

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Week 5 – Monday

Psa. 127:3-5 – Footnote 3¹

We are covering the matter of spiritual warfare together with the matter of the divine romance. In this message we are turning our attention to the matter of the second generation, our children. However, it is good for us to see that our raising our next generation for the Lord is actually a focal point of the spiritual battle. Psalm 127, verse 3 says, “Behold, children are the heritage of Jehovah, The fruit of the womb a reward.” This means that all our children are from the Lord and all our children belong to the Lord. They are only given to us for a time for us to keep custody for Him. That is why we should do our best to raise our children for Him. He gives them to us; we give them back to Him. But the next verse says, “Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, So are the children of one’s youth.” Every child is like an arrow. If you are talking about arrows, the setting must be some kind of battle. No wonder our children are a focus of the attack of the enemy. In general in any age the enemy does a particular work to try to gain the youth of that generation. It has always been like this, but it seems that it is intensified now. It was like this when we were young but today the battle is more fierce. We sang hymn 893 which says, “Conflict today is fierce.” Another line says, “ ‘Tis harder at the end the Lord to testify.” It seems that as we approach the consummation of this age it is getting harder. For our children and young people especially it is harder and harder to be a testimony for the Lord in this age. But each of our children is like an arrow in the hand of a mighty man.

“Blessed is the man Who fills his quiver with them” (v. 5). A quiver is a container for the arrows; we should have a quiver full of arrows. Sorry, I only have 3 arrows. I met a brother last night who said he had 11 arrows. When I asked how many grandchildren, he had to think, “Is it 43 or 44?” Imagine if each one grows up for the Lord, what a defeat that would be to the enemy. So the enemy will try to attack our children. We expect that our children and grandchildren who are here with us will be the ones to consummate this age, to see the Lord return. I believe that the children who are with us today will see the Lord return. So when you are serving them in the nursery or have them at home, I hope that you see them as little arrows that intimidate the enemy. “Blessed is the man Who fills his quiver with them. He will not be put to shame When he speaks with enemies in the gate.” Our children are part of the spiritual warfare.

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Week 5 – Tuesday

Acts 2:37-39

Acts chapter 2 is very particular in our history; it is the beginning of the church. On the night of the Lord's resurrection He breathed into the disciples. You could say that the church was brought forth that night because we were regenerated in the Lord's resurrection, but officially we need to take Acts chapter 2 when the Spirit was poured out on the Body on the day of Pentecost as the time when the church was formed. That day the children are mentioned. I read these verses many times, but never noticed that on the first day of the church God paid attention to the children. Peter was preaching the gospel "And when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, What should we do, brothers? 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" (vv. 37-39a). The promise is to you and to your children.

Verse 39 continues, "And to all who are far off". Many brothers have a burden for the gospel but their first attention is to those who are far off. They are burdened for coworkers; they are burdened for students; they are burdened to preach the gospel to the community. That is wonderful but don't ignore your children. First the gospel is to you and to your children, then to those who are far off. It is not written with a comma between *you and your children*; the comma is before *those who are far off*. This indicates that there is a priority; the first ones we must be burdened for are our children. The church must always have the burden for the gospel, but first to the children. Satan is afraid of the increase of God's people; he fears the increase of God's people. Where does our increase come from? From our children and from preaching the gospel to those outside, always from these two sources. Both Brother Nee in his ministry and Brother Lee in his ministry said strongly that our increase should be 50% from each of these sources. However, with many of the churches most of the increase is from outside. You have a very unique opportunity here because the Lord is blessing you with so many children. The only places that I have seen this fulfilled is in the Philippines and Belize which have 50% increase from inside and from outside. I hope that all the churches would pay attention to this matter.

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Week 5 – Wednesday

1 Cor. 10:1-6, 11 – Footnotes 1¹, 1³, 1⁴, 3¹, 4¹, 6¹

The Old Testament is book of pictures. First Corinthians chapter 10, verse 6 says that everything that happened to Israel is a picture, a type, of us and an example for us. Verse 11 says, “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have come.” Things happened to them many ages ago and were written down as examples to us and were given as an admonition to us. Who are we? We are the ones to whom the end of the ages have come. We at the end of the age must look at the Old Testament picture to learn Satan’s strategy. God exposes Satan’s schemes in His Word and we can learn the lessons.

We can especially learn something from the book of Exodus. Exodus is a very particular book because it shows our history in picture form. What do you see in the first page of Exodus? God’s people in bondage. Then God sends a saviour, Moses. How are they saved? By a lamb and by a sea. That typifies our salvation because Jesus is the Lamb of God and our baptism. First Corinthians 10:2 says that they all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. This verse equates the crossing of the Red Sea with baptism. Then they go into the wilderness and what happens there? They receive God’s supply, God’s provision, consisting of the bread from heaven and the water from the rock. Both of these are pictures of Christ. Actually, 1 Corinthians 10 does not say that the rock was a picture of Christ; it says that the rock was Christ. I don’t know what that means but for us Christ is the bread that comes down from heaven, the manna, and He is the flowing river. So there we have the bondage, salvation and supply. Then God brings them to the mountain and reveals Himself to them. He shows them not only the law, but also the blueprint for His house. So here we have the revelation of God Himself through the law and the desire of His heart, His tabernacle. For us, this is the revelation of Christ and the church. Then how does the book end? It ends with the children of Israel erecting the tabernacle and the glory of God filling it. That is our destiny.

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Week 5 – Thursday

Exo. 1:6-14 – Footnote 6¹

I want us to pay attention to the first section of Exodus. Chapter 1, verses 8 and 9 say, “And a new king rose up over Egypt, who did not know of Joseph. And he said to his people, The people of the children of Israel are now more numerous and stronger than we.” If you go back one page in your Bible, how many children of Israel were there in Genesis 50? Seventy, sixty-six came out of the good land. There is the touching story of the brothers coming to Egypt to buy food and meeting Joseph. Then he told them to bring their brother and eventually they all come to Egypt. Joseph also gained a wife and two children in Egypt to make a total of seventy. When you turn the page, there are about two million children of Israel. Four hundred years had passed with no record of what happened during that time. Do you know what happened? Increase, lots of children, children having children. By then Pharaoh was threatened by the children of Israel because he realized that they were more numerous and stronger than the Egyptians. Then he made a plan because he was threatened by their increase: “Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply and, when some war occurs, they also join themselves to those who hate us and fight against us and go up from the land. So they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens.... But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out so that they came to dread the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with harshness” (vv. 10-13). This is just the first part of the plot. Pharaoh wanted to put down the children of Israel so he decided that he would do this in two steps. The first step was to wear down the older generation, to make the ones who work, work even harder to get them exhausted so that they don’t have any energy left for the worship of God nor to fight. They wouldn’t have strength to worship or to fight.

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Week 5 – Friday

Exo. 1:15-20 – Footnotes 16², 17¹

That strategy was toward the older generation. He had a different strategy in the following verses toward the younger generation that was more insidious, more harsh. “When the babies are born, if it is a boy, kill it.” The firstborn boys were all to be killed. Can you imagine if there was a king or some leader in some nation today who would make this decree? The whole world would rise up against them. But Pharaoh did this; this is a picture of Satan. What does this show us? This shows us Satan’s attitude toward our children, especially the boys. “And they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and in brick and in all kinds of labor in the field; all their labor with which they made them serve was with harshness. And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one whose name was Shiphrah and the other whose name was Puah” (vv. 14-15). I never heard of anyone naming their daughter Shiphrah or Puah. These are great names in the Bible; these two sisters were the real saviours of Israel before Moses. Actually, the saviour, Moses, needed a saviour. There were four sisters who saved Moses: these two and his mother and older sister. Hebrews 11 tells us that his father was also involved (v. 23) but Exodus only mentions the sisters.

“And he said, When you act as midwives for the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them but let the male children live” (vv. 16-17). These midwives are a picture of all our sisters, especially all our serving sisters. Sisters, especially if you serve with the children you could be the saviour of our children; you could save the nation of Israel. Suppose the midwives had carried out what Pharaoh commanded and slain the boys but let the girls live, who would the girls marry when they grew up? It would need to be the Egyptians. So in the picture they would be mingled with the world right away. In one generation there would no more pure Israel. I have observed over the years that in many of the local churches the boys among us no longer have much interest in the things of the Lord when they get to a certain age. This is more common among the boys than among the girls. There may be exceptions here and there, but what you see here is what we experience. Then when the sisters want to get married, I have observed that more of our daughters go outside to seek a companion even when there are brothers available. They seek a husband among the unbelievers; what we see in Exodus 1 is fulfilled even today. We need more Shiphrahs and Puahs to rescue our next generation.

Divine Romance - Spiritual Warfare

Week 5 – Saturday

Exo. 10:8-10

Exo. 19:4-6 – Footnotes 4¹, 5¹, 6¹

Later God sent Moses and Aaron to tell Pharaoh, “Let my people go” and they had rounds of conflict. Then Exodus 10, verses 8 to 10 say, “So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, Go, serve Jehovah your God. But who exactly are going? 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. And he said to them, Let Jehovah indeed be with you if I ever let you go with your little ones as well.” Pharaoh was saying, “OK, you go worship Jehovah, but I will never let your children go!” This is showing us Satan's attitude toward our little ones. If we apply the Passover lamb as Jesus, if we apply the manna as Him as our supply, if we apply the Red Sea as baptism, we have to apply this too. Do you see the attitude? Why does Satan fear the little ones? Because they are like the arrows, especially at the end of the age these little ones could be the ones to bring the Lord back.

Exodus chapter 12 talks about the Passover. “And you shall observe this matter as a statute for you and for your sons in perpetuity. And when you come to the land which Jehovah will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this service. And when your children say to you, What does this service mean to you? You shall say, It is the passover sacrifice to Jehovah, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses. And the people bowed and worshipped” (vv. 24-27). I want to point out that on the evening of the passover, a lamb was slain in every home. Slaying the lamb and applying the blood was the function of whom in the Old Testament? That is what priests do. Do you realize that on the night of the passover there were priests in every home? Who were the priests? The parents.

Later God expresses His desire saying that He brought them on eagles' wings to be a kingdom of priests (19:4-6), but Israel lost this privilege by worshipping the golden calf in Exodus 32. Because of that, only one tribe, the Levites who came and answered Moses call, could be priests. I would say that the closest God ever got to having a kingdom of priests was on the night of the passover. But who were the priests? The parents. We cannot depend on the church for the raising of our children. The church can help and will help, but the first responsibility is with all of us as the parents. We should be those who bring our children to salvation, or at least have the desire to bring our children to salvation.

Exodus 12:26 says, “And when your children say to you, What does this service mean to you?” The children of Israel were to speak about the passover to their children in perpetuity, year after year. In years to come there would certainly be a generation that was not born yet when they crossed the Red Sea. So they would not know about coming out of Egypt; they were born in the good land. They might have heard of their grandparents coming out of Egypt but now they see their parents slaying another lamb. Don't you think that some of the children would ask, “Daddy, what are you doing? What does this mean?” When they ask, does it say, “You shall take your children to children's meeting and they will explain everything to them”? Of course, it does not say that. “You will invite sister Miriam to give a lesson to all the children.” It doesn't say that. What does it say? “You shall say...” The charge to every parent is to be a priest, a prophet, and a teacher. That is our job, our function for our children.