

Lesson #25

The Builder Warrior

In the previous lesson we identified five enemies that oppose the five foundational principles. As we build upon these foundations and put them into practice, we can expect resistance from these and other enemies. We must learn to be warriors and builders at the same time.

The concept of the builder warrior can be seen multiple times in the scriptures. In this lesson we will look at several examples and see that building and battling go hand in hand.

Builder Warriors in Nehemiah

One of the best examples of a builder warrior is seen in the life of Nehemiah. He was born in Babylon during the time of captivity and became the cupbearer for Artaxerxes, the Babylonian king. A previous king named Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem, broke down its walls, destroyed the temple of the Lord, and carried many people away as captives to live in Babylon. This captivity would last seventy years, but the love for Jerusalem and the temple of God remained in the hearts of the Jews.

As we pick up the story, Nehemiah was heart broken over the state of Jerusalem and asked for permission to return to there and rebuild the city of his fathers. He had prayed to God for favor in the eyes of Artaxerxes and his prayer was answered, the king granted his request. Nehemiah was commissioned by Artaxerxes to return to Jerusalem and rebuild it (see Nehemiah, Chapters 1 & 2).

The rebuilding of Jerusalem was making progress, but when the enemies who were occupying the land saw that the Jews were rebuilding, they were furious. They mocked them, conspired to attack them and sought to create confusion (see Neh 4:1-6). Upon learning of their conspiracy Nehemiah instructed the builders to also be warriors.

¹⁷ Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon.

¹⁸ Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

— Nehemiah 4:17-18 (NKJV)

The enemies opposed the work of building because they knew that rebuilding Jerusalem meant that the people of God would again become strong and subdue any who resisted them. It was the very act of building that precipitated warfare and required them to be builders and warriors at the same time. Like Nehemiah and those with him, we too must be warriors if our work of building is to make progress.

Other Builder Warriors

King David was also a builder warrior. Though he is known as a mighty warrior, he carried a vision to build a house for God, a dwelling place for God's presence.

² Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said ... As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: 1 Chronicles 28:2 (KJV)

We also see the builder warrior mantle on the Apostle Paul. The man Paul, who wrote to the Ephesians about our warfare with principalities and powers, is the same man who referred to himself as a wise master builder when he wrote to the Corinthians referring to them as "God's building" (see Eph 6 and 1 Cor 3).

Of course Jesus is the ultimate builder warrior and He spoke of the warfare that would accompany the work of building. In the scriptures, the gates of a city represent its rulers. Therefore, Jesus was describing the resistance of demonic powers that would result from the work of building. when he said "I will build my church (ekklesia) and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it (see Matt 16:18).

Occupying Builders

Jesus also gave us the parable of stewardship in which a Nobleman instructed his servants to *occupy*, or *do business*, until he returned. Since the command in the parable is in the context of stewardship (the Nobleman provided the money and those he gave it to were his servants), the business they were to be concerned with was *His* business. Applied to us, this is a command to build God's business, it is not simply advice on how to pass the time and avoid boredom.

Occupying also has military tones. As an army of occupying builders, we must expect conflict. Contrary to popular belief, Jesus stated very clearly that He did not come to bring peace. He said, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword" (Matt 10:34). He wanted His disciples to know that following him would cause divisions, even among those closest to us - unless of course they too follow Jesus. Yes, the ultimate result will be peace, as we have pointed out early in this study. But the process of building God's house, a unified group of people who are influencing the culture and preparing to rule and reign with Jesus in His kingdom, is a process that precipitates war.

Two Types of Builders

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." Then He went on to tell a parable of two types of builders, one who heard the word and did it, and another who heard the word but did *not* do it (see Matt 7:21-27). This is essentially a parable about following instructions. The building built according to the words of Jesus was built on the rock and stood during the storm. But the building built by the man who did not obey Jesus' words, was built on shifting sand and the storm brought it down.

Not all building projects that are labeled "Church" are pleasing to God, even though they may be impressive and skillfully constructed. The builders at the Tower of Babel were very skilled and what they were building was very impressive. But it was not according to God's plan and so he decentralized them and frustrated their work. God's building plan is often very different than man's.

Paul referred to himself as a wise master builder who had laid the foundation upon which others could build. He then issued a warning: "But let each one take heed how he builds on it." (see 1 Cor 3:10). Here again we see that building is not the issue, the issue is building correctly. There are plenty of people

who are building, but the question is whether or not they are building according to God's plan. Therefore, there are only two types of builders: 1) those who build according to God's plan and 2) those who build according to other plans.

The Weapon of Our Warfare

We know that our primary resistance is not flesh and blood, but principalities and powers in the heavenly realm (see Eph 6:12). And when it comes to conducting warfare in the spiritual realm the weapons of our warfare are spiritual as well. The primary weapon that we have is the sword of the Spirit which is the spoken word of God. Many people have attempted to use the word of God as a sword, "...but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it" (Hebrews 4:2). The word of God, when spoken in truth and faith, is a sharp two-edged sword that cuts down our spiritual enemies.

One of the most powerful ways that the spoken word is expressed is in worship and singing and there are many examples of this in scripture. Psalm 149 is an excellent example which connects worship (singing of praises, rejoicing, and musical instruments) to victory over the enemies of God. The two verses below sum it up well.

⁶ Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand,

⁷ To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples;

— Psalm 149:6-7 (NKJV)

In 2 Chronicles, Chapter 20, we also see an example of worship being used in the context of warfare. A great army had gathered against God's people and Jehoshaphat asked God to judge them, because they had no power in the natural to stand against the great multitude. Then word of the Lord came to them saying, "...the battle is not your's, but God's." They were instructed to go out to the battle, not to fight, but to sing unto the Lord and praise the beauty of holiness. When they did this, the Lord set ambushes against the enemy and they destroyed themselves.

What is God's Plan?

As we grasp the concept of being builder/warriors, the obvious question we must ask is: "What are we building and is there a biblical building plan we can look to?" In the next lesson we will address this issue.