**CHRIST COMPANION BIBLE CHURCH**

**Weekly Bible Study**

***Branch: Hqtrs Date: 14/Sept/2021***

**(Study 29) ARISE AND BUILD - Part 1**

THE CHURCH AND SATANIC OPPOSITIONS

Texts: **Ezra 4:1-24.**

Memory Verse: ***...And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*** *Matthew 16:18*

 According to Matthew Henry commentary, *"We have here an instance of the old enmity that was put between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. God's temple cannot be built, but Satan will rage, and the gates of hell will fight against it. The gospel kingdom was, in like manner, to be set up with much struggling and contention. In this respect the glory of the latter house was greater than the glory of the former, and it was more a figure of the temple of Christ's church, in that Solomon built his temple when there was no adversary nor evil concurrent, (1 Kings 5:4) but this second temple was built notwithstanding great opposition, in the removing and conquering of which, and the bringing of the work to perfection at last in spite of it, the wisdom, power, and goodness of God were much glorified, and the church was encouraged to trust in him"* (Matthew Henry).

 Our Lord Jesus prophesied regarding the Church, her rise, the oppositions from the power of darkness, and the final prevalence thereof! One thing is very clear; the Church is destined to be victorious in the end. Matthew 16:18. The Church as individual, corporate and spiritual entity will experience utter hatred and oppositions from Satan that will grow in degrees, because his time is very short! This is evidently visible throughout history.

 Desperate effort from the enemy to hinder the building of the Temple by the returnee Jews from Babylonian captivity were clearly set forth in the above passage. There are lessons to learn.

1***. The first Temple built by Solomon was without opposition!*** Also, David his father made abundant provisions for it and encouraged unity of effort in love oneness and dedication. 1Chronicles 22:17-19. It was painful that Israel fail to value the great providential bestowal, as the temple represented "God in the midst" of his people! Unfortunately the temple, the golden vessels, the cloud of glory and countless blessings that come with the temple, were lost to captivity and Babylonian warlords! Why?

a. Israel took God grace for granted.

b. Israel Kings forsook God for their personal interests. Proverbs 16:12.

c. Israel failed to heed God several warnings. Jeremiah 25:4.

 Today as Christians, we must value the great provident Christ bestows through grace. Not like Adam who lost Eden which was was freely given. He joked with God commandment and lose his ground and privilege to the enemy! Genesis 3:9-11.

**2. To get back what you carelessly lost to the enemy is not always easy!** Deuteronomy 30:1-6. Israel went to captivity as result of sin and disobedience. Seventy years of perfect humbling passed. At the end Israel realised that:

(a) Zion is better than Babylon. Psalm 137:1-4.

(b) Freedom, dominion and salvation must be cherished and guided passionately. Ezra 4:9-14.

(c) Obedience under God’s guardians is better than life in the flesh and sin. 1Samuel 8:7-9.

 ***3. The enemies did everything possible to frustrate Israel freedom and attempt to build the temple again.*** Ezra 4:23,24. God on their side arose to give them victory as no forces of opposition is strong enough to defeat the program of God over Israel and the Church! They are destined to shine as light to the darkness of the world. Act 26:16-18.

 The truth is that Satan will do everything possible, use anyone or means available to frustrate your purpose, decisions and move to give your best to advance God’s Kingdom. Faith in God and unrelenting effort is your sure anchor of victory.

 ***4. Whenever the Church make progress, the Kingdom of darkness is set into chaos and confusion!*** Nehemiah 4:6-8. Satan goes into action to setup garrisons, siege and combative forces to offensively fight against the Church. Instances are:

(a) Pharaoh tyranny and genocide decision to destroy Israel growth, fortune and future. Exodus 1:7-16.

(b) Herod upon hearing that Christ was born commanded all children in Bethlehem to be murdered. This was Satan in action to frustrate God salvation plan for mankind!

Matthew 2:16.

***5. Satan always engage two principles in his fight against the Church. Every child of God must not be ignorant of these satanic devices.*** 2 Corinthians 2:11

(a) Satan would raise external enemies to trouble, persecute or oppress the Church. E.g The Philistines, Nebuchadnezzar, The high priest and Sadducees Act 5:16-18. King Nero, Communism, Jihadist and so on.

(b) Satan often raises internal enemies and oppositions against the Church! See (Ezra 4:1-4). Satan had found this tool to be very effective. He employed strategies such as:

(i) Divide and rule. Mark 3:24

(ii)Infiltration of Satanic agents (tares) who are against the Church to work within the Church!

(iii) Discord, disagreement, bitterness, fighting, accusations etc among members to frustrate unity of purpose and progress. Act 15:39. Individuals in the Church need to be vigilant so as not to be instrument in the hand of the devil to frustrate God good purpose. Jeremiah 29:11.

***6. Man though converted, but when not sanctified, filled with Holy Ghost nor yielded to God, can be a great barrier and opposition to God’s move in the Church!***

 Example is Diotrephes, in 3 John 1:9-11. Human factor, ego, self interest and pride had always posed a great threat to God’s work.

7. ***God want every child of His to be part of the formidable team against Satanic opposition and artilleries.*** This we must do with great determination to do our own part in working against every move that is not of God. Jesus said *"I will build my Church and the gate of hell shall not prevail against it".*

Dearly beloved, are you willing and ready to effectively fight and build with Christ? Your decision can bring great victory to this body of Christ. Isaiah 45:13.

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CHS **143 HOLD THE FORTH**

1. Ho, My comrades! See the signal

Waving in the sky!

Reinforcement now appearing,

Victory is nigh.

*“Hold the forth, for I am coming”*

*Jesus signals still;*

*Wave the answer back to heaven,*

*“By Thy Grace we will”*

2. See the mighty host advancing,

Satan leading on

Mighty men around us falling,

Courage almost gone!

3. See the glorious banner waving!

Hear the Trumpet blow!

In our Leader's name we'll triumph

Over every foe!

4. Fierce and long the battle Rages,

But our help is near,

Onward comes our great Commander

Cheer, my comrades, cheer!