

# Rebuilding the Temple

by C.I. Scofield

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faithfulness and separation in the face of opposition to Christian building.*

**Scripture:** Ezra 3:12

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Overcoming Adversity"

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## Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the analysis of Ezra 3:10-5:4, focusing on the foundation of praise, ill-timed grief, the counsel of separation, and the hired counselors. The heart of the lesson reveals three perils faced in Christian building: opposition from pessimists, world-mixture, and open opposition from the world, emphasizing the need for constructive Christianity amidst challenges and discouragements.

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## Transcript

(Ezra iii:10-v:4.)

I. The Analysis.

I. The foundation of praise (verses 10, 11). 2. Ill-timed grief (verses 12, 13). 3. The counsel of separation (verses 1-3). 4. The hired counsellors (verses 4, 5).

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

Three perils in the face of which all Christian building is done, three methods of opposition to all constructive Christianity are present in this lesson, and form the heart of it.

First, the opposition from pessimists. It was a poor thing to drown the shout of the workers in the noise of the weeping of "many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers" because they had "seen the first house." There is a shallow and unthinking pessimism as there is also a shallow and unthinking optimism. Men of the first type, many of them, in our day, men of a deep knowledge of the Scriptures and who should be mighty for God, are so persuaded of the degeneracy of the times, of the wide-spread apostasy from sound doctrine, and of the pervading sectarian confusion that they discourage all constructive work for Christ. "To what end?" they ask, "Since all is confusion, since so few give a clear testimony? Why seek to reconstruct a ruin? If, indeed, we might hope to reproduce the order, the zeal, the doctrinal soundness of the Apostolic church, then would we build with you. But, alas! alas! that may not be."

The truth being that there never was an "apostolic church" in the sense of a great organization of churches, and all pervaded by holy zeal and biblical accuracy. It is purely a figment of the imagination. There were, in apostolic times, scattered churches, made up for the most part of slaves and of the very poor; and some of these were zealous and holy and well instructed, and some were carnal and mistaught.

Never since Christ has there been so grand a chance to build local churches after the Apostolic mould and faith as just now when there is so much confusion and discord. There is no real room in Christianity for pessimism. The Christian knows that this age ends in apostasy, but he need not be an apostate. The very clamor about him of destructive criticism, of evolutionism gone mad, of theosophy, Christian Science and "new thought" is but a call to him to abide faithful. Similarly, the fact that churches have swung so far away from the simple primitive order is but a call of God to every local church to resume that order.

Second, the opposition from world-mixture. "Let us build with you: for we seek your God," etc. Never was there a time when it was more necessary for the churches of Jesus Christ to remember Zerubabel's noble answer: "Ye have nothing to do with us, to build an house unto our God." To-day the churches of Jesus Christ stand upon every highway with the mendicant's whine of need, and the mendicant's outstretched palm. When a new meeting house is to be built every device is resorted to to secure from a religion patronizing world as great a share of the cost as possible. No money is too "tainted" to be taken for the Lord's work. Men against whom reputable and responsible persons make charges of perjury, fraud, greed, deliberate injury of the weak and defenseless, are approached for great gifts to so-called Christian work. It is a time for the old Bible cry: "Come ye out from among them and touch not the unclean thing."

Third, the open opposition of the world. The late Lord Salisbury said, at the outbreak of the boxer rebellion, "Missionaries are very unpopular persons in the foreign ministries of all governments." What a confession. There is today, in the United States Senate, an absolute impossibility of securing a vote on the pure food bill. Why? The Department of Agriculture says because of the influence of distillers and manufacturers of injurious foods. Let righteousness strike a profitable evil, and that evil will find means to "frustrate their purpose."

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