

“HOUSES” OF WORSHIP

PUBLICALLY AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

Acts 2:41-42,46-47

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

46 And they, **CONTINUING DAILY WITH ONE ACCORD IN THE TEMPLE, and breaking bread from HOUSE TO HOUSE, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,**

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. **And the Lord added to the church [A BUILDING?] daily such as should be saved.**

THIS VIDEO SERIES IS A NON-EXHAUSTIVE EXAMINATION OF THE PIVOTAL ROLE THAT HOUSES/HOMES OF SEEKERS AND/OR NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS PLAYED IN THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH.

THIS STUDY IS LIMITED IN SCOPE, BUT FOUNDATIONAL IN SIGNIFICANCE.

THE CHURCH, WHAT IS IT?

LET'S BEGIN WITH A CUMULATIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION OF THE GREEK WORD *EKKLESIA*, WHICH IN THE SCRIPTURES IS USUALLY TRANSLATED “CHURCH.”

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

CHURCH (*Strong's Greek Dictionary*) g1577. *ekklēsia*; from a compound of 1537 and a derivative of 2564; **A CALLING OUT, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both):** — assembly, church.
AV (118) - church 115, assembly 3;

CHURCH (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*) g1577. ἐκκλησία *ekklēsia*;
I. a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly
D. in a Christian sense
1. **an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting**
3. **those who anywhere, in a city, village, constitute such a company and are united into one body**
4. **the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth**

CHURCH (*CWSB Dictionary*) 1577. *ekklēsia*; gen. *ekklēσίας*, fem. noun from *ékklētos* (n.f.), called out, which is from *ekkaléō* (n.f.), to call out. **It was a common term for a congregation of the ekklētoí (n.f.), the called people, or those called out or assembled in the public affairs of a free state, the body of free citizens called together by a herald (*k rux* [G2783]) which constituted the *ekklēsia*. In the NT, the word is applied to the congregation of the people of Israel (Acts 7:38). On the other hand, of the two terms used in the OT, *sunagōg* (G4864) seems to have been used to designate the people from Israel in distinction from all other nations (Acts 13:43 [cf. Matt. 4:23; 6:2; James 2:2; Rev. 2:9; 3:9]). In Heb. 10:25, however, when the gathering of Christians is referred to, it is called NOT *sunagōg*, but *episunagōg* (G1997), with the preposition *epí* (G1909), upon, translated "the assembling . . . together." The Christian community was designated for the first time as the *ekklēsia* to differentiate it from the Jewish community, *sunagōg* (Acts 2:47 [TR]). **The term *ekklēsia* denotes the NEW TESTAMENT community of the redeemed in its twofold aspect. First, all who were called by and to Christ in the fellowship of His salvation, the church worldwide of all times, and only secondarily to an individual church. Secondly, the NT churches, however, are also confined to particular places.** *Ekklēsia* does not occur in the gospels of Mark, Luke, John, nor the epistles of 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 and 2 John, or Jude...**

(III) **The word *ekklēsia* is nowhere used of heathen religious assemblies in Scripture.** In the OT, two different words are used to denote gatherings of the chosen people or their representatives: *edah* (5712, OT) meaning congregation and *qahal* (6951, OT), assembly. In the Septuagint, *sunagōg* (G4864) is the usual translation of *edah* while *qahal* is commonly rendered *ekklēsia*. Both *qahal* and *ekklēsia* by their derivation indicate calling or summoning to a place of meeting, but there is no foundation for the widespread notion that *ekklēsia* means a people or a number of individual men called out of the world or mankind. *Qahal* or *ekklēsia* is the more sacred term denoting the people in relation to Jehovah, especially in public worship. Perhaps for this very reason, the less sacred term *sunagōg* was more commonly used by the Jews in our Lord's time, and probably influenced the first believers in adopting *ekklēsia* for Christian use. ***Sunagōg*, though used in the early church as a synonym for *ekklēsia* (James 2:2), quickly went out of use for a Christian assembly, except in sects which were more Jewish than Christian. Owing to the growing hostility of the Jews, it came to indicate opposition to the church (Rev. 2:9; 3:9). *Ekklēsia*, therefore, at once suggests the new people of God, the new Israel.**

AN AMALGAMATION OF THESE VARIOUS DEFINITIONS FOR THE GREEK WORD *EKKLESIA* (CHURCH) WOULD BE AS FOLLOWS:

“THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CALLED OUT ONES.”

FROM THESE FAIRLY EXHAUSTIVE DEFINITIONS OF *EKKLESIA*, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THIS GREEK WORD CANNOT BE APPLIED TO DESIGNATE A “PLACE” OR PHYSICAL LOCATION WHERE AN ASSEMBLY MEETS.

TO DO SO VIOLATES THE INTRINSIC MEANING OF THE ORIGINAL GREEK WORD TRANSLATED AS “CHURCH” AND FALSELY REPRESENTS A DIMENSION TO THE MEANING OF THIS WORD THAT IS NEITHER PROPOSED NOR INFERRED BY THE HOLY GHOST IN CHOOSING IT.

AGAIN, THIS IS NOT A MINOR OR DIMINUTIVE POINT.

TO APPLY *EKKLESIA* TO A FACILITY IS A PERVERSION OF THE SINGULAR DENOTATION OF THIS GREEK WORD AND ITS MESSAGE TO US.

**BIBLICALLY, THE CHURCH IS WHO
WE ARE;
THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WHAT
WE DO.**

**THE “CHURCH” IS “THE ASSEMBLY OF
CALLED OUT ONES.”**

CONSIDER THE WORDS OF JESUS AS FURTHER AFFIRMATION OF THESE POINTS:

“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matthew 20:18).

JESUS’ MANIFESTED PRESENCE IDENTIFIES ANY ASSEMBLY OF INDIVIDUALS GATHERED IN HIS NAME AS *THE CHURCH*, REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF FACILITY USED FOR ASSEMBLING.

THIS SIMPLE, YET COMPREHENSIVE DELINEATION DOES NOT REQUIRE ANY TYPE OF FACILITY OR NATURE OF ACTIVITIES TO ACCOMPANY THE GATHERING.

THE ONLY ELEMENT REQUIRED FOR THE ASSEMBLY TO BE DESIGNATED AS *THE CHURCH* IS THE MANIFESTED PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

MOST OF RELIGIOUS CHRISTIANITY HOLDS THE VIEW THAT THE ASSEMBLY MUST TAKE PLACE IN A RECOGNIZED/SANCTIONED “CHURCH-TYPE” BUILDING IN ORDER FOR THE MEETING TO BE LEGITIMATELY CALLED A “CHURCH”!

THE LAST SUPPER WAS IN A HOUSE

**WITH THE FACTS AND POINTS PRESENTED
THUS FAR AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THIS
STUDY, LET'S PROCEED.**

**THE "LAST SUPPER" WAS CELEBRATED IN THE
UPPER ROOM OF A HOUSE.**

**WHILE THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT FROM THE GOSPELS IS NOT
ACTUALLY IN THE "NEW TESTAMENT,"
IT IS MOST RELEVANT TO THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,
AS WE WILL OBSERVE DURING THE FIRST PORTION OF THIS STUDY.**

Mark 14:12-17

12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

14 And **whosoever he shall go in, say ye to the GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE, The Master saith, WHERE IS THE GUESTCHAMBER, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?**

15 And **he will shew you a LARGE UPPER ROOM furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.**

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

Luke 22:7-14

7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; **follow him INTO THE HOUSE where he entereth in.**

11 And ye shall say unto **the GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE**, The Master saith unto thee, **WHERE IS THE GUESTCHAMBER**, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12 And he shall shew you **A LARGE UPPER ROOM FURNISHED**: there make ready.

13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

THE “UPPER ROOM FURNISHED AND PREPARED” FOR THE MASTER WAS A ROOM ON AN UPSTAIRS FLOOR (STRONG’S) OF A MAN’S HOUSE.

AGAIN, THE HOUSE WAS SOMEONE’S RESIDENCE. THE LORD’S COMMUNICATION WITH THE DISCIPLES IMPLIES THAT THEY DID NOT KNOW THIS “GOODMAN” BEFORE THIS POINT IN TIME.

ALSO, GIVEN THE FORMER OCCUPATIONS OF THE TWELVE DISCIPLES, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THIS HOUSE, AS DESCRIBED, COULD HAVE BELONGED TO ANY OF THEM.

THE MAN BEARING THE PITCHER OF WATER WAS EVIDENTLY A SERVANT AND THE GOODMAN A WEALTHY “HOUSEHOLDER” (STRONG’S) WHOSE HOUSE WAS LARGE AND WELL STAFFED.

AN IMPORTANT EXPLANATORY NOTE:

THE REASON FOR CLARIFYING IN THE PREFACE TO THE ABOVE SCRIPTURES THAT THE “LAST SUPPER” SCENE IS NOT RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS IS BECAUSE THE EVENT DID NOT TAKE PLACE DURING THE ACTUAL NEW TESTAMENT ERA.

AS RECORDED IN HEBREWS, PAUL DEFINITELY DEFINED THE TIME FRAME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT:

Hebrews 9:14-17

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 FOR A TESTAMENT IS OF FORCE AFTER MEN ARE DEAD: OTHERWISE IT IS OF NO STRENGTH AT ALL WHILE THE TESTATOR LIVETH.

EVEN THOUGH MAN HAS DESIGNATED THE FOUR GOSPELS AS NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS, GOD HAS NOT DONE SO.

ACCORDING TO THESE VERY CLEAR VERSES, THE NEW TESTAMENT COULD NOT BEGIN UNTIL AFTER THE DEATH, BURIAL, AND RESURRECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, "THE TESTATOR."

AS WE ALL KNOW, NONE OF THIS HAPPENED UNTIL THE END OF EVERY GOSPEL.

FURTHERMORE, THE SINGLE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROMISE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS MANKIND RECEIVING THE "PROMISE OF THE FATHER," WHICH IS THE INDWELLING OR INFILLING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD — THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST.

AS ANY OBSERVANT BIBLE STUDENT KNOWS, THIS OUTPOURING RECORDED IN ACTS 2:1-4 DID NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL THE DAY OF PENTECOST, THUS MAKING ACTS THE FIRST BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

IN LIGHT OF THESE BIBLICAL FACTS, THE LAST SUPPER COULD NOT HAVE TAKEN PLACE DURING THE TIME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT!

THE DAY OF PENTECOST OUTPOURING HAPPENED IN A HOUSE!

**AS COMMANDED BY JESUS, THE DISCIPLES
RETURNED TO JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT
OF OLIVES AFTER HIS ASCENSION
— TO AN UPPER ROOM OF A HOUSE.**

Acts 1:12-15

12 Then **returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet**, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

13 And **when they were come in, they went up into an upper room**, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, **(the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)**

MOST LIKELY THIS IS THE SAME “LARGE UPPER ROOM” WHERE THE LAST SUPPER WAS CELEBRATED.

GIVEN THAT THE “GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE” WOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR WITH THE DISCIPLES THROUGH THEIR MUTUAL CONNECTION TO JESUS, IT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY THE SCRIPTURE SIMPLY STATES THAT THEY JUST WALKED INTO A HOUSE AND “WENT UP INTO AN UPPER ROOM.”

IT STRONGLY INFERS A SPECIFIC LOCATION BOTH FAMILIAR AND FREELY ACCESSED.

FURTHERMORE, IT IS MOST LIKELY THAT THIS WAS THE SAME UPPER ROOM WHERE THE HOLY GHOST WAS POURED OUT ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

GIVEN THAT IT WAS NOT UNCOMMON FOR THE MORE WEALTHY DURING THAT TIME PERIOD TO HAVE SECOND FLOOR BANQUETING AND FEASTING HALLS IN THEIR HOMES,
THIS PARTICULAR LARGE UPPER ROOM OF A HOUSE/HOME WAS EVIDENTLY LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD 120 PLUS PEOPLE!

AGAIN, THE HOLY GHOST WAS POURED OUT FIRST IN THE UPPER ROOM OF A HOUSE.

Acts 2:1-4

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, **and it filled all the HOUSE where they were sitting.**

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

HOUSE (*Strong's Dictionary*) = g3624. *oikos*; of uncertain affinity; **a dwelling** (more or less extensive, literal or figurative); by implication, a family (more or less related, literally or figuratively): — **home, house(-hold), temple.**

AV (114) - house 104, household 3, home + g1519 2, at home + g1722 2, misc 3

HOUSE (*Thayer's*) = g3624 *oikos*;

I. a house

A. **an inhabited house, home**

B. any building whatever

C. any dwelling place

1. of the human body as the abode of demons that possess it

2. of tents, and huts, and later, of the nests, stalls, lairs, of animals

3. the place where one has fixed his residence, one's settled abode, domicile

- II. the inmates of a house, all the persons forming one family, a household
 - A. the family of God, of the Christian Church, of the church of the Old and New Testaments
- III. stock, family, descendants of one

THE HOLY GHOST WAS FIRST Poured OUT IN A HOUSE!

THE DAY OF PENTECOST MARKED THE YEARLY JEWISH CELEBRATION FOR THE GIVING OF THE LAW TO MOSES, WHICH WAS THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE INITIAL OUTPOURING OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST WAS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT MARKED THE “OFFICIAL” COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE OLD TESTAMENT BEGAN ON A MOUNTAIN TOP; THE NEW TESTAMENT BEGAN IN THE UPPER ROOM OF A HOUSE!

WHY DID GOD CHOOSE TO POUR OUT THE HOLY GHOST THE FIRST TIME IN A HOUSE RATHER THAN THE TEMPLE?

PLEASE CAREFULLY CONSIDER THIS:

THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY GHOST FIRST TOOK PLACE IN JERUSALEM — IN THE CITY WHERE THE TEMPLE WAS LOCATED.

BOTH JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES FREQUENTED THE TEMPLE WHILE JESUS WAS WITH THEM, AND THE DISCIPLES CONTINUED THIS PRACTICE AFTER THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

GIVEN THESE FACTS THEN, WHY DID THE LORD NOT SEND THE DISCIPLES TO THE TEMPLE FOR THE DAY OF PENTECOST OUTPOURING INSTEAD OF TO THE UPPER ROOM OF A RESIDENCE?

THIS QUESTION BEARS REPEATING:

CONSIDERING THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TEMPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT,
AND GIVEN THAT THE DISCIPLES WITH JESUS FREQUENTED THE TEMPLE **BEFORE** THE DAY OF PENTECOST AND THEN CONTINUED TO DO SO AFTERWARDS,
WHY WOULD THE LORD NOT CHOOSE TO POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN **THE TEMPLE**?

ONE POSSIBLE REASON IS THAT THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST WAS GOING TO BE POURED OUT UPON “ALL FLESH” (JOEL 2:28)
— NOT JUST UPON THE JEWS.

TO POUR OUT THE HOLY GHOST IN A DISTINCTIVELY JEWISH BUILDING OF WORSHIP WOULD SEEM TO SEND THE WRONG MESSAGE.

REMEMBER — THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST, REPLACED THE TEMPLE AS GOD’S “DWELLING PLACE” — AT 6 A.M. ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST!

ANOTHER POSSIBLE REASON IS THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE TEMPLE AND IT WAS IN JERUSALEM.

IN ACTS 1:8 JESUS SPECIFICALLY COMMANDED THE DISCIPLES TO GO INTO ALL THE WORLD TO BE WITNESSES UNTO HIM.

THE FATHER APPARENTLY DID NOT WANT TO CONNECT THE FULFILLING OF HIS PROMISE TO POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT UPON ALL FLESH TO A SPECIFIC LOCATION OR STRUCTURE.

ALL NATIONS/CITIES HAD HOUSES; BUT, AGAIN, ONLY ONE NATION/CITY HAD THE TEMPLE.

**FURTHERMORE, WE KNOW WHERE THE TEMPLE WAS/IS LOCATED;
BUT, WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE THE “UPPER ROOM” WAS LOCATED.**

THIS PREVENTS IT FROM BEING MADE INTO A SHRINE OR “HOLY PLACE.”

**THE ONLY “HOLY PLACE” TO EACH OF US IS THE PLACE WHERE WE EACH
FIRST RECEIVED THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST!**

THIS IS AS IT SHOULD BE!

**THE FATHER ALSO MAY NOT HAVE WANTED TO ASSOCIATE THE JERUSALEM
TEMPLE WITH THE INITIAL OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY GHOST BECAUSE THE
INAUGURATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS TO MARK THE REPLACING OF
THE EARTHLY TEMPLE BUILDING WITH THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE OF THE BODY
OF CHRIST.**

**THE FORMER MAN-MADE TEMPLE WAS BEING SUPERSEDED BY A “BETTER”
TEMPLE “NOT MADE WITH HANDS” — THE CHURCH — THE BODIES OF ALL
BELIEVERS WHICH ARE THE “**TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.**”
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THAT DECLARATION,
THE FATHER QUITE POSSIBLY WAS ESTABLISHING A PATTERN OR STANDARD
THAT ANY LOCATION WHERE THIS NEW “TEMPLE” WOULD GATHER IN HIS
NAME WOULD BE CONSIDERED PROVISIONALLY “HOLY” BECAUSE THE
GATHERERS THEMSELVES WERE SANCTIFIED.**

**GOD ALSO MAY HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PREVENT EXACTLY WHAT
EVENTUALLY HAPPENED:
HIS BODY/HIS HOUSE BEING REPLACED (IN OUR MINDS, FAITH, PRACTICES,
AND SPIRITS) BY PHYSICAL STRUCTURES WHICH WE HAVE CALLED “THE
CHURCH.” JESUS DID SAY IN MATTHEW 18:20,**

**“For *WHERE* two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the
midst of them.”**

*WHERE (Strong’s Greek Dictionary) g3757. o hou; genitive case of 3739 as
adverb; at which place, i.e. where: — where(-in), whither(-soever).*

WHATEVER HIS MANY REASONS WERE OR COULD HAVE BEEN,
THE IRREFUTABLE FACT REMAINS THAT GOD **DID NOT CHOOSE** THE
TEMPLE AS THE LOCATION OF THE SECOND GREATEST EVENT SINCE THE
CREATION OF MAN (CALVARY BEING THE FIRST, WHICH MADE THE SECOND
POSSIBLE).

WHERE DID THE LORD CHOOSE TO FULFILL THE “PROMISE OF THE FATHER”?

IN THE UPPER ROOM OF AN UNNAMED HOUSE!

MUCH OF THE EARLY CHURCH'S GATHERINGS AND MINISTRY WERE IN HOUSES.

Acts 2:41-42,46-47

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And **they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

46 And they, **CONTINUING DAILY WITH ONE ACCORD IN THE TEMPLE, and breaking bread from HOUSE TO HOUSE, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,**

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. **And the Lord added to the church [A BUILDING?] daily such as should be saved.**

Acts 5:41-6:1

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

42 And **DAILY IN THE TEMPLE, and IN EVERY HOUSE, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.**

6:1 **And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied,** there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

QUESTION:

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE FATHER WAS MOVED TO ALLOW INCREASED PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH, ESPECIALLY IN JERUSALEM, TO DRIVE THOSE WITH THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION OUT INTO THE WORLD IN ORDER TO FULFIL WHAT HE HAD COMMANDED THEM TO DO?

IN THE 70 A.D. DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, THIS EMPHASIS WAS BOTH OBVIOUS AND OMINOUS.

THE TEMPLE WAS NOT ONLY DESTROYED, BUT THE GROUND WAS PLOWED.

SELAH! (THE TEMPLE'S DESTRUCTION WAS EVEN WORSE THAN ANYTHING CAUSED BY A SNOW STORM — 2-18-03)

CONSIDER THIS:

THE STATEMENT MADE IN ACTS 5:42 THAT THEY WERE “DAILY IN THE TEMPLE” IS **THE LAST TIME** THAT ANY SUCH STATEMENT WAS MADE IN THE REMAINDER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

AFTER THIS, ATTENDANCE AT THE TEMPLE IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS AGAIN,
EXCEPT WHEN PAUL VISITED THERE ON HIS LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.

ON A SIDE NOTE, CONSIDER THAT THIS FINAL VISIT BY PAUL TO THE TEMPLE WAS THE CATALYST FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF HIS MINISTRY.

WHY? BECAUSE THE JEWS ARRESTED HIM AND WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM IF HE HAD NOT APPEALED TO CAESAR AND BEEN “ESCORTED” TO ROME.

THE FIRST GENTILES TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST, RECEIVED IT IN A HOUSE

ACTS 10 — PETER PREACHED THE FIRST GOSPEL MESSAGE TO THE GENTILES IN A HOUSE BELONGING TO THE ROMAN CENTURION CORNELIUS.

Acts 10:23-27

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was **coming in [TO CORNELIUS' HOUSE — SEE ACTS 11:12 BELOW]**, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and **found many that were come together.**

Acts 11:12-15

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and **we entered into THE MAN'S HOUSE:**

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And **as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.**

NOTE:

JUST AS IT OCCURRED IN JERUSALEM ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, THE FIRST OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY GHOST UPON THE GENTILES WAS ALSO IN A HOUSE.

UPON HIS ARRIVAL, PETER FOUND THAT MANY HAD GATHERED IN CORNELIUS' HOUSE TO HEAR WHAT GOD WOULD SAY THROUGH HIM.

**WHILE HE WAS SPEAKING,
THE HOLY GHOST "FELL ON THEM" IN THE EXACT SAME MANNER AS
HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST
— IN ANOTHER HOUSE, IN JERUSALEM.**

PRAYER WAS MADE FOR PETER IN A HOUSE.

HOW DID PETER KNOW WHICH HOUSE TO GO TO AFTER BEING DELIVERED FROM PRISON?

Acts 12:11-12

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered the thing, **he came to the HOUSE** of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; **where many were gathered together praying.**

**UPON BEING DELIVERED FROM PRISON AND A DEATH SENTENCE,
PETER DID NOT "STOP BY THE CHURCH BUILDING" TO REJOICE WITH
EVERYONE.**

NO, HE WENT TO A HOUSE WHERE HE KNEW THEY WOULD BE PRAYING.

EVANGELISM TOOK PLACE OUTSIDE AND RESULTED IN MINISTRY IN A “HOUSE.”

**IN BOTH OF THE FOLLOWING CONTEXTS,
THE INITIAL CONTACT HAPPENED “OUTSIDE”
OF THE HOUSE,
BUT THE MINISTRY TO THE INDIVIDUALS
(LYDIA AND THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER) OPENED
THE DOOR OF EVANGELISM TO THEIR WHOLE
HOUSE(HOLD).**

Acts 16:14-15

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and **her household**, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, **come into my house, and abide there.** And she constrained us.

Acts 16:27-34

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and THY HOUSE.**

32 And **they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were IN HIS HOUSE.**

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them INTO HIS HOUSE, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with ALL HIS HOUSE.

BOTH LYDIA AND THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER HAD THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM OUTSIDE OF THEIR HOUSES.

**BUT, WHEN THEY BOTH BELIEVED,
THEIR FAITH OPENED THE DOOR TO MINISTRY FOR THEIR WHOLE
HOUSEHOLDS
— IN THEIR HOUSES.**

**FURTHERMORE, PAUL WAS INVITED TO “ABIDE” IN BOTH HOUSES AND
CONTINUED TO MINISTER IN THOSE HOUSES UNTO ALL WHO CAME THERE.**

**AGAIN, PAUL OFTEN MINISTERED IN THE SAME HOUSE IN WHICH HE WAS
“ABIDING.”**

PAUL'S MINISTRY IN A HOUSE NEXT DOOR TO THE SYNAGOGUE.

**WHEN THE JEWS OF CORINTH REJECTED HIS MESSAGE,
PAUL'S MINISTRY WAS MOVED TO A HOUSE WHICH BELONGED TO JUSTUS
— EVEN THOUGH HIS HOUSE WAS NEXT DOOR TO THE SYNAGOGUE!**

**ACTUALLY IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE TWO STRUCTURES SHARED A COMMON
WALL.**

Acts 18:1-11

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

6 And **when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed**, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: **from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.**

7 And **he departed thence, and entered into A CERTAIN MAN'S HOUSE, named Justus, one that worshipped God, WHOSE HOUSE JOINED HARD TO THE SYNAGOGUE.**

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all HIS HOUSE; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

**AS WAS PAUL'S NORMAL PRACTICE,
HE WENT TO THE JEWS FIRST IN ANY NEW CITY THAT HE ENTERED INTO FOR
MINISTRY.**

SOMETIMES THEY RECEIVED HIS MINISTRY; SOMETIMES THEY DID NOT.

IN THE CORINTHIAN SCENARIO, A MOST UNUSUAL THING OCCURRED.

WHEN CERTAIN JEWS ROSE UP AGAINST PAUL'S TEACHINGS,

HE RELOCATED HIS MINISTRY NEXT DOOR INTO THE HOUSE OF JUSTUS.

**FREED FROM THE PRESSURE OF THE ENTIRE SYNAGOGUE, THE CHIEF RULER
OF THE SYNAGOGUE BELIEVED AND ALL OF HIS HOUSE!**

AMAZING!

PAUL'S LONG MESSAGE AND A MIRACLE IN A HOUSE!

THE FOLLOWING VERSES DEPICT HOW A YOUNG MAN FELL FROM A WINDOW ON THE THIRD LOFT OF A HOUSE WHERE PAUL WAS TEACHING.

NOTICE THAT THE GATHERING WAS IN AN "UPPER CHAMBER."

Acts 20:6-12

6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

7 And **upon the first day of the week, when the disciples CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD**, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And **there were many lights IN THE UPPER CHAMBER, where they were gathered together.**

9 And **there sat IN A WINDOW a certain young man** named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and **fell down from THE THIRD LOFT**, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and **talked a long while, even till break of day**, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

NOTE:

PAUL TAUGHT AT LEAST 10 HOURS WITH NO RECORDING DEVICE.

POSSIBLY SOMEONE WAS TAKING NOTES (MAYBE SOME FIRST CENTURY FORM OF "SHORTHAND").

REALISTICALLY, THE ONLY WAY THAT PAUL COULD SEE THE BENEFIT OF SPEAKING THAT LONG WAS BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT HE WAS NOT SPEAKING TO THEIR MINDS, BUT RATHER TO THEIR SPIRITS!

THE POINT OF INCLUDING THIS TEXT HERE IS TO EMPHASIZE THAT ONE OF THE MOST WELL KNOWN EVENTS OF PAUL'S MINISTRY TOOK PLACE WHILE HE MINISTERED IN A HOUSE!

PAUL WAS "SCHEDULED" TO LEAVE THE NEXT DAY.

SO, HE STARTED MINISTERING ABOUT "DINNER TIME" AND WAS INTERRUPTED AT ABOUT MIDNIGHT WHEN A YOUNG MAN FELL OUT OF A THIRD-STORY WINDOW AND DIED.

WE REJOICE OVER THE MIRACLE OF THE YOUNG MAN'S RESURRECTION, BUT TWO THINGS WE NORMALLY MISS.

FIRST, PAUL WAS MINISTERING IN A HOUSE! SECOND, AFTER THE MIRACLE, "SERVICE WAS NOT DISMISSED."

PAUL KEPT MINISTERING UNTIL DAYLIGHT.

IS ANYONE YOU KNOW THAT APOSTOLIC? NOT ME!

“PUBLICLY AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.”

Acts 20:17-21

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and **have taught you publicly, and FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE,**

21 **Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**

AS PAUL WAS DEPARTING FROM EPHESUS, HE GAVE A GENERAL SUMMARY OF HIS MANY MINISTERIAL SCENARIOS TO THE ELDERS PRESENT TO BID HIM FAREWELL.

HE DECLARED TO THEM THAT ON MANY OCCASIONS OVER THE YEARS HE HAD TAUGHT THEM “PUBLICLY AND FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.”

THE IMPLICATION OF PAUL’S SUMMARY IS THAT THESE HOUSES WERE HIS NORMAL VENUES OF MINISTRY.

OBVIOUSLY, PAUL ALSO MINISTERED “OUTSIDE” OF BUILDINGS, BUT THAT WAS USUALLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF EVANGELISM.

Acts 17:16-17

16 **Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.**

17 **Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and IN THE MARKET DAILY with them that met with him.**

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT HE CONSIDERED PREACHING IN SYNAGOGUES PART OF HIS “PUBLIC” (OUTSIDE OF HOUSES) MINISTRY.

PAUL’S MINISTRY IN EVERY CITY STARTED IN THE SYNAGOGUES IN ORDER TO GIVE THE JEWS THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO BE SAVED.

IT CANNOT BE EVEN REMOTELY CONSIDERED THAT PAUL EVER WENT TO ANY SYNAGOGUE FOR THE PURPOSE OF USING THAT FACILITY TO ESTABLISH A “CHURCH” IN THAT SPECIFIC CITY.

PAUL COMMANDED US, “Be ye followers [*IMITATORS*] of me, even as I also am [*AN IMITATOR*] of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

PAUL’S MANNER OF SPEAKING PLAINLY COMMUNICATES THAT “IMITATING” HIM IS NOT AN OPTION; IT IS A COMMAND!

PAUL OFTEN MINISTERED IN THE SAME HOUSE WHERE HE WAS “ABIDING.”

Acts 21:8-14

8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and **we entered into THE HOUSE OF PHILIP the evangelist**, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy [THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT THEY PROPHESED IN THEIR HOUSE].

10 **And as we tarried THERE [IN THE HOUSE] many days**, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will the Lord be done.

OBVIOUSLY PAUL'S REGULAR PATTERN WAS TO MAKE WHATEVER HOUSE HE RESIDED IN THE FOCAL POINT OF HIS MINISTRY FOR THAT AREA.

THE ONE TIME THAT WAS NOT THE CASE WAS DURING HIS TWO YEARS OF TEACHING IN THE "SCHOOL OF TYRANNUS" IN EPHESUS.

YEARS AGO IT WAS THE NORM FOR VISITING MINISTERS TO STAY IN THE HOMES OF THE PASTOR OR ONE OF THE SAINTS.

ONE OF THE GREATEST SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE OCCURRED WHEN TWO MEN OF GOD STAYED IN OUR HOME AS I WAS ABOUT TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

I HAVE NO MEMORY OF WHAT EITHER MAN SAID IN THE CHURCH SERVICES — AT ALL.

BUT, I VIVIDLY REMEMBER THE IMPACT THAT THEY HAD ON ME WHILE STAYING IN OUR HOUSE!

IT COMPLETELY CHANGED MY LIFE AND MY SPIRITUAL DIRECTION.

THE IMPACT OF THEIR MINISTRY ON ME IN MY FAMILY'S HOME STILL RESONATES WITHIN ME TO THIS DAY!

WHAT MUST IT HAVE BEEN LIKE TO HAVE HAD "ACCESS" TO PAUL AND HIS MINISTRY THROUGHOUT THE DAY BECAUSE HE WAS STAYING IN THE HOUSE WHERE THE CHURCH USUALLY MET? BEYOND IMAGINATION!

“GREET THE CHURCH IN THEIR HOUSE”

IN SEVERAL OF HIS EPISTLES, PAUL REFERS TO THE “CHURCH IN THE HOUSES” WHERE PEOPLE GATHERED TO WORSHIP.

NOTE THAT IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING REFERENCES, “THE CHURCH” IS NOT THE HOUSE ITSELF, BUT RATHER IT IS THE COLLECTIVE BODY OF BELIEVERS THAT MEET IN THAT INDIVIDUAL’S HOUSE.

Romans 16:3-5

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise **greet THE CHURCH THAT IS IN THEIR HOUSE.** Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, **WITH THE CHURCH THAT IS IN THEIR HOUSE.**

Colossians 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and **THE CHURCH WHICH IS IN HIS HOUSE.**

Philemon 1:1-2

1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,

2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and **TO THE CHURCH IN THY HOUSE:**

THE VARIED REFERENCES INCLUDED HERE DEMONSTRATE THAT THIS PRACTICE OF IDENTIFYING A SPECIFIC CHURCH IN A CITY OR AREA WITH THE “HOUSE” THAT THEY MET IN WAS THE NORM FOR THE GENTILE CHURCH.

THERE IS A CONSPICUOUS ABSENCE OF ANY REFERENCE TO A “CHURCH” WHICH MET IN A “PUBLIC” BUILDING. THIS IS A GLARING AND UNAVOIDABLE FACT!

CHURCHES IN HOUSES

IN THE LIGHT OF PAUL'S OTHER REFERENCES AND CONSIDERING THE CONTEXTS IN WHICH THEY ARE MENTIONED, THE FOLLOWING REFERENCES TO "HOUSES" OR "HOUSEHOLDS" HAD TO HAVE BEEN ADDRESSING THE CHURCHES WHICH MET IN THESE HOMES.

1 Corinthians 1:11-17

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, **by them which are of THE HOUSE of Chloe**, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

16 And I baptized also **the household of Stephanas**: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

1 Corinthians 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know **the house of Stephanas**, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that **they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints**.)

2 Timothy 4:19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and **the household of Onesiphorus**.

WHILE THE WORD "CHURCH" IS NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN THE SCRIPTURE REFERENCES INCLUDED HERE, PAUL'S NORMAL METHODS OF ADDRESS AND/OR THE CONTEXT OF EVERY ONE OF THESE TEXTS POINT TO THE "CHURCH IN THESE HOUSES" AS THE SUBJECT OF THE DISCUSSION.

THE FOLLOWING VERSES HAVE TO ALSO BE REFERENCES TO “CHURCHES,” EVEN THOUGH THE WORD “HOUSEHOLD” WAS NOT IN THE ORIGINAL GREEK TEXT.

Romans 16:10-11

10 Salute Apelles approved in Christ. **Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*.**

11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. **Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus,** which are in the Lord.

IN BOTH VERSES 10 AND 11 OF ROMANS 16, THERE WAS NO GREEK WORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK MANUSCRIPT THAT WAS TRANSLATED AS *HOUSEHOLD*.

THIS ITALICIZED WORD IN THE *KING JAMES VERSION* TEXT WAS SUPPLIED BY THE TRANSLATORS BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THE WORD WAS IMPLIED BY THE CONTEXT.

IN BOTH VERSES THE TRANSLATORS COULD HAVE EASILY INSERTED THE WORD “HOUSE” INSTEAD OF “HOUSEHOLD,” CONSIDERING PAUL’S NORMAL EXPRESSIONS AS THE PATTERN.

WHY THEY DID NOT IS ANYBODY’S GUESS.

PAUL'S MINISTRY AND THE APOSTOLIC PATTERN OF HOUSE TO HOUSE MINISTRY.

THE BOOK OF ACTS CONCLUDES WITH PAUL PREACHING AND TEACHING FOR TWO YEARS IN HIS OWN HOUSE IN ROME.

Acts 28:30-31

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years IN HIS OWN *HIRE*D HOUSE, and received all that **CAME IN** unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

WHAT DID PAUL DO FOR ALL OF THOSE WHO CAME TO "VISIT" HIM IN HIS HOUSE?

HE PREACHED TO THEM AND TAUGHT THEM ABOUT JESUS!

PAUL WAS ALLOWED TO MINISTER FOR THE TWO YEARS THAT HE WAS UNDER "HOUSE ARREST" IN ROME, BUT ONLY TO THOSE WHO CAME TO VISIT HIM IN HIS "RENTAL" HOUSE.

FURTHERMORE, THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES SEEMINGLY DID NOTHING TO PREVENT ANY OF THIS FROM HAPPENING!

ONE FINAL NOTE ON THIS POINT, EXCEPT FOR THE EPISTLE OF JAMES, ACTS IS THE ONLY BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT DOES NOT END WITH THE WORD "AMEN."

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT THE BOOK OF ACTS, THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, ENDS WITH PAUL MINISTERING FOR TWO YEARS IN ROME – **FROM HIS HOUSE!**

PAUL FREQUENTLY ADDRESSES BOTH THE LEADERS AND THE CHURCHES IN THOSE LEADERS' HOUSES.

Romans 16:3-5

3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

4 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5 Likewise **greet THE CHURCH THAT IS IN THEIR HOUSE.** Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

1 Corinthians 16:19 The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, **WITH THE CHURCH THAT IS IN THEIR HOUSE.**

Colossians 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and **THE CHURCH WHICH IS IN HIS HOUSE.**

Philemon 1:1-2

1 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,

2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and **TO THE CHURCH IN THY HOUSE:**

THE VERSES INCLUDED HERE AND IN THE PREVIOUS LESSONS (*MANY MORE THAN TWO OR THREE WITNESSES*) MAKE IT ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT PAUL CONSIDERED "CHURCHES" MEETING IN PRIVATE HOUSES TO BE THE NEW TESTAMENT NORM.

THIS CONCLUSION DOES NOT ELIMINATE AND NEITHER IS IT A SUBSTITUTE FOR REGULAR AND/OR OCCASIONAL COLLECTIVE CHURCH GATHERINGS AT A DESIGNATED PUBLIC LOCATION.

BUT, NEITHER IS MEETING ONLY IN A PUBLIC FACILITY AN ACCEPTABLE BIBLICAL SUBSTITUTE FOR THE OBVIOUS "HOUSE TO HOUSE" EXPRESSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH'S MINISTRY.

**TO FURTHER MAKE THIS POINT,
CONSIDER PAUL'S ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE
WITH CHURCHES IN HOUSES:
FOR SAUL TO BE ABLE TO PERSECUTE "THE
CHURCH," HE HAD TO ENTER INTO HOUSES!**

Acts 8:3-4

3 As for Saul, he made havock of **the church, entering into every HOUSE**, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

NOTE:

**FOR SAUL TO "MAKE HAVOCK OF THE CHURCH,"
HE HAD TO "ENTER INTO EVERY HOUSE."**

NOTE, HE DID NOT ENTER INTO "CHURCH BUILDINGS"!

NEITHER DID HE ENTER INTO THE TEMPLE!

**IF HE WANTED TO FIND THE CHURCH, HE HAD TO GO INTO THE HOUSES
WHERE THEY MET!**

THE APOSTLE JOHN'S REFERENCE TO CHURCHES IN HOUSES

THE APOSTLE JOHN ALSO USED THE WORD "HOUSE" AS BEING SYNONYMOUS WITH "CHURCH."

2 John 1:9-12

9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10 **If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into YOUR HOUSE,** neither bid him God speed:

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THIS TEXT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY HAS TO BE THAT JOHN WAS NOT WARNING PEOPLE AGAINST ALLOWING ("WELCOMING") "GUESTS" INTO THEIR HOMES THAT DID NOT FULLY AGREE WITH THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE — THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

HIS WARNING UNDOUBTABLY WAS AGAINST ALLOWING SOMEONE WITH FALSE DOCTRINE TO "MINISTER" TO THE CHURCHES THAT MET IN VARIOUS HOMES WHERE JOHN HAD THE AUTHORITY TO GIVE SUCH SPECIFIC AND DEFINITIVE INSTRUCTIONS — **COMMANDMENTS.**

IN FACT JOHN'S CONCERN WAS SO GREAT THAT HE "FORBID" THEM FROM EVEN SAYING "GOD BLESS YOU" TO THESE PROPONENTS OF FALSE DOCTRINE.

THE ONE SEEMING “EXCEPTION” TO THE PREMISE OF THIS STUDY?

**PAUL USES THE TERMINOLOGY “COME
TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH” ONE TIME.**

WAS PAUL REFERRING TO BELIEVERS GATHERING IN A “CHURCH BUILDING”?

1 Corinthians 11:17-22

17 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that **ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.**

18 For first of all, **WHEN YE COME TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH**, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 **When ye come together therefore into one place**, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

**DO THESE VERSES EXPRESS THAT THE “CHURCH” HAD A SEPARATE
MEETING PLACE OUTSIDE OF SOMEONE’S HOUSE?**

**OR, ARE THEY REFERENCING THE CONDUCT OF THE PEOPLE WHEN THEY
COME TOGETHER “INTO ONE PLACE” FOR THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP AND
SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP**

— THAT IT SHOULD NOT DEGENERATE INTO A “PARTY ATMOSPHERE”?

**OUR CONTINUED EXAMINATION OF THIS TEXT AND OTHER COMPANION TEXTS
WILL ALLOW THE BIBLE TO GIVE US THE ANSWER,
NOT MAN’S OPINION OF THE MATTER.**

CONSIDER THESE OTHER TRANSLATIONS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 11:18:

1 Corinthians 11:18 (*New King James Version*)

18 For first of all, when **you come together as a church**, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

1 Corinthians 11:18 (*Literal Translation of the Bible Version*)

18 Indeed, first, I hear divisions to be among you **when you come together in the assembly**. And I believe it in some part.

1 Corinthians 11:18 (*Modern English Version*)

18 First of all, when you **come together as the church**, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

NOTE: IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT EACH OF THESE TRANSLATIONS USES THE SAME GREEK MANUSCRIPT (*TEXTUS RECEPTUS*) AS THE KING JAMES VERSION, WHICH MOST MODERN TRANSLATIONS DO NOT USE.

THEREFORE, THE FACT THAT THEIR TRANSLATIONS DIFFER FROM THE KJV IS DUE TO CONSIDERATIONS OF THE TRANSLATORS, NOT VARIATIONS IN THE GREEK TEXT.

WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE BIBLE IS INFALLIBLE IN ITS ORIGINAL LANGUAGES ONLY.

THERE ARE NO DIVINELY INSPIRED TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE.

THEREFORE, USING THESE OTHER TRANSLATIONS AS EVIDENCE, IT IS SCRIPTURALLY UNPRINCIPLED TO USE THIS SINGLE KING JAMES VERSION TRANSLATION TO TRY AND ESTABLISH THAT THE EARLY CHURCH HAD ONE OR MORE PERMANENT, PUBLIC MEETING FACILITIES.

**PAUL'S ADDRESSING OF WHAT WAS OCCURRING WHEN THE CHURCH CAME TOGETHER PROVIDES NO CONTEXTUAL INDICATORS WHATSOEVER TO ESPOUSE THAT HE IS MAKING ANY REFERENCE TO A DESIGNATED STRUCTURE BEING CALLED A "CHURCH"
— REGARDLESS OF WHERE THAT ASSEMBLING (GATHERING TOGETHER) TOOK PLACE.**

WHILE THE FOLLOWING VERSES SEEM TO BE SOMEWHAT PARALLEL TO 1 CORINTHIANS 11:18 ABOVE, THEY ACTUALLY CLARIFY THAT VERSE.

**THE “HOUSE OF GOD” IS THE CHURCH
— THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE PEOPLE OF GOD
— NOT A BUILDING!**

1 Timothy 3:14-15

14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself **IN THE HOUSE OF GOD, WHICH IS THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, the pillar and ground of the truth.**

NOTE: IT IS LUDICROUS TO SUGGEST THAT PAUL WAS ESPOUSING THAT SOME EDIFICE CALLED A “CHURCH BUILDING” WAS THE “PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.”

Hebrews 3:1-6

1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

3 For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, **INASMUCH AS HE WHO HATH BUILDED THE HOUSE HATH MORE HONOUR THAN THE HOUSE.**

4 For **every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.**

5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

6 **But Christ as a son over his own house; WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE,** if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH;** and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

IN LIGHT OF THESE AND ALL OF THE OTHER VERSES CITED IN THIS STUDY, IT IS SIMPLY NOT POSSIBLE THAT GOD **EVER** INTENDED FOR HIS CHURCH TO BE IDENTIFIED AS BEING SYNONYMOUS TO A "BUILDING"!

FURTHER EXAMPLES OF PAUL'S USE OF THE PHRASE "IN THE CHURCH"

TO FURTHER CONFIRM PAUL'S INTENTIONS IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11:18, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING VERSES WHICH CONTAIN EVERY EXAMPLE OF PAUL'S USE OF THE PHRASE "IN THE CHURCH" NOT ALREADY INCLUDED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

1 Corinthians 4:16-17

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, **as I teach every where IN EVERY CHURCH.**

1 Corinthians 6:1-4

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge **who are least esteemed IN THE CHURCH.**

Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 **Unto him be glory IN THE CHURCH** by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Colossians 4:15-17

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also **IN THE CHURCH of the Laodiceans**; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

Hebrews 2:11-12

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, **IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH will I sing praise unto thee.**

FROM THESE TEXTS IT IS INTELLECTUALLY AND SPIRITUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO JUSTIFY CONCLUDING THAT PAUL WAS ADDRESSING A FACILITY RATHER THAN THE ACTUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BODY OF CHRIST. IMPOSSIBLE!

SUBVERSION OF “HOUSES” OR THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE “BODY OF BELIEVERS” WHO MET IN THOSE HOUSES?

THE “SUBVERSION” OF WHOLE HOUSES IN PAUL’S WARNING IS NOT REFERRING TO “FAMILIES” WHO DWELL IN THOSE HOUSES, BUT TO GROUPS OF BELIEVERS WHO ASSEMBLE IN THOSE “HOUSES.”

Titus 1:10-11

10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, **who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.**

THE TERMINOLOGY USED HERE AND THE PROBLEM BEING ADDRESSED IN THIS STUDY CANNOT BE REASONABLY APPLIED JUST TO ISOLATED FAMILIES OR RESIDENTS OF A HOUSEHOLD.

AGAIN, THE WARNING HAS TO BE ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON WHEN BELIEVERS ARE ASSEMBLING TOGETHER IN THOSE HOUSES.

AN ADDITIONAL NOTE WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE IN VARIOUS WAYS AND WILL BE MADE AGAIN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY:

HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT PAUL AND THE OTHER WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT USE REFERENCES TO "HOUSES" WHEN SPEAKING OF THE CHURCH ALMOST LIKE WE TODAY REFER TO BUILDINGS OWNED BY THE CHURCH?

EVEN THOUGH THEY NEVER CROSS THE LINE AND ACTUALLY EQUATE THE PLACE OF ASSEMBLY WITH THE CHURCH ITSELF, THEY STILL SOMETIMES USE THE ASSEMBLING IN HOUSES AS SEEMINGLY SYNONYMOUS AT TIMES WITH THE CHURCH ITSELF.

SO, LET'S BE BIBLICAL AND SPEAK OF THE "HOUSE OF GOD." ANYONE?

PAUL EXHORTED US ON HOW WE SHOULD “ACT” IN THE CHURCH.

IN 1 CORINTHIANS 14, PAUL GIVES SOME OF HIS MOST SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING WHAT HE EXPECTS TO HAPPEN AND NOT HAPPEN WHEN THE CHURCH GATHERS TOGETHER.

THESE PRINCIPLES WERE INTENDED TO BE APPLIED REGARDLESS OF WHERE (I.E., THE TYPE OF FACILITY USED) THE CHURCH MET.

FROM THIS SCRIPTURAL TEXT, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY THE EXACT TYPE OF FACILITY WHICH WAS USED WHEN THE CHURCH GATHERED.

PAUL’S FOCUS WAS NEVER THE FACILITY AS A PLACE, BUT ALWAYS ON THE RESULTANT GATHERING OF THE CHURCH BODY TOGETHER AS “THE PLACE” — AGAIN, REGARDLESS OF THE FACILITY USED.

CONSIDERING THE PREVIOUS SCRIPTURES QUOTED IN THE ENTIRETY OF THIS STUDY, AND KNOWING IRREFUTABLY THAT THERE IS NO HISTORICAL EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY, IT IS A FACT THAT FOR THE FIRST 300 YEARS OR SO OF ITS HISTORY, NO PART OF THE BODY OF CHRIST EITHER OWNED OR USED A FACILITY IN ANY EARTHLY LOCATION THAT WAS DESIGNATED OR REFERRED TO AS A “CHURCH” BUILDING.

THEREFORE, THE PHRASE “IN THE CHURCH” USED BY PAUL IN THE FOLLOWING TEXT MUST REFER TO THE GATHERING/ASSEMBLING OF THE BODY ITSELF AND NOT TO THE TYPE OF FACILITY USED FOR THE GATHERING!

1 Corinthians 14:18-40

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

19 **Yet in the church** I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23 **IF THEREFORE THE WHOLE CHURCH BE COME TOGETHER INTO ONE PLACE [REGARDLESS OF THE TYPE OF FACILITY USED]**, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

26 How is it then, brethren? **when ye come together**, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence **in the church**; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, **as in all churches of the saints**.

34 Let your women keep silence **in the churches**: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak **in the church**.

36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

40 **Let all things be done decently and in order.**

QUESTION:

WAS PAUL'S PURPOSE IN WRITING THIS TO THE CORINTHIANS TO DISCUSS HIS CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR CONDUCT IN A "CHURCH BUILDING" OR THEIR CONDUCT IN THEIR GATHERINGS AS THE BODY?

THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS OBVIOUS.

A MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION THAT WE SHOULD BE ASKING OURSELVES IS THIS:

DO *OUR* GATHERINGS AND WHAT HAPPENS THERE EVEN REMOTELY "RESEMBLE" WHAT PAUL HAS PRESCRIBED?

NOW THAT REALLY IS THE REAL QUESTION, ISN'T IT?

AN EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OF THE SPECIFICS OF THIS PASSAGE FROM 1 CORINTHIANS WILL REQUIRE ITS OWN STUDY DOCUMENT, BUT STUDY IT WE ALL SHOULD.

CONCLUSION

WHILE THE BRIEF STUDY CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT IS NEITHER EXHAUSTIVE NOR COMPLETE, IT IS SUFFICIENT ENOUGH TO STAND AS A VIABLE AND CREDIBLE EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF HOUSES IN THE MINISTRY OF THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH.

FURTHERMORE, AS HAS BEEN STATED BEFORE, THERE IS NO HISTORICAL EVIDENCE THAT ANY "CHURCH" IN ANY LOCATION IN THE WORLD, IN THE FIRST 300 YEARS OF THE CHURCH'S HISTORY, EVER OWNED A PUBLIC BUILDING FOR EVANGELISTIC PURPOSES.

EVEN THOUGH THE CHURCH IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS DID MEET "PUBLICLY" AT TIMES, THERE IS NO BIBLICAL EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT IT WAS IN ANY FACILITY DESIGNATED AS A "CHURCH" TO WHICH NON-BELIEVERS WERE INVITED.

THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT THE UN-SEALED NEVER ATTENDED THE PUBLIC GATHERINGS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST (SEE 1 CORINTHIANS 14:23-25).

IT IS JUST THAT THERE IS NO BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR SCHEDULED PUBLIC "SERVICES" ESTABLISHED FOR THAT SPECIFIC PURPOSE.

IT IS NOT UN-BIBLICAL TO INVITE SOULS TO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE BODY OF CHRIST, NO MATTER WHERE IT IS GATHERED.

YET, A CAREFUL, OBJECTIVE EXAMINATION OF JESUS' INTENT IN HIS COMMANDS TO EVANGELIZE WILL COMMUNICATE THAT NEITHER THE "PREACHING" OF THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD (MARK 16:15) AND/OR "WITNESSING" IN JERUSALEM, JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH (ACTS 1:8) ARE FULFILLED BY ONLY AN INVITATION TO ATTEND A "CHURCH SERVICE."

A REASONABLE CONCLUSION COULD AND MAYBE SHOULD BE MADE THAT WHILE THERE IS NO SCRIPTURAL MANDATE AGAINST A LOCAL GEOGRAPHICAL PORTION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST "OWNING" A BUILDING TO BE USED FOR "PUBLIC GATHERINGS" OF THAT ASSEMBLY OF BELIEVERS, IT IS NOT SCRIPTURAL FOR IT TO BECOME THE TOTAL OR EVEN PRIMARY FOCUS OF ALL ACTIVITIES OF EVANGELISM, FELLOWSHIP, AND DISCIPLESHIP.

IN FACT, THERE IS MORE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE PREMISE THAT ALL OF THOSE FOCUSES OF THE CHURCH WERE EXERCISED OUTSIDE OF A FACILITY SO DESCRIBED.

FACTUALLY SPEAKING, THERE IS MUCH SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE THAT PRIVATELY OWNED HOUSES WERE USED AS VENUES FOR BELIEVERS TO GATHER WITH THOSE WHO HAD BEEN WITNESSED TO WITH THE GOSPEL (NOT INVITED TO A "CHURCH SERVICE").

SOULS WERE WITNESSED TO IN THE "FIELD" (THE WORLD) AND THOSE THAT RESPONDED TO THE GOSPEL, EITHER BY BEING SAVED FIRST (BEING FULLY BORN AGAIN) OR BY BELIEVING THE GOSPEL AND COMING UNDER CONVICTION THOUGH THEIR OBEDIENCE WAS INCOMPLETE, WERE THEN INVITED TO GATHER WITH THE BODY.

WHILE I AM THANKFUL FOR THE FREEDOM THAT THOSE WHO RESIDE IN THE UNITED STATES ARE ENJOYING FOR NOW TO GATHER PUBLICLY FOR WORSHIP, ONE HAS TO ASK WHY THE EARLY CHURCH WOULD NOT HAVE DONE THAT.

EVIDENTLY IT WAS BECAUSE THE CHURCH WAS ILLEGAL IN EVERY NATION UNTIL THE ROMAN EMPEROR CONSTANTINE MADE CHRISTIANITY THE STATE RELIGION OF ROME. IF THE CHURCH WAS "ILLEGAL," THEN IT COULD NOT EASILY EVANGELIZE PUBLICLY, COULD IT?

THEREFORE, MOST OF THE CHURCH'S EFFORTS HAD TO BE DONE PRIVATELY IN HOMES OR OTHER "PRIVATE" PLACES.

IN THE BIBLE THERE WERE OBVIOUSLY SOME OCCASIONS WHEN FEARLESS MEN AND WOMEN OF GOD WOULD DEFY THE LAWS AND PREACH/TEACH OUT IN PUBLIC, BUT THAT OFTEN RESULTED IN PERSECUTION AND/OR ARREST AND/OR DEATH.

THE CONCERN THAT EVERY LEADER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST SHOULD BE ALLOWING THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO ADDRESS WITH THEM IS THIS: WHAT PREPARATIONS CONCERNING THE LOCAL CHURCH'S SPIRITUAL STRUCTURE AND TRAINING PROCEDURES ARE WE MAKING TO PREPARE FOR THE TIME WHEN WE (THOSE PORTIONS OF THE CHURCH CURRENTLY IN THE "FREE WORLD") WILL HAVE TO OPERATE "UNDERGROUND"?

ADDITIONALLY, THE CURRENT CULTURAL CLIMATE OF THE UNITED STATES AND MUCH OF THE WESTERN WORLD HAS ALREADY REACHED A PLACE OF HOSTILITY TOWARDS TRUE BIBLE BELIEVERS.

THIS MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO GET "GUESTS" TO COME TO PUBLIC "CHURCH SERVICES" BECAUSE THEY FEAR BEING OSTRACIZED BY THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES ONCE THEY HEAR THAT THEIR "FRIEND" OR "FAMILY MEMBER" HAS ATTENDED A "CHURCH SERVICE," ESPECIALLY A NON-TRADITIONAL ONE.

THEREFORE, EVEN NOW OUR EVANGELISM EFFORTS WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE AND WOULD MEET WITH LESS RESISTANCE IF PEOPLE WERE BEING INVITED TO A LESS OBVIOUS "RELIGIOUS" ENVIRONMENT.

**CONSIDERING ALL OF THE ABOVE,
WHAT SHOULD OUR PLAN BE FOR MOVING THE CHURCH AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS ON "CHURCH-SERVICE, INVITATIONAL EVANGELISM" AS BEING THE PRIMARY,
IF NOT THE SOLE METHOD FOR PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO THE LOST?**

BIBLICALLY, DISCIPLES ARE "FRUIT BEARERS" (JOHN 15:8).

DISCIPLES DO NOT HAVE TO BE TOLD, PRESSURED, OR SHAMED TO MOTIVATE THEM TO "WITNESS."

INHERENT IN THE SPIRITUAL DNA OF A DISCIPLE IS THE DESIRE AND WILLINGNESS TO SHARE JESUS WITH OTHERS.

PAUL CALLED HIMSELF A "DEBTOR" TO EVERY ONE WHO HAD RECEIVED WHAT HE HAD RECEIVED.

THAT IS TRUE DISCIPLESHIP!

IN SUMMARY, LET'S CONCLUDE WITH SOME "APOSTOLIC" MATH:

- 1) Number of verses where someone was actually baptized in Jesus name in the Book of Acts: 5.
- 2) Number of verses where someone was actually baptized in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in the New Testament: 0.

THEREFORE, USING THIS SAME MATH MODEL:

- 1) Number of verses where it is specifically stated in the New Testament that the Church met in a house or that ministry took place in a house: 20 times — at least!
- 2) Number of verses where it is specifically stated that the Church was identified by a specific public building in which they regularly assembled: 0!

DO OUR "CHURCH BUILDINGS" AS WE CURRENTLY USE THEM CAUSE OR PROMOTE SPIRITUAL PARALYSIS?

**ARE WE "ALLOWING" OR EVEN FACILITATING SPIRITUAL PARALYSIS
BECAUSE ON SOME LEVEL WE ARE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE MAJORITY
OF THOSE WHO ATTEND OUR SERVICES ARE NOT DISCIPLES,
AND THEREFORE ARE NOT "WITNESSES"?**

**HAS IT BECOME "EASIER" TO JUST GIVE IN AND LET THE STATUS QUO
CONTINUE
THAN IT IS TO TAKE A STAND AND TEACH DISCIPLESHIP AND MAKE TRUE
DISCIPLES?**

OF COURSE, THE ULTIMATE QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE ASKED BY EACH OF US TO OURSELVES ARE THESE:
AM I A TRUE DISCIPLE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

IF I SAY THAT I AM A DISCIPLE, THEN DO I HAVE THE LIFE-EVIDENCE TO PROVE THAT I AM?

LET ME ADD HERE THAT PAUL SAID THAT WE ARE TO BE ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN THAT BY ALL MEANS WE MIGHT SAVE SOME (1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-23).

ALSO, THE BIBLE STATES IN ECCLESIASTES 11:1-6 THAT WE SHOULD "GIVE A LITTLE TO SEVEN AND ALSO TO EIGHT" IN OUR SOWING LABORS BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW WHICH TYPE OF EFFORT WILL BE FRUITFUL TODAY.

CONSEQUENTLY, THERE IS NO EXPECTATION OR SUBSTANTIATED, BIBLICAL REQUIREMENT THAT ALL OF OUR "EVANGELISTIC" CHURCH SERVICES BE TOTALLY ELIMINATED.

TO PROPOSE THAT WOULD BE FRUITLESS, USELESS, AND SCRIPTURALLY UNNECESSARY.

THERE ARE AND PROBABLY WILL ALWAYS BE PEOPLE THAT CAN ONLY BE REACHED BY THE "CHURCH SERVICE INVITATION" METHOD.

BUT, THERE IS NO BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THAT METHOD BEING OUR ONLY OR EVEN OUR PRIMARY METHOD OF ATTEMPTING TO OBEY MARK 16:15 AND ACTS 1:8. NONE!

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

NO ONE, ESPECIALLY THIS WRITER, IS ATTEMPTING TO MANDATE THE SALE OF ALL "CHURCH" FACILITIES IN ORDER TO BE "MORE BIBLICAL"

AND/OR TO IMPLY THAT ALL PUBLIC GATHERINGS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST WHICH ARE HELD IN FACILITIES CURRENTLY "CLASSIFIED" AS A "CHURCH BUILDING" SHOULD CEASE.

THE BIBLE PLAINLY COMMANDS BELIEVERS TO GATHER TOGETHER REGULARLY.

IF ANYTHING, WE NEED TO **INCREASE** THE NUMBER OF TIMES THAT WE ARE TOGETHER EACH WEEK (SEE HEBREWS 10:25).

HOWEVER, ANYONE AND EVERYONE WHO DESIRES TO BE TRULY APOSTOLIC IS SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES TO EXAMINE AND EVALUATE ALL THAT WE DO AND ALL THAT WE FOCUS UPON SO THAT COLLECTIVELY WE CAN BECOME MORE IN TUNE WITH THE APOSTLES
— BOTH IN WHAT THEY TAUGHT AND IN WHAT THEY PRACTICED.

OUR “SEARCHING” OF AND “SUBMITTING” TO THE SCRIPTURES AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD FOR THE PURPOSE OF BECOMING MORE APOSTOLIC IS NOT AN EVENT;
IT IS A PROCESS.

BUT, IT MUST BE A PROCESS THAT WE ARE FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATING IN, AND NOT ONE THAT WE ARE AVOIDING AT ALL COSTS.

Why? Because the costs of avoiding this process are very high.

THEY ARE MUCH HIGHER THAN ANY POTENTIAL PRICE FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROCESS.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THE LOST OF THIS WORLD ARE WAITING FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF HIS CHURCH
WHEN IT HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED TO BECOME WHAT HE SPECIFICALLY TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES TO BE
AND WHAT HE TAUGHT THEM TO TEACH US TO BE.

IN JESUS NAME!