

## BEING PREPARED BY UNDERSTANDING GOD'S GOALS

*Zechariah 4:1-10—And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have seen, and behold, a candlestick all of gold, with its bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon; there are seven pipes to each of the lamps, which are upon the top thereof; and two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. And I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angels that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of Grace, grace, unto it. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? For these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel; these are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.*

*Psalms 87:1-7—His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon as among them that know me; behold, Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia: This one was born there. Yea, of Zion it shall be said, This one and that one was born in her; and the Most High himself will establish her. The Lord will count, when he writeth up the peoples, This one was born there. They that sing as well as they that dance shall say, All my springs are in thee.*

*Ephesians 2:20-22—Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a home of God in the Spirit.*

*Hebrew 10:19-25—Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhort one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh.*

Shall we have a further word of prayer:

*Beloved Lord, we are so thankful that we are once again in Your presence through these times that You have been speaking to us. We are so thankful, Lord, it is always a miracle when we hear Your voice. And we are thankful that You want to reach us. We know that we are living in very difficult and growingly dark days, and we need You, Lord, as all around us is paganized and in many ways demonized. We need You as never before. Lord, we are so thankful You are faithful to Your promise that You are with us and will be with us right through to Your coming. Now Lord, we commit the speaking of Your Word to You. We know we need that anointing and we ask for a double portion for this time. Help us Lord, that beyond the human voice we shall hear Your voice. Give us an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Lord, we ask You again, let the hearing of Your Word be also anointed that your purpose in our time together might be fulfilled. And we ask it in the name of our Messiah the Lord Jesus. Amen.*

The theme of this conference is being prepared for the Lord's coming, and it is centered around those verses in Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly;" again in 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come," and "And he that heareth, let him say, Come."

### **The Word of God**

My responsibility in this time is to do with the individual's response. I have spoken about the Word of God. The Word of God does not just *contain* the Word of God; it *is* the Word of God. It is not just some counsel of the Lord; it is the whole counsel of the Lord. We need as never before in these days when a colossal assault is being made upon the authenticity, the inspiration, and the relevance of God's Word to be those in whom the Word is found. We need to be those in whom the Word of Christ is dwelling. As the apostle James said, "We should have the implanted Word." That is much more than just reading a Scripture quickly and it goes in one ear and out the other. It is to dwell in us; it is to be implanted in us; it is to grow and be rooted in us. We need the Word of God as never before.

### **A Living Sacrifice**

We have considered this matter of presenting our bodies a living sacrifice which is our spiritually intelligent worship and service. There is no other way to be prepared for the coming of the Lord. If we are listless, lifeless, not really very interested and, in fact, in many cases afraid of the coming of the Lord and even wishing He would put it off, we will be unprepared for His coming. Things are going to get so difficult that all of us will long for the coming of the Lord. And it is already started.

When I was saved over seventy years ago, we used to hear missionaries who came to speak to us, say, "You have no idea in your country (at that time it was Great Britain) the openness above you. You are not only able to pray and read the Bible, but there is the sense of an open heaven above you. We come from countries—speaking of Asia and Africa in particular—in which we have to wrestle right through because of the heaviness and darkness in the

atmosphere. We have to persevere to come through in prayer and intercession and even worship and praise.” The paganization of these Western nations is bringing that same heaviness and darkness into the atmosphere. Wherever I go, believers tell me that they are finding it so much more difficult now to pray and intercede as if somehow there are forces that have been released to smother us, to strangle us, to silence us.

I love that hymn of Margaret Barber’s, “I Dare Not Be Defeated”; she was a lady, but she was also a real soldier of the Lord Jesus. It is a wonderful thing to sing: “A victor a victor.” Just at the time of the setting of the sun, we are not going to collapse. We are going to go right through and see the fulfillment of the purpose of God by the Holy Spirit that is given to us.

### **What Is God’s Goal?**

I want to share one further matter that is absolutely essential if you and I are to be prepared for the coming of the Lord. If there should be within our hearts a cry, “Come, Lord Jesus,” I believe that we absolutely need an understanding of God’s purpose and aim. So many believers have no idea as to what God is driving at. They just say, “We are saved, we are converted, we read our little portion every day, we have a few minutes of prayer before we go to work or school, we go to meetings which are sometimes boring and sometimes lively, and we go to prayer meetings which are nearly always boring. And we wonder what kind of life is this Christian life.

It is because we do not understand what God is driving at. We do not understand what His goal is. God is not aimless. It is not as if He has no goal. Why did He persevere with us when we fell? I have often thought: why didn’t He create a new Adam and Eve? Wouldn’t it have been better to start all over again? Why did He persevere with a fallen mankind? Why did He promise a coming Messiah right from the beginning in Genesis, chapter 3, and all the way through the Scriptures? When the Messiah came and lived here on this earth, died for our sins, finished the work of our salvation and was buried, on the third day He rose again, and forty days later ascended in glory to the right hand of the Father, did He not have a purpose? Is it all just a kind of sequence of events? That is why we need the Bible.

Let me say something else. We need the Holy Spirit. No one else is able to give us revelation or to pierce the gloom that is often in our brain. There is a kind of dullness, a kind of inability to hear or see the Lord that comes upon us, and we need the Holy Spirit to lift it.

### **Zechariah’s Vision of the Lampstand**

Two thousand six hundred or more years ago, a Jewish prophet had a vision. His name was Zechariah. He was one of those who had returned from Babylon. He had seen the whole destruction of the land of Jerusalem and the house of God and managed to live through it all until the Persian Emperor’s decree that was given in 536 BC. He returned to the land and with him was another prophet whose name was Haggai.

Zechariah was apparently asleep when an angel shook him. I imagine that if an angel shook you or me, we might be somewhat startled. The angel said to Zechariah as he sat up, “What do you see?” And Zechariah, who knew the Lord, said, “I see a lampstand all of gold with seven lamps and on either side of it two olive trees with branches that come to the lampstand.” Then

in Hebrew (not in English) it says, “Those branches were emptying out gold.” Your translators have added oil because they could not understand how in the world olive trees could produce gold. Tell it not in Ashkelon, publish it not in Gaza; otherwise we might have a gold rush when everyone comes rushing to see if they can get gold. Of course, there is no such thing. The fact of the matter is, this was a vision, and that gold was the same nature as the Messiah Jesus. Those branches were opening and pouring gold which became light just as the life of Jesus became the light. This is the testimony of Jesus.

### **The Remnant Returns to Build the Temple**

This vision had transformed Zechariah. He and Haggai and the faithful people of God, which was a small remnant, had returned to build the temple. Within that group was a remnant of truly faithful people, but they became so depressed and cast down. When they first came back, they built the foundation for the temple, and then they faced monstrous problems. All kinds of things came against them, and they gave up trying to do anything more. Only the foundation was laid; the walls were not built; the roof was not put on; nothing was done. This was the house of God, the temple of the living God. And these two prophets together were used by the Holy Spirit to challenge the people of God that they should rise up and believe that God was going to fulfill His purpose. In spite of insurmountable difficulties, in spite of the antagonism of the devil, the antagonism of the forces of darkness, the purpose of God was going to be fulfilled which was that the temple of the Lord should be completed, Jerusalem should be rebuilt, her walls rebuilt, and her gates hung again in their right place

### **Not By Might, Nor By Power, But By My Spirit**

Zechariah knew very well what the lampstand was. He knew it was the lampstand of the tabernacle and the temple and because there were no windows that seven-branch menorah was the only thing that gave light. However, the thing that interested him was the two olive trees. “What are these, Lord?” he said. The Lord said to him, “This is the word to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit.” Does that sink in? Listen again: “Not by might [the word in Hebrew is armies], nor by power [ability], but by My Spirit. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel, thou shalt become a plain.”

Is there any difference between a flat plain and a huge mountain? There is an enormous difference; a great difficulty is removed. “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit is the Supervisor of all the work of God. Everything in this world, even you and me, originated with the Father. It was *through* the Son that it was all brought into being and *for* the Son. But it was the Holy Spirit who watched over the performance and fulfillment of the work.

### **The Work of the Holy Spirit**

For instance, in the very first verses of Genesis, chapter 1, we are told: “In the beginning God created ... It was formless and void ... and the Spirit brooded.” It uses a most amazing word in Hebrew of an eagle or a bird of prey sitting and brooding. It was looking for a perch or a place

to rest, but it could find nothing. It was that Spirit that supervised the work of God. Every time “God said,” the Holy Spirit made sure it became fact.

Who brought the Lord Jesus into this world? It originated with the Father, and it was the Son, but it was the Holy Spirit who conceived the Son in the womb of Mary. Who was it that enabled Jesus to offer Himself on the cross for our sins in the moment of desolation and unutterable agony? It was the everlasting Spirit. Who raised Jesus from the dead on the third day? It was the Holy Spirit. What happened on the Jewish festival Shavuot fifty days after the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord? The risen, glorified Messiah took the promise of the Spirit and poured Him out upon one hundred and twenty human beings, all Jews, in an upper room. That moment something happened in history that had never happened before. The God of glory had again and again filled the temple so that no one could stand or minister. But never before had the Holy Spirit come into one hundred and twenty human beings and joined them to a Savior, Head, and King at the right hand of God. It was a totally new beginning. It was the beginning of the spiritual house of God. Those one hundred and twenty became members of the Lord Jesus and members one of another.

### **The Early Church Empowered By the Holy Spirit**

The New Testament uses a picture that is nowhere else found in the Bible: head and body, the church. Jesus is the Head; the body is His and it is the church. It is an organism, not an organization. It has organization, but principally it is a spiritual organism. These one hundred and twenty people were suddenly made one with the Head at the right hand of God. While they heard Him and obeyed Him, they turned the whole of Jerusalem upside down, and while they continued to hear Him and obey Him the whole of Judea and Samaria were turned upside down. In the end, the Holy Spirit entered into the Gentiles—all those Gentile Roman officers who came together in Caesura in a drawing room to hear Peter and suddenly the Holy Spirit fell upon them. And they spoke, of all things, in tongues and Peter was nearly roasted by the folks back in Jerusalem. They said, “What in the world have you done? Did you give them an invitation? Did you make an appeal?” He said, “No, no, I was rehearsing what happened with the Messiah and suddenly while I was speaking, I noticed that the whole crowd of Gentile officers were not listening to me.” Suddenly they began to speak and glorify God; they had been saved. And Peter said, “What could I do? I did not ask them; I did not make any appeal. God sovereignly did something.” It was the Holy Spirit.

I have already said that you cannot live the Christian life if you are not ready to die. Once you let go and die, the Christian life blossoms. You do not have to prod it or push it; it just happens. It is the power of His resurrection life. It begins with a death and your identification with Him. Then the Christian life begins to blossom and you bear fruit.

God longed for a home. In one sense, He was homeless. He longed for a dwelling place, and in the Old Covenant, that was the temple. That is why everything was centered in the temple. The two books of Chronicles, and the two books of Kings are all to do with God’s relationship to the temple and the Word of God.

### **The Lampstand Represents the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus**

It is very interesting that when Zechariah, Haggai, Zerubbabel, and Joshua, the High Priest and all the other faithful ones were so depressed and so pushed down, with no way through that the Lord showed Zechariah the lampstand all of gold. He immediately understood that God was choosing the lampstand to represent everything else in the temple and the tabernacle. He did not choose the showbread table, nor the golden altar of incense, nor the burnt offering, nor the golden laver nor even the Ark of the Covenant, as tremendous as all these were. He chose the seven-branched lampstand. It is almost as if God was saying, "I am choosing this to represent the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. That is what the lampstand represents. It is the only light in the tabernacle and temple. That is the Word of God. Of course, the Messiah had not yet come. He was promised; the lion was there from Judah through David. It was all there in place, but He had not come. Nevertheless, it is still the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

### **John Saw the Lampstand in a Vision**

When John had his vision in a forced labor camp in a copper mine in Patmos, Greece, he said, "I am in Patmos for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus." Within a very short time God gave him his first enormous revelation. He saw the Lord high and lifted up; He saw the risen Messiah glorified, and then he saw seven golden lampstands all around Him. It was the same lampstand that Zechariah had seen, only this time it did not represent the old temple; it represented the church—not what so many of us have come to understand as the church, but what God means by the word "church". Then he heard the Lord Jesus speak a message to every one of those seven churches, and it ends always in the same way: "To him who overcomes ... he that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church."

Dear family of God, we have sometimes to repent. We should be clear on these things. But even those of us who are in fellowships or assemblies that have some understanding about the church, there is a listlessness, a heaviness, a slowness of moving, an inability to really understand the battle that we are in, and the colossal and strategic need of intercession. But how can we become intercessors when instead of being spiritually mature adults, we are little children, we are babies, we need to be rocked, we need little comforters, things to play with. Where are the soldiers of the Lord Jesus? Where are the overcomers? Where are those with clear vision of what God is aiming at?

### **The Place He Causes His Name to Dwell**

Why did He declare from the beginning that great cry: "You shall not offer your offerings or give your gifts anywhere that you shall choose but in the place where I will cause My name to dwell"? That in itself is an extraordinary statement. What does it mean "the place that I have caused My name to dwell"? Of course, it was Jerusalem. Names in Scripture mean so much. Isaac is laughter; Joseph is addition; David is beloved; Daniel is judgment of God; Samuel is heard of God. It is as if God is saying, "This place that I choose where my house shall be built is the place where I cause My name to dwell. This is where My personality is expressed. This is where My character is seen. This is where you will meet with Me and I will meet with you."

From that moment, the tabernacle and then the temple became, as it were, the heart of everything. Every king's reign was judged by his relationship to the house of God. Why was David so beloved by God? Because he said: "One thing I have desired, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple" (see Psalm 27:4). From that point it was the tabernacle and the temple.

However, the aim of the Lord is something more than a physical temple. The aim of the Lord is what happened on Pentecost when one hundred and twenty very ordinary human beings, among which were the disciples, were joined to a Head at the right hand of God, not in some distant manner but as a body that is joined to the head. If you cut off my head, my body dies instantly. The point of head and body is one organism, one whole, one living life.

### **The Fire of God Is Missing in the Church**

We are facing enormous problems. So often our meetings lack the fire of God, the passion that should be in them, and the desire to seek the Lord at all costs. I know this is dreadful for me to say, but I feel sorry for the Lord sometimes. He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst." I think sometimes He is in our midst, wondering what this is all about. These lifeless, passionless, fireless believers are mouthing words and nothing more.

When the Holy Spirit came into that one hundred and twenty, the fire of God went everywhere in Jerusalem, and the Jewish establishment did not know what to do. It turned them upside down. Within a short time, three thousand people were saved without all the normal system we have in crusades, evangelistic meetings, etc. Within a few weeks it was five thousand. A great company of priests and Levites believed. I often think it was those who were in the temple the day Jesus died and suddenly there was a sound like an earthquake. The whole place shook, and looking into the temple with horror they saw the great veil, which was seven times the length of my palm, torn in two from top to bottom. The first thing they saw was sacrilege. How could this have happened? But when they saw what happened on the day of Pentecost, they began to think: "I was there; I saw the temple's veil torn in two, and the way into the holiest place was opened." The whole of Jewish history is ebb and flow—ebb backwards, flow forwards. Every flow was the work of the Holy Spirit, and every ebb was the backsliding of the people.

### **The Ebb and Flow of the Church in World History**

But lest you start to take a kind of wrong view of Jewish history, the history of the church is exactly the same. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (see Matthew 16:18). In church history there has been an ebb and flow. The ebb has been when human hands have somehow taken hold of divine things and the purpose of God and made it human—they humanized it. The flow has been when the Holy Spirit has launched a new initiative by the Lord Jesus. Wherever you look, whether it is Montonists, Bogamils Waldenses, Reformation, Lutherans, the first great Evangelical

awakening, the Moravian revival, right up to date, every flow has been the initiative of the building of the church and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Now let us ask ourselves a question: Is the Lord going to desert us near to His coming? No. Why do you think He put in the book of Revelation that amazing cry of triumph: “Hallelujah! The Lord our God reigns and the bride has made herself ready.” But quite honestly, when I look at most believers everywhere I travel, they do not look as though they are getting themselves ready. Nevertheless, I believe that the Lord is going to launch a last initiative and the Holy Spirit will work it.

Years ago, Austin Sparks said to me when we were talking about the end: “When I was a young man in my late teens, early twenties, I was given a ticket to go to the United States. I had already become a believer, and I determined that I would go to hear three great American preachers—A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pearson, and A. B. Simpson. All of them were a blessing but A. B. Simpson was the most spiritual and greatest of them. When I went to see him, I asked if I could ask some questions. A. B. Simpson, who was incredibly gracious, told me to come and ask my questions. We had a wonderful talk, and I asked him: ‘It cannot be so long before you go to be with the Lord. What do you think about the last stage of church history before the coming of the Lord?’ A. B. Simpson thought for a moment and then said, ‘There will be a new discovery of the Person, the power, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Nothing else will carry the people of God through the last phase of world history and into the fulfillment of God’s purpose.’” I think he was right.

I also read to you Psalm 87. Don’t you think it is an extraordinary little psalm with only seven verses? And this one psalm encapsulates the whole eternal purpose of God from the beginning to the end. “His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the gates of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.”

The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Ur of the Chaldees and said to him, “Get out to a place that I will show you.” Somehow Abraham, by the Spirit of God, saw in the glory of God the city of glory. “Glorious things are spoken of thee.” Everything to do with glory is associated with the city of Jerusalem. That is why it has lasted all the way through history. Nineveh has gone; Rameses is gone, Babylon is gone; but not Jerusalem. It will not disappear until His blessed feet stand upon the Mount of Olives and He once again goes into the city. It will happen more surely than I stand here.

### **The Importance of the Foundation**

This phrase: “His foundation is in the holy mountains” (v. 1) is extraordinary. Now I do not want to criticize the Word of God, but I cannot help but wonder if the psalmist had had a nap when he wrote this. What was wrong with him? What is a foundation? Suppose I was to say to you, “Come and see my foundation,” you would think I was nuts. What is your foundation? A black piece of stone? Or maybe concrete? What is wonderful about that? What does he mean that His foundation is in the holy mountains? What he was saying was all to do with the Old Covenant and the temple. A foundation is nothing unless it is built upon. Immediately you will remember that the foundation has been laid which is Jesus the Messiah; He is the chief cornerstone. Supposing I said, “Come to Jerusalem and I will show you my home, and when you come in, you see this flat foundation. There are no walls, only one cornerstone, there is no roof,

no water, no electricity, nothing. You would say that I am nuts; something is wrong with my brain. People do not normally do this. If they say come to my home, they do not just show me the foundation. But what God was saying is this: “The foundation is there, but what about the building?”

When the remnant returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the house of God, they laid the foundation and then they had stopped building. They were so depressed, so downcast, so lifeless, so beaten by circumstances and difficult people that they just gave up. For sixteen years the foundation lay there for the house of the Lord and not a single thing was built upon it until suddenly Zechariah and Haggai began to prophesy. They fired up the people of God, at least those who were faithful, and they began to build. Within a few years they had built the whole house of God.

I think we are in somewhat of the same condition. We know the truth, we have heard it again and again, and it has been explained to us what God’s eternal purpose is, but somehow or other circumstances, problems, difficulties, relationships, and many other things have gotten in the way. How in the world can we be prepared for the coming of the Lord if the house of the Lord is not built?

### **All My Springs Are in Thee**

So this psalm is amazing, even this last little verse: “All my springs are in Thee.” It is not in worldly philosophy, not in psychiatry, or psychology, or a thousand and one other things of this world. All my springs, all my sources are in Thee. For when the house of the Lord is built, it is Christ. Everything is centered in Christ; everything is to do with Him. He is the beginning and the end. He is everything. And when the Lord Jesus becomes everything in you and in me, then somehow you and I come together. That is the house of the Lord.

### **The Top Stone Will Bring Shouts of Grace, Grace**

When the angel spoke to Zechariah, he said, “Zerubbabel’s hands began it, Zerubbabel’s hands will finish it. The top stone shall be brought forth with shouts of ‘grace, grace unto it.’” Why grace? Because most Christians would think that once you have got to the place where the top stone is going in, surely you will shout “glory, glory.” No, they say, “Grace, grace,” which means that the times will be so difficult, so unbecoming to the fulfillment of the purpose of God, that when the top stone, which is Jesus, reappears, the only thing we will be able to say is “grace, grace.” It is the grace of God that began it; it is the grace of God that has watched over it, and it is the grace of God that has completed it.

Thus when you take those seven churches and the lampstand all of gold representing each one, you suddenly realize that God is speaking to us. In the Old Testament it was the temple and the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. In the New Testament it is the body of Christ.

But where is the building? Isn’t it interesting that when Paul wrote the Ephesian letter he said, “In whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are built together as a home of God in the Spirit” (2:21-22). Fellowship.

### **Called Into the Fellowship of Jesus the Messiah**

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, which was in a total mess, he said this: “God is faithful.” That surely required some faith in the apostle: “God is faithful through whom ye have been called into the fellowship of Jesus the Messiah” (1:9). The fellowship of Jesus the Messiah is the church, the real church. It means that when the Lord Jesus saved me and became my life, He saved you and became your life which means that now there is something that binds us all together. It is the same Christ; it is the same Head. The body may have many members but only one Head. Is that not amazing? Is it not just as amazing when you begin to understand the book of Revelation? That term, the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus, is found more in this last book of the Bible than anywhere else.

So with all the problems and all the difficulties, there is something marvelous about this. It is no wonder that the writer of the Hebrew letter, whoever he might have been, said, “Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the custom of some is, and so much the more as we see that day approaching” (10:25). What did he mean? He meant we need fellowship. We need to share and build each other up. He says that we should provoke one another to love and good works. Well, I have to tell you that my experience over quite a few years and over quite a part of the world is that most churches provoke one another to criticism, backbiting and gossip. There is so little provoking of one another to love. It is all to do with not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.

### **God’s Goal Is a Marriage**

God had a purpose from the beginning. We call it the eternal purpose of God. There is a marriage in the first three chapters of the Bible, and when you come to the end of the Bible, there is another marriage. The first marriage was human; the final marriage is divine. When John wrote his gospel, it was to give an understanding of the Lord Jesus. He said that the first miracle He wrought was in a marriage in which He turned water into wine. Now I know most American Christians would not touch wine with a ten-foot pole. But the fact of the matter is that real wine is anti-septic and water is often a carrier of disease. When Jesus turned that water, which is so corruptible, into wine, He turned it into something that cannot bring disease, and He did it in a marriage. Don’t you think that is amazing? So when His whole Messianic ministry began, He chose to begin it in a marriage. Finally, at the end of the Bible, we discover this heavenly Jerusalem, who is the mother of us all, coming down out of heaven adorned as a bride for her husband. The purpose of God has been fulfilled.

Would you not want to be part of that? Is there any sacrifice too great to make to be part of that? Is there any worldliness so enormous that we cannot give it up for such an eternal weight of glory? How stupid we are if for just a few days of pleasures down here we lose the possibility of being part of that eternal city, the bride to reign with Christ!

May God bless you and may He get this word into our heart in a living way and help us to understand that it is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of host. This whole work is in very safe hands. It is in the hands of the Lord Jesus and under the supervision of the Holy Spirit. There is no way it cannot be fulfilled. Blessed be His name.