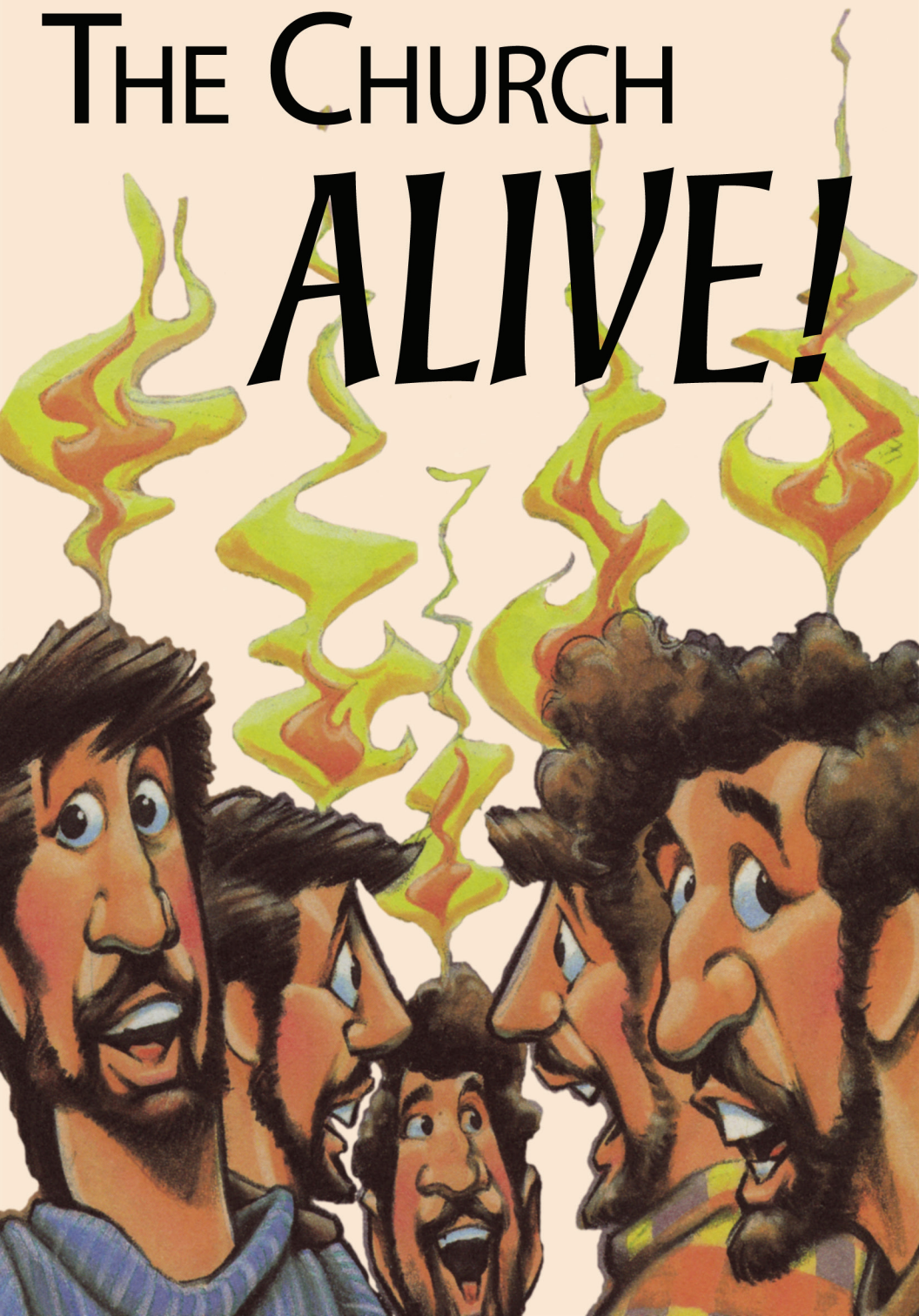


THE CHURCH *ALIVE!*



As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at
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THE CHURCH ALIVE!

THE MYSTERY REVEALED

I would like you to consider with me the state of the church in this generation. This is a serious matter—I speak of the church that our Jesus *died* to present to Himself as “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish,” “and to make all (people) see what (is) the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that *now* the manifold wisdom of God might be made known **by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places”!

That’s us guys—and the time (according to the Holy Spirit of God) is “**now**.” Do you believe that passage? Then it is also true that you must *position* yourselves to receive God’s grace as He desires to raise up a People, a Nation that is an “equal yoke” for the Groom—the King of all Kings!

“And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunders, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready!**’ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

Some may think that you have heard all of this before. Oh, as Jesus our Lord said, be very careful how you hear! We only deceive ourselves if we “hear” but never act (Jas. 1:22; Lk. 6:43–49). Please! Now is the time—“in view of His great mercies” gather your thoughts and energies and fears and spiritual pride and all that you are, and lay it on the altar before Him... and *ACT* on the Word rather than bouncing around Bible verse truths to amuse (I speak boldly out of jealousy for my Lord’s church, which other than the normal speeches and scheduled rituals and programs seems to be invisible in most every city that I travel to). Please! As I would urge all of God’s People everywhere, don’t settle for anything less than “a city set on a hill that *cannot* be hidden,” “the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, (causing) growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love,” “the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, (growing) with the increase (which is) from God,” “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” That can’t remain theoretical any longer, OK?! Decide what you’ll do with your

tonight (we know you're tired), and your weekend and your "vacation" and...! "You are not your own—you were bought for a price"! Get on the phone and begin to penetrate into the lives around you forcefully and relentlessly impassioned to "present everyone perfect in Christ. **Labor** to this end struggling with all His power"!

This is very simply what the Word of God says. My observation is that these things are almost universally disobeyed in the church world today, and the Corporate Life of Jesus Christ is replaced by a very poor substitute of unbiblical "worship services" and "mid-week Bible Studies." Don't take my word for it—see if you can find me *that* concept (dressing up to be an audience at a ceremony of two songs, a prayer by a guy chosen a week in advance, a speech by the official presenter of speeches, etc.) of "christianity" anywhere in the Bible. It's not in there! Be honest now... Nowhere in the Holy Scriptures is a church pictured as (in the Book of Acts) or referred to or taught to be as such (in the Gospels or Epistles). **The GOOD NEWS:** There is a Biblical alternative! **The BAD NEWS:** "Few will be those who find it" because it will cost you *all* of your idols of television, selfishness, career idolatry, family idolatry and the like. **Frankly, most will try desperately to find loopholes and create a theology to defend the fruitless mediocrity around us, and to protect their pride and orator-clergyman career path** (that also doesn't exist in the Bible—believe me I was in that category for several years and recognize the difficulty and insecurity in giving it up).

THREE VISUAL AIDS FOR THE CHURCH

There is an analogy that I hope that you are all intimately familiar with involving the Feasts of the Lord. Possibly this will be helpful in giving you a glimpse of the alternative to "churchianity." The true, Biblical nature of the Church of Jesus Christ is essential for God's People to respond to **NOW**, and we can be aided in our understanding of the practical outworkings of this by an understanding (believe it or not!) of the Last and Greatest Feast, **Tabernacles**. In the Bible, there are three major Feasts in the Old Covenant (which is, though so often ignored, the "shadow of the reality that is in Christ"—Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 9:8–9; 10:1; etc.). A (very) brief glimpse for those of you who may not have been floored yet by God's infinite Wisdom in establishing the sacrifices, the Temple, the Sabbath, the Law, the physical (geographical) nation of Israel, the Ark, the Manna, wheat fields, rivers, suns, physical families, Feast Days and a myriad of other things in order for us to have "**visual aids**" for our **spiritual eyes** in order to grow spiritually and to know the "times and seasons"! (Read again, in regards

to the above statement, the following verses—I can't take the time to go further now: Col. 2:16–17; Heb. 8:5; 9:9; 9:23–24; 10:1–2; Rev. 21:22–22:7; Lk. 12:54–56; 1Thes. 5:4; 1Pet. 1:10–11; Rom. 15:4; 1Cor. 10:6, 11; Mat. 5:17–18; Gal. 3:24; 1Cor. 15:46; Eph. 1:18; Jn. 14:19a, 21b).

Even if this is all foreign to you currently, please *enjoy* the fact that the Feasts are a great key to understanding (much like Gal. 4:24 and Heb. 9:1–9) the special inheritance that we have, and to discern the Day that we're speeding towards (whether we believe it or not, we are obviously much closer to the Day of the Return of Christ than Paul was). And understanding the Wisdom of God in the “visual aids” of the Feasts will also help us to *prepare ourselves* for that Day—if we have the presence of mind and passion for Jesus, and jealousy for the honor of His Name and His Bride, the Church, to **care**. Here are some thoughts to hold before your Lord... analogies that I believe will be somewhat useful to your understanding of the nature of the church of the Bible. Don't be picky. Just gain what you can from the passages referred to. If you don't quite “get it,” don't fret or be upset—just go on serving your God with all of your heart, all of your soul, all of your mind and all of your strength! And so will I. Just pray through it and make Prov. 2:1–15 and 3:5–6 the guideline for your study.

The first of the Three Feasts of Israel is the Feast of Passover. (It also included The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast Day of the Sheaf of First fruits.)

This first analogy is well known to us all. Our Lord and the Christ, Jesus, was that Paschal Lamb for us whose blood was sprinkled on the door and lintel in order that the Death Angel might “passover” the homes of those of us who have been prepared and cut by circumcision (Ex. 12:1–51; Lev. 23; Num. 33; Deut. 16; Heb. 11:28) and appropriate that blood by a response of faith. In addition to being “unleavened,” without sin (Heb. 4:15; 1Cor. 5: 7–8), our Jesus was also the single “sheaf of first fruits”—our “Pioneer,” the “Firstborn” of a new Race (Col. 1:15; 1Cor. 15:23, 45; 1Pet. 2:4–5, 8–10). Like the single sheaf of the first month grain harvest that was to be waved before the Lord “on the morning after the Sabbath” (Lev. 23: 9–14), so also the “Firstborn One” became a celebration of God's coming Harvest as He was the lone Wave Offering before the Lord “on the morning after the Passover Sabbath,” His Resurrection Day! “But Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.’”

And so, the second great Feast that God had commanded: Pentecost (Also called The Feast of Weeks, of Harvest, of First fruits—Ex. 23; 34; Deut. 16; Lev. 23; Num. 28).

This Feast was to celebrate the Harvest of the spring wheat, where a wave offering of, not a single sheaf as at the Passover, but rather a wave offering of two **loaves** were offered. This Feast was to be celebrated on the fiftieth day (thus, the name Pentecost) after the Passover Feast, again, not on the Sabbath day, but “on the morrow after the Sabbath.” This Feast was also to commemorate the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai.

There is so much to say, yet even a brief mention such as this must leave us staggered at the infinite mind of our God who “when the day of Pentecost had **fully** come” (Acts 2:1) brought the first harvest of souls up from the ground as He had His “only begotten Son” fifty days earlier, and made a “**loaf**” out of them as a wave offering (1Cor. 10:17; Acts 2:42–47)!

What had commemorated the giving of the Law on the Tablets of Stone, now would commemorate the Law written by the Spirit of God in the New Covenant on the Tablets of the Hearts of men (Jer. 31:33; 2Cor. 3:3, 6; Ezek. 36:26–27).

Where 3000 had died (Ex. 32:15–28), now 3000 were raised from spiritual death (Eph. 2:1–5; Acts 2:36–41)!

Both of these Feasts, though historical events (both as Feasts in the old Covenant, and in Christ’s literal death and resurrection—the Passover blood that was shed, and Pentecost—the third month celebration of the harvest of 3000 souls) are clearly meant for us to participate in currently, in the spiritual sense, or we are “none of His” (Heb. 9:22; Rom. 8:9–11).

LIKEWISE, and the reason I’ve taken the time to establish all of the above, SO MUST WE PARTICIPATE IN THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, THE LAST AND GREATEST FEAST, IN ORDER TO KNOW THE FULL INTENT AND BLESSINGS OF GOD!!! This Feast (Test this—but not by the traditions of men, but rather in the Spirit of God by the Word of God) is primarily:

1) Not yet fulfilled (as seems clear in the following parallels and observation); and

2) Involves the Church of Jesus Christ and *You!* (Only those that have shared in the other two Feasts can partake in this culmination of all of the work of God).

The third and last of the Feasts of Israel was to be held after the long, dry scorched months of summer when the rains finally were renewed at the final harvest time in the seventh month. This was to be the greatest of all the Feasts (GREATER EVEN THAN PENTECOST)!

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES OR INGATHERING

It seems impossible to logically just call this “Judgment Day” since this Feast included the Feast Day of the Blowing of *Trumpets*, the Day of *Atonement*, and the Feast of *Booths* (Lev. 23:16; Num. 29; Deut. 16; 31; Neh. 8:14–15; Ex. 23:16; Jn. 7), and **then** ended with an eighth day Rest, the completion. If, again, this is hard to understand, that’s OK... I’ll bet you will still benefit tremendously from the New Testament scriptures, if you’ll be disciplined enough to look them up and obey them. Back to the analogy, the “shadow,” the “schoolmaster,” even the *Old Testament* that the Apostle Paul referred to as, (2Tim. 3:15–16), “the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture (a New Testament verse referring to the *Old Testament*, of course, in context) is given by inspiration of God, and (is) profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...” And so, the “useful” shadow:

The Feast of Trumpets, because the Day of Atonement must be introduced by the Trumpet call of men of God carrying His Words (See Amos 3:6–8; Isa. 58:1; Hos. 8:1; Ezek. 33:1–7; Joel 2:1,15; Isa. 18:3; 27:13; Jer. 4:8; Rev. 1:10; 4:1; 1Cor. 14:8). There is no question that the dry summer months of the last 1800+ years have been primarily “a famine in hearing the Word.” At least it has been a famine in hearing a “living and active Word” that doesn’t simply “educate,” but “lays bare the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” and causes men that refuse holiness and cling to the cloak of darkness and the shadow of compromise and justifying words to **run** (“You’re judging—don’t you dare confront me with my cesspool mind and unfruitful life!”) (Heb. 4:12; Jn. 3:19–21; Jn. 15:1–8; 2Thes. 2:11–12; 2Tim. 4:1–3; 3:1–9). And, by the way, that **exact same Word** will bring grace and glory and liberty from the bondage of sin to those with “good and honest hearts” (Acts 3:19, 26; Jn. 8:31–32; Titus 2:11–15; 1Thes. 2:13; Rom. 1:16; 2:4–11; Lk. 8:15; Mat. 7:24–27; 2Cor. 3:16–18; Jn. 3:19–21). Most definitely, the Day of Atonement will be introduced by the Trumpet Call of the Word!

The Day of Atonement is, as we view the Word of God and make its application, 1) a reaffirmation, a reawakening of the necessity of the

atonement blood of the Lamb of God (not as a “doctrine” that is taught and “claimed,” but in deep, deep gratitude, as the very source and essence of our abiding Life in Him); 2) a time of fasting and repentance and a “rending of our hearts”: “Without holiness no one will see the Lord”; and, 3) a time of moving into the inner sanctuaries of our God’s heart and mind (for proof see 1Cor. 2:9–3:2, Jn. 15:15)—moving into the Most Holy Place where the Ark of God’s Glory resides, filled with the hidden manna, the tablets of God’s Righteousness, and God’s affirmation in the rod of Aaron (Heb. 9:1–5; 10:19–20). That’s the place that Jesus spoke of “in a loud voice” on that “last and greatest day of the Feast” where “gushing torrents of alive water will flow from his innermost being”—*that is absolutely to be the NORM of EVERY Christian’s life on earth, according to Jesus Himself!* Again, not “the doctrine of,” but the reality of a river that Ezekiel saw that **changes the world around us into Christ!**

(Ezek. 47:1–12) “Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar... and there was water, running out on the right side... the water came up to my ankles... the water came up to my knees... the water came up to my waist... and it was a river that I could not cross: for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. He said to me, ‘Son of man, have you seen this?’ Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. Then he said to me: ‘This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea (the Dead Sea here represents the Dead Sea of humanity that the waters of God flowing out of us and our “innermost being,” the Temple of God, cause to burst into Life!) its waters are healed. And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will **live!** There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. **But its swamps and marshes will not be healed;** they will be given over to salt. Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all (kinds of) trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine.”

But first, the Last and Greatest Feast, the Feast of the Ingathering, **must** see a great Day of Atonement in God's People.

Acts 3:19 "**Repent** therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of **refreshing** may come from the presence of the Lord."

Acts 3: 23 "And it shall come to pass (that) every soul who will not hear that Prophet (Jesus) shall be utterly destroyed from among the people."

2Tim. 2:19 "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let **everyone** who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'"

Mat. 21:43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a People **who will bear its Fruit**!"

Lk. 19:44 "your enemy...will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Some specific things that must be torn down in our cities, in our churches, and in our lives if we would see the fullness of God's purposes:

1. **Division amongst our number from old scars.** "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." That cannot be bypassed. Please take the initiative, each of you, to help the others that you are aware of that are still holding on to this sin—for everyone's sake. God's visitations (take this any way you'd like) are only to those that are of "one accord."

2. **Immorality.** Nothing rationalized. Septic tank minds and mouths must be repented of.

3. **Covenant violations (of heart) in marriage.**

4. **Selfishness, Idolatry, Laziness.**

5. **Spiritual arrogance,** critics "twice dead" (Jude 11–12; Num. 16:1–7; 1Sam. 4:21–22).

I can't encourage you enough to move to demolish these strongholds... that you might be useful to God. There won't be any exceptions this time around!

2Tim. 2:21 “Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”

Acts 17:30 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent!”

ARE YOU READY TO GO FOR IT?!

Then last of all, the part of the **Feast of Tabernacles** that I'd like you to take very seriously, as it has application to your life...

THE FEAST OF BOOTHS

This can no more likely be devoid of meaning and application to us than the Passover or Pentecost—so consider carefully!

“Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep **the feast of the Lord** (for) seven days; on the first day (there shall be) a (sabbath)–rest, and on the eighth day a (sabbath)–rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. **You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year.** (It shall be) a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I (am) the Lord your God.’ So Moses declared to the children of Israel **the Feasts of the Lord.**” (Lev. 23:39–44).

And, (Neh. 8:11–17) “So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, ‘Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.’ And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them. Now on the second day the heads of the fathers’ houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. And they found written in the Law, which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, ‘Go

out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written.’ Then the people went out and brought (them) and made themselves booths, each one on the roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the Water Gate and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. So the whole congregation of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very great gladness.”

During the Feast of Booths, all of the people came out of their various levels of prosperity and comforts, and slaves right next to rulers would live in little thatched roof huts. During this Feast the streets were filled with these small booths! They were made from the “branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook” and were so numerous that there was only room on the rooftops to erect these huts. For the duration of the “last and greatest Feast,” everyone joined themselves together in a oneness, purposely destroying the divisions of class and possessions and education. It all sounds so much like the church of the Bible even *before* Tabernacles! (Acts 2:42–47) “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common (not a “common purse,” but the heart of Jesus unattached to material things—Acts 5:3–4; Lk. 6:20–36) and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing *daily* with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

And, (Acts 4:32–35) “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid (them) at the apostles’ feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.”

THIS IS NOT CULTURAL

It's the very foundation of a life that is storing up treasure in Heaven in simple observable obedience to Jesus (Lk. 6:17–36; 9:57–62; 14:12–13, 25–34) and is a suitable vessel to “turn the world upside down” in the power of the Holy Spirit of Jesus! It is only the fruit of a people that obey Jesus’ teaching literally, rather than delude themselves by getting together three times a week to simply give speeches about, talk about and form a denomination that agrees upon what that teaching is... but never obeys it as those simple, trusting folks in the first century did. It is also the fruit of those Disciples who would see the Feast of Tabernacles and God’s full intention in His People.

If you don't believe *that*, would you at least believe “I will build my *church* and the gates of hell will not withstand *it*,” “to the intent that **now** the manifold wisdom of God might be made known **by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,” “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” As long as the “gates of Hell” continue to destroy marriages, and drugs and sex ravage the teenagers of “church folk” and conversions are oh-so-few, we have no *RIGHT* to defend the thing around us as “the Lord’s Church.” *HIS* church will blow apart the very gates and strongholds of Satan and Hell itself with the power of the Risen Jesus and His Word! (Mat. 16:18; 2Cor. 10:3–6; 1Jn. 3:6–9; Eph. 6:12). *Nothing else* is the church that *He* is “building.”

So why be defensive for something that does not bear the **Fruit** that Jesus said it must (Lk. 6:43–44; Mt. 21:43; Acts 26:20b; Lk. 3:8–9)? Let's just be honest and humble enough to go on. We've paid a price to go this far—why camp out on something so undeniably (even by any intelligent **heathen** observer) short of the mark now?!

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

Many of you have been aware of the fact that in recent years there has been a very obvious call to the intimate Knowledge and vertical Worship of, and Fellowship with, the Living King, Jesus, and His Father—rather than religious rituals and temple exercises done in His honor to somehow please a “way off somewhere inactive God.” As some of you have realized, either He's “in our midst” (Mat. 18:20) or He's not!

God's call continues (Again, please test this—but don't discard it out of apathy or justification of the idols of the middle-class American lifestyle) to be that call to glorious worship (rather than an unbiblical "song service" and "weakly" speeches to spit-polished "audiences" in the "pews"—*Really*, it isn't anywhere in the scriptures!) and the drawing up of His **People** into a Holy Nation, a Royal Priesthood, an "Ever-Increasing Government" and "Habitation of God by the Spirit"! Not a "here or there Kingdom" "in Jerusalem or on this mountain" where someone says "here is the Christ, or there is the Christ"—but a People, a **Church** with "no beauty or majesty" that (one more time!) "the gates of Hell cannot withstand," "to the intent that **now** the manifold wisdom of God might be made known **by the church** to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places"!

Thank our God—He has put the "Second Adam" into a deep sleep (for three days and three nights) and has pulled a rib out of Jesus' side and is **building** Him a Bride suitable for Him... of His nature! And that Bride, by the Spirit that "He exerted in Christ when He rose Him from the dead" is, according to Jesus Himself, more blessed by the Coming of the Comforter than we would be even with His physical presence on earth! (Jn. 14:12; 16:7). If you would prefer Jesus' physical presence on earth to what you currently have, *you're missing what God has offered you!*

The message delivered by those men who knew was continually the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the **Kingdom** (His verifiable reign amongst His People)—Acts 8:12; Acts 28:31; Mat. 6:33. As we have focused the eyes of our hearts on a new Understanding of Worship of our Lord and King, it remains necessary to move into the **Feast of Booths** where we celebrate the "**KINGDOM** of our God and His Righteousness." Jn. 13:35 "By *THIS* all will know that you are My disciples, if you have AGAPE for *one another*." VISIBLE, as in, "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." With *one another!* Is it true? Can the world *see* that depth of relationship in your lives with one another? One thing is certain: if we are no deeper than a church lobby or fellowship meal—the world will never know that we are truly His disciples. He said a lot when He said "By *THIS* all will know that you are my disciples," didn't He?

(1Jn. 2:7–8) “Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The **old commandment** is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.” No, it’s not a “new command” at all—but the very oldest. Yet it is new because now it is “seen” (NIV) in us rather than “studied” by us! (Heb. 8:10–13).

The very essence of the “christianity” that has descended from Heaven to earth is not primarily the passing on of knowledge, but rather, “the **life** became the light of men” (Jn. 1:4), the treasure, not on stone tablets or in gilded edge and leather bindings, but “living letters,” the treasure in “earthen vessels” (See Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 10:15–16; 2Cor. 3:2–6; 4:6–7; Ezek. 36:26–27; 1Cor. 4:19–20).

This is a Covenant, not of our words (though the Utterance of God is the very bedrock of the universe—1Pet. 1:22–25), but of the **visible** Agape that we have for “*one another*,” that Word becoming “flesh” in us, the corporate Life of Jesus Christ that looks like and **bears fruit like**:

*Isa. 61:1–7 “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to **preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations... But you shall be named the Priests of the Lord, (men) shall call you the Servants of our God... Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and (instead of) confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs.”***

Obviously this isn’t a life pulled away in seclusion, but out on the streets! Is that your heart? Oh, I hope so—it’s God’s heart for you and His church!

AN APPEAL

I'm certain that this is enough for now, but let me end with the challenge to consider each day and night and weekend: Am I truly building with the costly materials that are only found by digging very deep—"gold, silver, and precious stones," or am I building with the cheap, surface materials of "wood, hay and stubble" that will not endure the test of fire? (1Cor. 3:9-15).

Please, for Jesus' sake and the honor of His Name and His Purposes, take this literally as it was intended: "but exhort one *another* **daily**, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." We really need each other, Family. May the Grace of God, His Mercy and His Liberty be with you all... For Jesus' Sake.