringing them fully into His *parousia*, and enabling Him (Luke 18:8) to come for them, finding "faith on the earth."

CONFERENCE MESSAGE 1

1. The New Testament imperative that we live Christ is foreseen in the contrasting historic accounts in 1, 2 Kings and 1, 2 Chronicles.
2. To live Christ in dynamic, unbroken experiential union with Him enlarges His own fulfillment of the altar of burnt offering and of the offerings themselves.
3. It is not until we begin to experience of Christ as the reality of altar of the burnt offering that we participate in the recovery of the church as the house of God and begin the church life, a life in Jerusalem that is absolutely for His interests—Ezra 1:2-3, 5, 3:2-3. — (I, A, 1, 2)
4. For such a living, God gives us one person—Christ, and one way— the cross; the cross as signified by the altar of burnt offering is the base, the ground, of all spiritual experiences. — (I, B, 1, 2)
5. Through the cross we need to become nothing, to have nothing, and to be able to do nothing; otherwise, what we are, what we have, and what we can do will become a substitute for Christ—1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23. — (I, B, 2, c)
6. The burnt offering typifies Christ not only in His living a life that is perfect and absolute for God but also in His being the life that enables God's people to have such a living—John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:18; 8:29; 14:24; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:19-21.— (II, A, 1, 2)
7. The burnt offering is Christ Himself, and we are one with Him; thus, the burnt offering is also our oneness with Christ—1 Cor. 6:17.—(II, A, 3)
8. The Hebrew word translated "burnt offering" literally means "that which goes up" and denotes something that is ascending to God; this ascending refers to Christ; the only thing that can ascend to God from the earth is the life lived by Christ, for He is the unique person to live a life that is absolutely for God—Lev. 1:3, 10, 14; John 6:38. — (II, C, 1)
9. By laying our hands on Christ as the burnt offering, we are joined to Him; as Christ lives in us, He repeats in us the life He lived on the earth, the life of the burnt offering—Lev. 1:4; 1 Cor. 6:17; Gal. 2:20. — (II, C, 2, 3)
10. In Leviticus the first offering that is mentioned is not the sin offering or the trespass offering but the burnt offering; we need Christ first as our burnt offering because our first situation before God, our first problem related to God, is not a matter of trespasses but of not being for God—1:3. — (III, A)

Message Three (continuation)

11. We need to realize that we are not absolutely for God and that of ourselves we cannot be absolute; therefore, we need to take Christ as our burnt offering—Lev. 1:3-4. — (III, C)
12. The daily burnt offering in the Old Testament typifies that, in the New Testament, we who belong to God should offer ourselves daily to God—Num. 28:3-8 (cf. Ezek. 46:13b; LS Ezekiel (25): 299) — (IV B).
13. Today, in our Christian life and church life, there is the need for the continual burnt offering—Lev. 1:3-4, 8-9; 6:9, 12a, 13; Rom. 12:1. — (IV, C)
14. When we worship the Father with Christ as the reality of the burnt offering, a fragrance well pleasing to God will ascend to Him for His satisfaction; He will render His sweet acceptance to us; this is the significance of the burnt offering—Lev. 1:9; John 4:23-24; Num. 28:2. — (V, A, B, 1, 2)

Message Three (continuation)

Message Three

**The Rebuilding of the Altar of God—
the Altar of Burnt Offering**

Scripture Reading: Lev. 1:3-11, 13-14, 17; 6:9, 12a, 13; Num. 28:2;
Ezra 1:2-3, 5; 3:2-3, 6a; Psa. 43:4a; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 12:1

I. "They built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings upon it, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God"—Ezra 3:2b:

- A. For the recovery of the house we need the recovery of the altar—1:2-3, 5; 3:2-3:
1. The first thing to be recovered for the church life is the altar—Rom. 12:1:
 - a. **Before** we can have the church life, we must put everything on the altar—Psa. 43:4a.
 - b. We must put all that we have, all that we are, and all that we can do on the altar for God's satisfaction; this is the start of the church life.
 2. The problem is that we have come back from Babylon to Jerusalem, yet at Jerusalem we may still keep many things for our own interests; we may not offer everything on the altar for God's interests and for God's satisfaction—Rom. 12:1:
 - a. We should not come back to Jerusalem yet maintain our life as it was in Babylon.
 - b. The life in Jerusalem must be absolutely for the Lord's interests.
- B. The altar of burnt offering typifies the cross of Christ—Exo. 27:1; 40:6; Heb. 13:10:
1. In His economy God gives us one person-Christ-and one way-the cross—1 Cor. 2:2:
 - a. The cross is the center of God's operation in His economy—Gal. 1:4; 2:19-21; 3:1, 13; 5:24; 6:14.
 - b. God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross—Col. 1:20-22; 2:11-15.
 2. The cross is the base, the ground, of all spiritual experiences; all spiritual experience begins from the cross—Gal. 2:20; 6:14; 1 Cor. 2:2:
 - a. In order to progress spiritually, we need to pass through the cross daily—Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Luke 14:27.
 - b. If we want to have a proper church life, we need to experience the cross—Eph. 2:14-16.
 - c. Through the cross we need to become nothing, to have nothing, and to be able to do nothing; otherwise, what we are, what we have, and what we can do will become a substitute for Christ—1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23.

II. "They began to offer up burnt offerings to Jehovah"—Ezra 3:6a:

- A. The burnt offering signifies Christ's being absolute for God's satisfaction—Lev. 1:3-9:
1. The burnt offering, which was wholly for God's satisfaction, typifies Christ as God's pleasure and satisfaction—Eph. 5:2.
 2. The burnt offering typifies Christ not only in His living a life that is perfect and absolute for God but also in His being the life that enables God's people to have such a living—John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:18; 8:29; 14:24; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:19-21.
 3. The burnt offering is Christ Himself, and we are one with Him; thus, the burnt offering is also our oneness with Christ—1 Cor. 6:17.
- B. The burnt offering is for God's food that God may enjoy it and be satisfied—Num. 28:2:

Message Three (continuation)

1. Although God is almighty, He cannot provide Himself something to eat; His food must come from His people—v. 2.
 2. Christ is God's food, but He is not God's food in a direct way; rather, Christ is God's food served to God by us.
- C. The Hebrew word translated "burnt offering" literally means "that which goes up" and denotes something that is ascending to God; this ascending refers to Christ—Lev. 1:3, 10, 14:
1. The only thing that can ascend to God from the earth is the life lived by Christ, for He is the unique person to live a life that is absolutely for God—John 6:38:
 - a. Christ as our burnt offering is completely for God, absolutely for God—4:34; 5:30; Heb. 10:8-10.
 - b. Whatever the Lord Jesus was, whatever He spoke, and whatever He did was absolutely for God—John 6:38; 5:17, 36, 45; 8:28; 10:25; 12:49-50.
 2. By laying our hands on Christ as the burnt offering, we are joined to Him—Lev. 1:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 3. As Christ lives in us, He repeats in us the life He lived on the earth, the life of the burnt offering—Gal. 2:20.
- D. The burnt offering is "a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah"—Lev. 1:9, 13, 17:
1. The Hebrew words translated "satisfying fragrance" literally mean "savor of rest or satisfaction"—v. 9.
 2. The satisfying fragrance is a savor that brings satisfaction, peace, and rest; such a satisfying fragrance is an enjoyment to God.
 3. Because Christ lived a life that was absolutely for God's satisfaction, His living was a satisfying fragrance, a sweet savor ascending to God for His pleasure and satisfaction—Eph. 5:2.

III. In Leviticus the first offering that is mentioned is not the sin offering or the trespass offering but the burnt offering—1:3:

- A. We need Christ first as our burnt offering because our first situation before God, our first problem related to God, is not a matter of trespasses but of not being for God:
1. God created us to be His expression and His representation—Gen. 1:26.
 2. God created us that we might be for Him; He did not create us for ourselves, but as fallen human beings, we live for ourselves, not for Him.
- B. The burnt offering means that as those who were created by God for the purpose of expressing and representing Him, we should be for nothing other than God—vv. 27-28; cf. Psa. 73:25; Mark 12:30.
- C. We need to realize that we are not absolutely for God and that of ourselves we cannot be absolute; therefore, we need to take Christ as our burnt offering—Lev. 1:3-4.

IV. To live a life of the continual burnt offering is to be a living sacrifice—Rom. 12:1:

- A. The burnt offering is a type of our consecration, of our offering ourselves to God as a living sacrifice; the meaning of consecration is to offer ourselves to God as a living sacrifice—Lev. 1:3-4, 8-9; 6:9, 12a, 13; Rom. 12:1.
- B. The daily burnt offering in the Old Testament typifies that, in the New Testament, we who belong to God should offer ourselves daily to God—Num. 28:3-8.
- C. Today, in our Christian life and church life, there is the need for the continual burnt offering—Lev. 1:3-4, 8-9; 6:9, 12a, 13.

- V. We need to worship God the Father with Christ as the burnt offering for God's satisfaction to fulfill His desire—1:3, 9b; Num. 28:2; John 4:23-24:**
- A. God wants us to worship Him with Christ as the reality of all the offerings; the offerings are for pleasing God and making Him happy—vv. 23-24.
 - B. Proper worship is a matter of satisfying God with Christ as the burnt offering—1 Pet. 2:5; John 4:34; 5:30; 8:29:
 - 1. When we worship the Father with Christ as the reality of the burnt offering, a fragrance well pleasing to God will ascend to Him for His satisfaction—Lev. 1:9; John 4:23-24.
 - 2. Since God is satisfied with our offering to Him Christ as the reality of the burnt offering, He will render His sweet acceptance to us; this is the significance of the burnt offering—Num. 28:2.