

Quarterly

# IT TAKES A COMMUNITY





## “Our Twelve Tribes Who Earnestly Serve God Night and Day, From Sun Up to Sun Down All Over the Earth — In Every Place”<sup>1</sup>

### **Our banner is love for our Father.**

We give our whole hearts to serve Him night and day for the hope of the promise He made to our fathers, Abraham,<sup>1</sup> Isaac, and Jacob, in order to attain for them what He promised.<sup>2</sup> We serve in their place, to overcome where they did not, in order to bear the fruit that our Father has always wanted<sup>3</sup> — a people, young and old, who will keep the way of Yahweh in righteousness and justice.<sup>4</sup>

Our confidence is that if we bear that fruit, overcoming our spiritual enemies by the grace and faith He provides,<sup>5</sup> then Messiah will return to bring an end to this wicked age and give to Abraham’s descendents the enemy-free land He promised him.<sup>6</sup> Then He will establish His throne in Jerusalem, with His twelve apostles on twelve thrones ruling over the twelve tribes of physical Israel.<sup>7</sup>

Now in this present age the prophecy of Isaiah 49:6 must be fulfilled in order for this restoration of physical Israel spoken of in Acts 3:21 to take place in the next age.

**As Matthew 5:17 says,** the reason the Messiah came was to fulfill, not to annul the law and the prophets, its instruction and prophecy. The prophecy includes Isaiah 49:6. Only by the very Spirit of the God of Abraham can his seed — his spiritual descendents — do this.<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 49:6-8 parallels Acts 26:6-8. Verse 8 in each case is the resurrection of national Israel’s twelve tribes in the millennial age.<sup>9</sup> In Isaiah 49:8 the age-old inheritance will once more and finally be given to the descendents of Abraham, and they will be a twelve-tribed nation in the next age. But this can only come about after spiritual Israel overcomes all of his spiritual enemies<sup>10</sup> and binds the Serpent<sup>11</sup> in

this present age. Hebrews 10:13 takes teamwork of all the spiritual but corporeal twelve tribes together in this age. According to Acts 3:21, “heaven holds Him” until Hebrews 10:13 is accomplished. Then Matthew 19:28 will be restored, and that will be in the next age, culminating in the fullness of Messiah and His bride.<sup>12</sup>

So now, in this present age, Matthew 21:43 says the kingdom was taken away from them, natural Israel, and given to Gentiles<sup>13</sup> who would become that twelve-tribed spiritual nation. In order to produce the fruit of the kingdom, a new nation had to be born, the nation of 1 Peter 2:9 and Isaiah 49:6. They would attain to what He promised Abraham in Genesis 15:18 by the grace available through Messiah.

**God’s promise to Abraham** was a self-cursing oath as Jeremiah 34:18-20 describes. He had Abraham cut the calf in two and He passed between the parts of it.<sup>14</sup> True covenants are all but lost today, but in ancient Israel for a man to make or cut a covenant was to call down curses upon himself if he failed to keep the covenant. The Lord was the promising party. Abraham and his offspring keeping Genesis 18:19 was what would allow Him to bring about the promise. But they did not bear the fruit of Genesis 18:19, so Jesus Himself prophesied in Matthew 21:43 that would be left to another people to bring about the promise God made to Abraham concerning the land as an everlasting possession to the natural descendents of Abraham.


So, as Paul spoke in Acts 26:7, Abraham’s spiritual seed<sup>15</sup> would do it for them. In Acts 13:47, Paul applied the prophecy of Isaiah 49:6 directly to his own apostolic ministry. The restoration of

the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel spoken of in Isaiah 49:6 will bring about verse 8 — it will cause natural Israel to inherit their desolate heritage. This is exactly what Paul understood and expressed in Acts 26:6-7, which brings about verse 8 — the “resurrection” of natural Israel, just as Paul longed for in Romans 11:12-15.

This transfers the responsibility of the covenant to a new people — a “new Israel” — to bring about the promise He made to Abraham. Jeremiah 31:1 is established by the New Covenant of verses 31-34 to bring to pass Matthew 19:28 in the next age.

**The covenant** God made with Abraham represents God’s very own reputation and character, and the awesome responsibility He placed upon Himself to fulfill the promise, and upon Abraham and his seed after Him to do what God chose him to do.<sup>16</sup> God actually put Himself at risk, knowing that He would have spiritual descendents of Abraham in Messiah to do for them what they did not do for themselves.<sup>17</sup>

Isaiah 49:6 is that nation, the holy nation that Peter spoke of in 1 Peter 2:9-10, and that Paul claimed as his own in Acts 26:6-8. They are the twelve tribes raised up among the Gentiles, outside the borders of physical Israel,<sup>18</sup> who serve night and day for the hope of the promise made to our spiritual fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**Israel is Israel** only as a completed whole. Israel is Israel only as a twelve tribed nation. Jacob had twelve sons. Jesus had twelve apostles. The nation has twelve gates<sup>19</sup> and they are open night and day. In fact they never close.<sup>20</sup> The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!”<sup>21</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> John 8:39; Romans 4:16 <sup>2</sup> Acts 26:6-7 <sup>3</sup> Matthew 21:43 <sup>4</sup> Genesis 18:19 <sup>5</sup> Hebrews 10:13 <sup>6</sup> Genesis 15:10,17,18 <sup>7</sup> Matthew 19:28 <sup>8</sup> Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 8:4; Acts 26:6-8 <sup>9</sup> Matthew 19:28; Romans 11:15 <sup>10</sup> Hebrews 10:13 <sup>11</sup> Revelation 20:1-3 <sup>12</sup> Revelation 21:1-3 <sup>13</sup> Malachi 1:5-11; Acts 13:45-48 <sup>14</sup> Jeremiah 34:18-20; Genesis 15:10,17 <sup>15</sup> Galatians 3:16,26-29 <sup>16</sup> Genesis 18:19 <sup>17</sup> Matthew 21:33-45; Genesis 18:19 <sup>18</sup> Malachi 1:5,11 <sup>19</sup> Revelation 21:9-12 <sup>20</sup> Isaiah 45:1 <sup>21</sup> Revelation 22:17



## Table of Contents

# It Takes a Community

### PART 1: CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP



**4 Cult Leader**  
Jesus was the most notorious “cult leader” of His time.



**13 Circle of Disciples**  
Is there a difference between being a disciple and just going to church?

- **12 Get with the Program**  
Did Jesus’ life go the wrong way?
- **8 Salvation**  
More than just a get-out-of-Hell-free card
- **26 Cost of Discipleship**  
A standard that hasn’t changed



**28 Incarnation**  
A visible body was formed on Pentecost when His Spirit became incarnate in a people.



**32 A Place to Belong**  
The community is a place where He resides and His people reside.

### PART 2: IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

- **36 Shepherds Care for the Flock**  
Not with flattering speech or by making a name for themselves.
- **40 Will God Get What He Deserves?**  
Will the Bride be purified and prepared for His Son’s return?
- **45 Who We Are**



**46 The Dissenter**  
Outside the security of organized religion, His followers can lay hold of salvation.



**51 Thirsting for the Water of Life**  
Who is thirsty enough to overcome every obstacle?



### PART 3: THE VOICE OF DISSENT

- **64 The Idealized Nation**

**57 Living Water**  
Believing from the heart leads to intimate fellowship with the Master and His people.

## Part 1: Call to Discipleship

“Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.’”

(LUKE 14:26-27)

# Cult Leader

HOW THEY HATED THE IMPOSTER STEALING THEIR DISCIPLES: HE WAS TELLING THEM THE TRUTH!

### A nobody

When Jesus said those words He meant them. He was making the point that in order for a person to be a true disciple, he had to forsake anything or anybody that would hinder him from doing so wholeheartedly. His love for his Master and Savior had to be so great that he would hate anything that would keep him from carrying out His will. As Jesus said these things to His followers, perhaps He thought back to the time when even He had to disregard the words of His own mother, Mary. That day He had been sitting in the house with His circle of disciples and the crowd of people who hung on His every word. Filled with the Holy Spirit, He was speaking to them in parables, but the priests and the Pharisees were outraged. “Who does this *nobody* from Nazareth think he is, telling the people that the religion of today is corrupt? We are the ones chosen to teach about God... this man has lost his mind!”

Word had reached His mother and brothers that He had gone crazy and that He had a demon! What had happened to Him since that day so long ago when He was a small boy and yet He confounded all the teachers in the temple with His deep wisdom of the scriptures and the prophecies? Why weren't they accepting Him now? Surely He had gone off... something had gone wrong... She must go immediately and get Him before it was too late.

### A sign to be spoken against

But remember the words of Simeon back when He was just a little baby and Mary and Joseph had brought him to the temple to be dedicated? “Behold *this child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be spoken against. And a sword will pierce even your own soul...*” (Luke 2:34-35). What did that mean? Why would the Messiah be spoken against? Shouldn't He be received with great pomp and ceremony? Certainly something wasn't right.

So off she went with her other sons to rescue Him. When she arrived at the house it was so packed full of people that she couldn't even get in. People were sitting and standing anywhere they could, just to hear what He was saying, just to catch a glimpse of Him. And there were the Pharisees, filled with jealousy toward this imposter who was stealing all their loyal disciples away and telling them the truth. How they hated the truth, grinding their teeth at every word that shined a light into their dark souls, revealing that they were really nothing but hollow shells that produced no fruit.



*As a small boy He confounded all the teachers in the temple with His deep wisdom of the scriptures and the prophecies.*



### **Leaders and laity**

The Master had said to them, *“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing the fruit of it”* (Matthew 21:43). They were the leaders of a dry and mystical religion that had no love in it, nor any semblance of a link back to God. But still, they were the *leaders*. They obeyed the law meticulously, so they didn’t need love or joy or peace or patience, gentleness, self-control, or any of the things that this man talked so much about. (But it was these qualities that captured the hearts of the people.) They had the law of Moses and the traditions of Judaism, which had been passed down for hundreds of years. Now all their people were being misled by this blasphemer. They would have to do something to gather their sheep back into the fold, or else they would lose their entire nation. Eventually they’d all be converted to this crazy man’s cult. Yes, that’s what He was... a cult leader!

So there was Mary, Jesus’ own mother, hearing all the things these respected leaders were saying about her Son. But did she remember the words? *“...and a sword will pierce your own soul to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”* Did she understand that the very thoughts of their hearts were being revealed?

### **His circle of disciples**

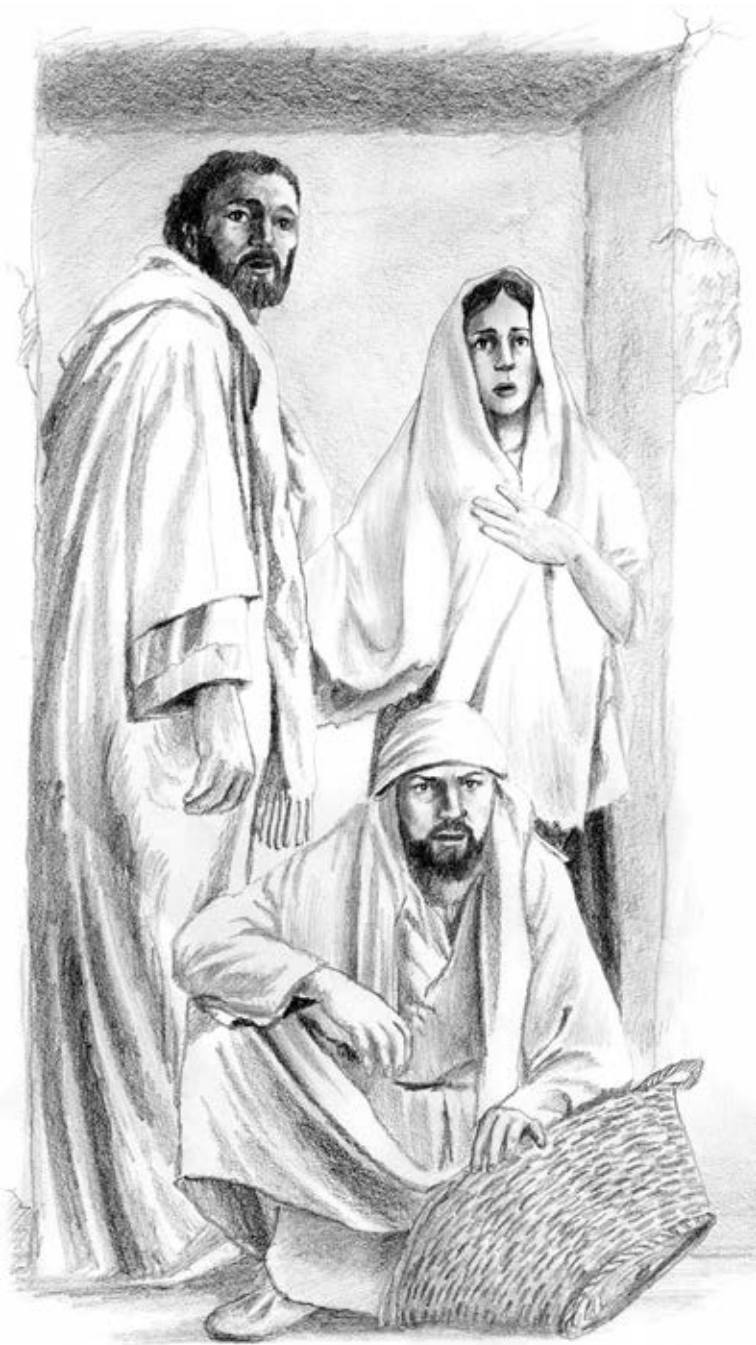
“Can you please give this message to my son,” she asked the nearest bystander. “Please tell him that his mother and brothers are here to see him... we need to talk to him right away.” She waited anxiously for Him to come running out. “Surely he’ll come out to talk to me after all I’ve done for him. I mean, I am his mother.”

He would never want to split up families, especially His own family, would He? Would God ever ask such a thing? After a moment or two, she noticed a hush come over the crowd. She strained her ears to hear if the message had made it to Him... then she heard the reply. Yes, she knew it came from Him, she knew His voice so well. *“Who are my mother and my brothers?”*

Desperately pushing aside those in her way she made her way close so He could see her. But she noticed Him looking around at His circle of disciples who were sitting tightly around Him... then He was motioning to them.

**“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.”**

(MATTHEW 12:33-34)



*Like a knife the words plunged into her soul. He would not come out... He was devoted to those people sitting with Him in there.*

*"Behold my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."* Like a knife the words plunged into her soul. He would not come out... He was devoted to those people sitting with Him in there. He would stay with them. The words of Simeon resounded in her heart with unmistakable clarity. Now she understood. He had now become the sign that would be spoken against. He had become the witness of God on the earth that would be opposed by all the spiritual forces of the evil one. And the evil one was manifested in the leading men of their religion — the preachers of their congregations and synagogues. They were the ones speaking against him. But He didn't care what the religious leaders thought of him. No, He was gathering people who would set themselves apart to do the same thing He had — to be holy and set apart, a nation separate from the world.

#### **Love for one another**

He would establish the true kingdom of God on the earth, even if it separated mother from son and brother from brother. He would not compromise or let the gospel be watered down. He wanted a circle of disciples who would take on His own heart. Therefore He said, *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:35). How could his disciples have true love for one another if they all lived their own separate lives? How could their love be shown as a witness so that all men would know and be persuaded that they were true disciples unless they shared a common life together?

#### **Obedying the gospel**

The Master never meant for there to be divisions and dis-unity among His followers. He wanted there to be love and care to show how God really is.

In John 17:11, just before He was brutally murdered, the Master had earnestly prayed the greatest desire in His heart, *"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Father, keep them in Your name, the name You have given Me, that they may be ONE even as You and I are ONE."*

Is His prayer relevant today? Shouldn't what was so important to the Master back then be just as important today? It had enough weight then that people were abandoning all their possessions and their families to be a part of it. But now most who claim to follow Him are still living their own independent lives and maybe going to church once or twice a week. And they say about the Master's words, "Oh... that was for back then. Things are different now." But why shouldn't the gospel be obeyed today just as it was in the beginning. Can't we break out of the sleepy religious traditions we have grown up with



## It Takes a Community to Love & Love

and recapture the vitality and excitement of those early believers we read about in the Book of Acts?

Yes! Now there is a group of people who are obeying the gospel with all their hearts. They are actually living a life of love and unity,\* (see box) laying down their lives for each another every day. They are getting back to the roots of the true church, the community, not living their own selfish lives, all the while believing that they are doing the will of God. They really live together in community, just like the first church did back then. They deny themselves daily, putting the words of their Master into practice in their own lives, not reasoning them away and excusing their lack of obedience to the gospel He preached.

### Don't be surprised

Sadly, history is beginning to repeat itself. The same thing rises up in the hearts of some of the modern-day religious leaders as it did back then — the response in their hearts that they can't hide because their thoughts are revealed when the truth is shown as a witness. "These people have a demon! They're a cult." But it isn't surprising. In John 15:18 it is recorded that the Master said, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you." Yes, the Master said this would happen. The "world" He referred to that "hated Him" were the religious leaders of His day, and those of today will do the same to anyone who truly believes and lives like He did. 🌿

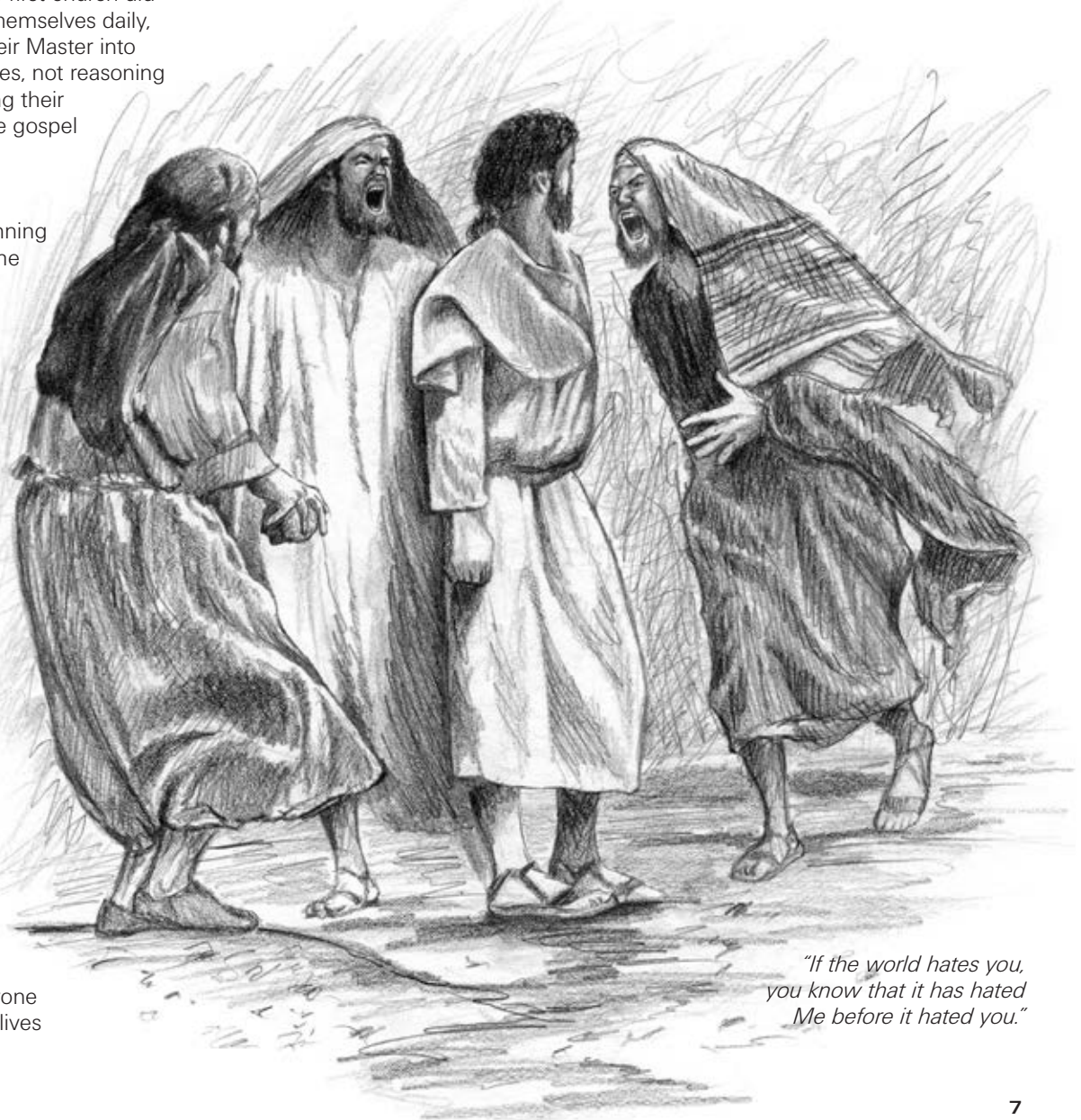
**\* No one has passed out of death** and into life who does not live this way, because they cannot love one another as the Master commanded. John 5:24 is mere doctrine without 1 John 3:14,16,23. So who are His disciples today? John 13:34-35 says all men will know who they are. Can it be the ones who do not live together and only see each other once a week, and then only the back of their heads, asleep in their pews?<sup>1</sup> Can they actually obey His commands? It takes a community to love and

love. Don't think you have passed out of death and into life if you just claim to know Him but do not obey His commandments.<sup>2</sup> Jesus warned the Jews who claimed to "see"<sup>3</sup> that they would die in their sins, and the apostle John wrote the letter of 1 John to the church so that those in it who claimed to "see" would see whether they had truly believed unto eternal life.<sup>4</sup> 🌿

<sup>1</sup> 1 John 3:16; Ephesians 5:14

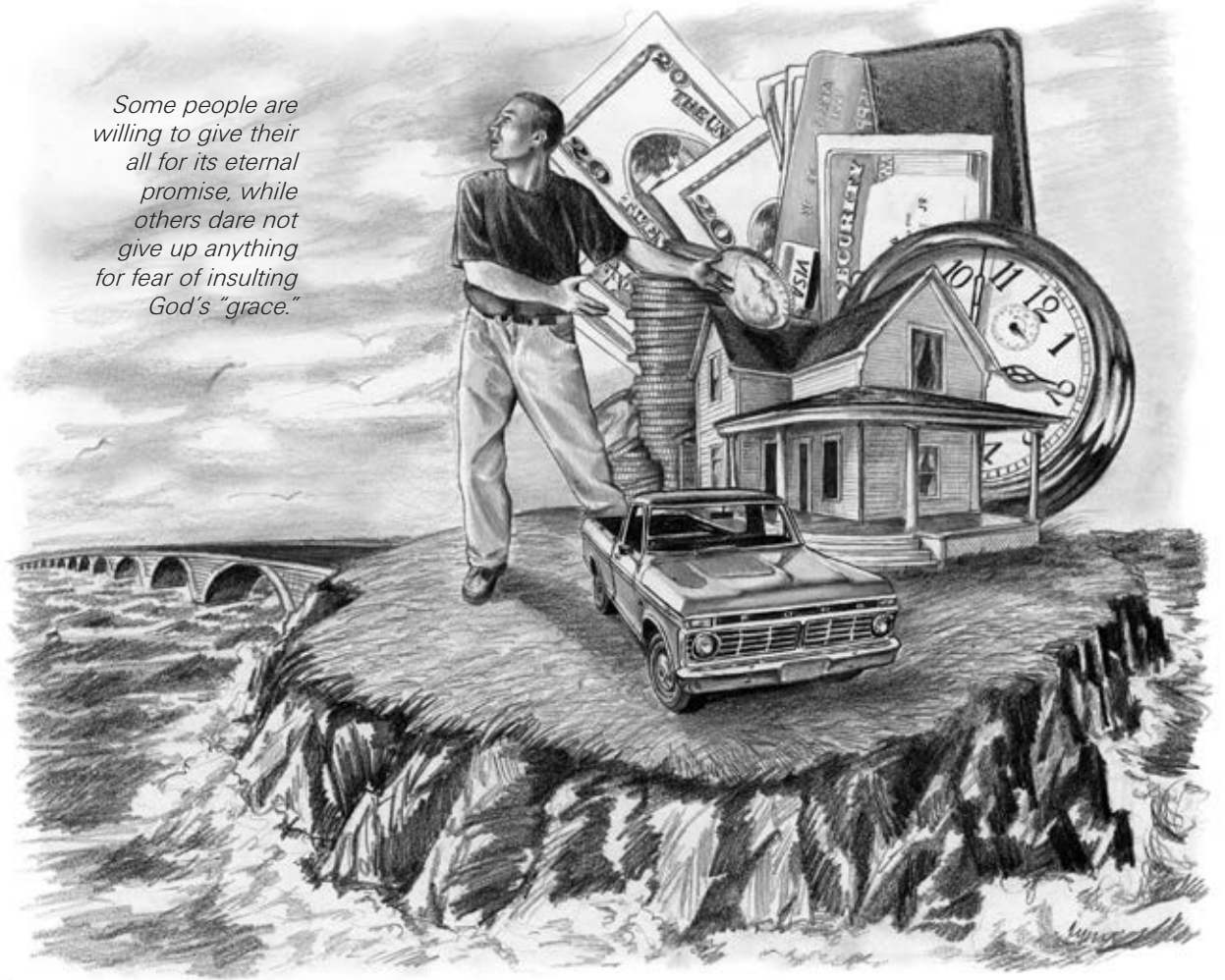
<sup>2</sup> 1 John 2:4 <sup>3</sup> John 9:41

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 5:12-13



*"If the world hates you,  
you know that it has hated  
Me before it hated you."*

*Some people are willing to give their all for its eternal promise, while others dare not give up anything for fear of insulting God's "grace."*



# Salvation

**A TESTIMONY:** I NEEDED TO BE FIXED... HEALED... RESTORED. I WAS SICK IN MY SOUL AND I NEEDED A DOCTOR.

*"The pain of remaining in this life was greater than the pain of giving it up."*

"Salvation"... we've all heard this word in many different forms attached to a thousand different philosophies and doctrines. So many people proclaim themselves to be the recipients and ticket-holders of this sacred gift from the Almighty. Some people are willing to give their all for its eternal promise, while others dare not give up anything for fear of insulting God's "grace." How did we arrive at such a predicament? Why are there so many contradictions about such a potentially simple topic? Shouldn't a child even be able to understand the gospel?

Many sincere Christians zealously strive to serve God in their various ministries and churches largely unaware of the different understandings of what salvation *is*, even within their own con-

gregation! To make matters even more complicated, many Christians have subconsciously separated themselves into two distinct categories: the ordinary "believers" and the more radical "disciples." But the Word of God clearly makes no such distinction.

## **Giving up**

I used to be the sort of fellow who lived life one day at a time, without even a desire for "salvation" — the very sound of that word actually sickened me. My experience in the world taught me never to trust anyone who made a living selling *that* product. I'd never really even thought about the *eternal* outcome of my decisions. I was too busy dealing with the immediate fallout of my failed relationships. Problems in the "here-



## Part 1: Call to Discipleship

and-now” were keeping my attention off the “happily ever after.” I wasn’t looking for a life insurance policy for eternity, but just a little “wisdom of the ancients” to get me through life. But as time went on troubles with my family and immoral relationships with girlfriends drove me to realize that I needed more than a little wisdom — I needed to be fixed... healed... restored. I was sick in my soul and I needed a doctor.

Finally, having reached the point where the pain of remaining in this life was greater than the pain of giving it up, I hit rock bottom and realized that it was time to surrender to this Jesus I’d read about in the Bible. I read how He had given life to those who trusted Him. He seemed to have had all the answers. But there was so much to give up if I wanted to follow Him, and a whole lot would have to change if I wanted to be like Him.

For the first time in my life it dawned on me what salvation is, and especially, how much it costs... Everything! There was nothing I could do to *earn* it, but I had to give up everything to *receive* it. No more games, no more living for myself. I was sincerely desperate, and I would have given anything to be healed. I didn’t want to live for anything else. I just wanted to find a place where I could live the life of a disciple of Jesus.

### Slowly meandering

Several years went by as I faithfully served in the youth and college ministries at several Baptist churches and Christian organizations such as a “Navigators” summer camp in Colorado Springs. Eventually I ended up at Calvary Chapel in southern California. I sought only the most faithful and zealous of friends to surround myself with, and we tried to encourage one another daily. Yet all during this time I was aware of an entire army of so-called believers who seemed to regard salvation as their “get out of hell free” card and nothing more. They always had the right words to say, and a smile on their face, but their lives *blatantly* showed that they had never really given up anything. I

found myself making excuses for these kinds of Christians who never seemed to have “counted the cost” as some of us had. “Well, I guess God is still working on some of us,” I would say. But I was curious as to why the gospel seemed to have such a powerful impact 2000 years ago, but so little effect in people’s lives when preached today.

As I looked at the faces around me one Sunday morning, I found myself questioning the integrity of some of the believers in my congregation. The last thing I wanted to do was to be self-righteous, but wasn’t the whole point of salvation to be saved *from* sin? Here I was, wanting to be healed from my selfish life and trying to be set apart from the ways of this world. Meanwhile, all around me were many who seemed to sense no guilt over their materialistic and even promiscuous lifestyles. I was

I was curious as to why the gospel had such a powerful impact 2000 years ago but so little effect today.



*I was aware of an entire army of so-called believers who seemed to regard salvation as their “get out of hell free” card.*

always given the excuse that, "God's grace covers our sins, and there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

I knew that to be so, but who was going to explain the lack of conviction and repentance? What about walking according to the Spirit, and *not* according to the flesh? The general understanding of grace seemed to mean that God would wait patiently while His "saints" slowly meandered any way they saw fit toward the pearly gates. But wasn't there something about keeping on sinning after we came to the knowledge of the truth? Were there no consequences for sin once we believed?

A few strove with little effect to turn the tide. They knew better than to let their hearts be silenced for the mind game of doctrinal accuracy. Didn't we leave that back in the dark ages? Where now were the dissenters, the non-conformists, those who weren't afraid to take a stand for truth? But most of the Christians I knew did not have that sort of conviction. They were neither righteous nor redeemed, if these words are ever to have any real meaning. Very few of them even agreed on anything besides the "Apostles' Creed."

Was it a blessing or a curse to sense such things about my fellow Christians?

### **Swept along by the tide**

*Grace* was beginning to sound more and more like *grease*, smoothing over the sins that people were unwilling to confess. But grace was never given to man for the purpose of *excusing* sin. I knew in my heart that grace was supposed to be for the purpose of *overcoming* sin and temptation, but why did it seem more and more like grace was an excuse to *not* be like our Savior? It was like some spiritual "Bondo" that fused and smoothed together all things sacred, secular, and even profane to serve the Most High God.

Many of us knew it wasn't supposed to be this way, but who could speak



*'Grace' seemed to mean that God would wait patiently while His 'saints' slowly meandered any way they saw fit toward the pearly gates.*

loudly enough and, more to the point, with the authority to correct the problem? Ultimately, we "faithful" were unable to stop it, and eventually we joined in on the decadence and hypocrisy. Who could resist the tide? The religious system we were part of made room for any number of rationalizations in its "obedience-optional" environment. To believe in our minds was to be saved, and heeding even a fraction of Christ's teaching meant that you were an "on fire" disciple (or left you open to the charge of "works salvation"). Nobody wanted to be accountable for sin, and why should they? We were told that Jesus *was* our righteousness, while we individually chose our own standard of obedience. We were all just "saved by faith" with no true unity, no concentric direction, and no evidence to show an unbelieving world that our God saves.

Many of us had once known deep down that the Living God wanted to restore all things and was looking for a people who would work *together* with Him to bring this about, even at the expense of their own families, friends, and life agenda. We knew that this thing

**"We were looking for the place where hope is young and people are not afraid to love."**



*“We have found the Son of God worth more than life itself.”*

called *salvation* was not an idea to be grasped, or a convenient ending for a mediocre life, but rather a process to be committed to. We had heard the eternal call and were burning with the desire to follow the Master in bringing salvation to the earth. So many of us lost among the ranks of Christianity originally felt this call at the depths of our being. We were looking for the place where hope is young and people are not afraid to love. As the years passed by, however, we became jaded by the lack of commitment and vision within the system. Most of us gave up the search, and, as has been the case for generations upon generations, we finally became leveled to the ways of the established church.

#### **Called, chosen, and faithful**

The truth of the matter is that this man some call Jesus is not holding the doors of heaven open for just anyone to enter by claiming to be His chosen servant. He has specific prerequisites and continuing demands that must be met in order for anyone to profess to be His disciple. To believe “on Him” means to meet all of these criteria, as well as to continue with Him in a covenant as His disciple. Just as in the first century, anyone who desires to follow the true Messiah is *expected* to literally cut himself off from any other previous obligations to family, friends, and career. This means that all personal belongings are forfeited, and any life plans are cancelled as a response to His call. It is the ending of one’s old life in all its forms. This is what it means to be His called,

*I’ve finally found the place where  
God commands His blessing  
— an actual ‘body’ of like-minded  
brothers and sisters dwelling  
together in unity.*

chosen, and *faithful* followers. Only from this total sacrifice of one’s own sovereignty is the Creator of the universe able to accomplish His purpose on the earth. Anything short of this is a watered-down empty hope.

#### **A new family**

True salvation starts in a people who are obedient to their Creator and committed to one another. It continues by bringing about God’s will on the earth through those who, having first burned *every* bridge to their former lives, now *remain* committed to the cause. They become part of a new family that puts all things that divide beneath its feet. They are a people who have no hope in this world and its ways, but whose hope is set completely on their goal as the Bride of the Messiah — to reign together with Him for all of eternity. Having an eternal standard before them, they submit to one another in love, out of reverence for the Messiah.

#### **Becoming like the Master**

I’ve finally found the place where God commands His blessing — life everlasting (Psalm 133). It is an actual *body* of like-minded brothers and sisters, dwelling together in unity, a people who love the Messiah enough to obey His many words. It was actually Him that I loved and was looking for all along, but I discovered He couldn’t be found in the midst of compromise and confusion. In the Community we have found the Son of God worth more than life itself, and we now desire to be found worthy of Him by giving everything we have (Matthew 10:37-39), even our very lives as a living sacrifice. We lay down our lives daily for one another as we embrace the challenge to become more and more like our Master. We call Him *Yahshua*. His name means “Yahweh’s salvation” and only those who are found worthy of Him will receive *this* free gift of salvation. 🌿

JOSEPH



# Get with the Program

DID JESUS' LIFE GO THE WRONG WAY?

## Hopes and dreams

According to the program, your life should go in a certain pattern. Perhaps your parents had a program planned for you and aspirations for your future. But your life may end up differing from their proposed program. The program depends on how you are programmed. Your program is based upon the input you receive, both genetically and socially.

## A leader of his people

One parent found herself in a very difficult predicament one day. Her name was Mary. You may know her as that famous woman who is often called, "the Virgin Mary." She was quite an outstanding character in history. And as you also may know, Mary had a very well known son.

He was a very special boy.

Mary had a divine revelation that this boy was the Son of God, who would end up becoming the Savior of their captive people. She knew He would be the Messiah of Israel.

As years passed her son made several visits to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem with His mother. On one occasion He broke away from her oversight and found His place among the most influential and respected men of their day, confounding them with His wisdom. Although she corrected Him for slipping away without permission when she finally found Him, deep in her heart she could see the handwriting of God on the wall... this boy would take His seat as leader of their people someday soon. She envisioned Him taking the reins — surely, He would be received by the powers-that-be, and become a great leader.

Yet, the years of life that followed in their obscure village, nestled in the hills above the West Bank in Israel, turned out much different than the way this "mother Mary" had on her program for her son.

When her son turned 30, the eligible age to function in the priesthood in their



*Joseph and Mary trained their son because they knew the boy was the Son of God, who would end up becoming the Savior of their captive people.*

land, Mary saw her son depart from His carpenter shop in Nazareth for the last time. But it was not to be received in the temple as the reigning Messiah.

No! To the contrary... He began a life viewed with great suspicion by the ones whom Mary thought would receive Him. The leading religious body of the day saw Him as a threat, a dangerous cult leader, who was empowered by demonic forces.

## Out of order

His simple message of salvation, love, and caring for the poor was not the apocalyptic words that the religious leaders were seeking to hear.

Feeding the multitudes, liberating those bound by evil spirits, and healing sick people was not on the program for their Messiah. They sought someone else... this one must be an imposter.

Sure, He seemed to be doing "good" things, but they were deceptive, be-

cause it was not the proper order... it didn't fit into their program.

Whose program was her son running on? Who programmed Him to think and act the way He did?

## The first deprogrammer

Even His own mother began to wonder why her son was making the choices He was making. Why did He do it this way? Surely He could not find success in His mission on earth if He continued conducting Himself like this... People were saying He had lost His mind. He did not even take time to eat.

Mary finally decided that she would have to take action. She and the rest of the family must go to find Him and bring Him home again. They had to change His "program"... deprogram him from the course He had taken... Somehow He was "all wrong" in how He was going about this thing, and they must bring Him to His senses... 🍀

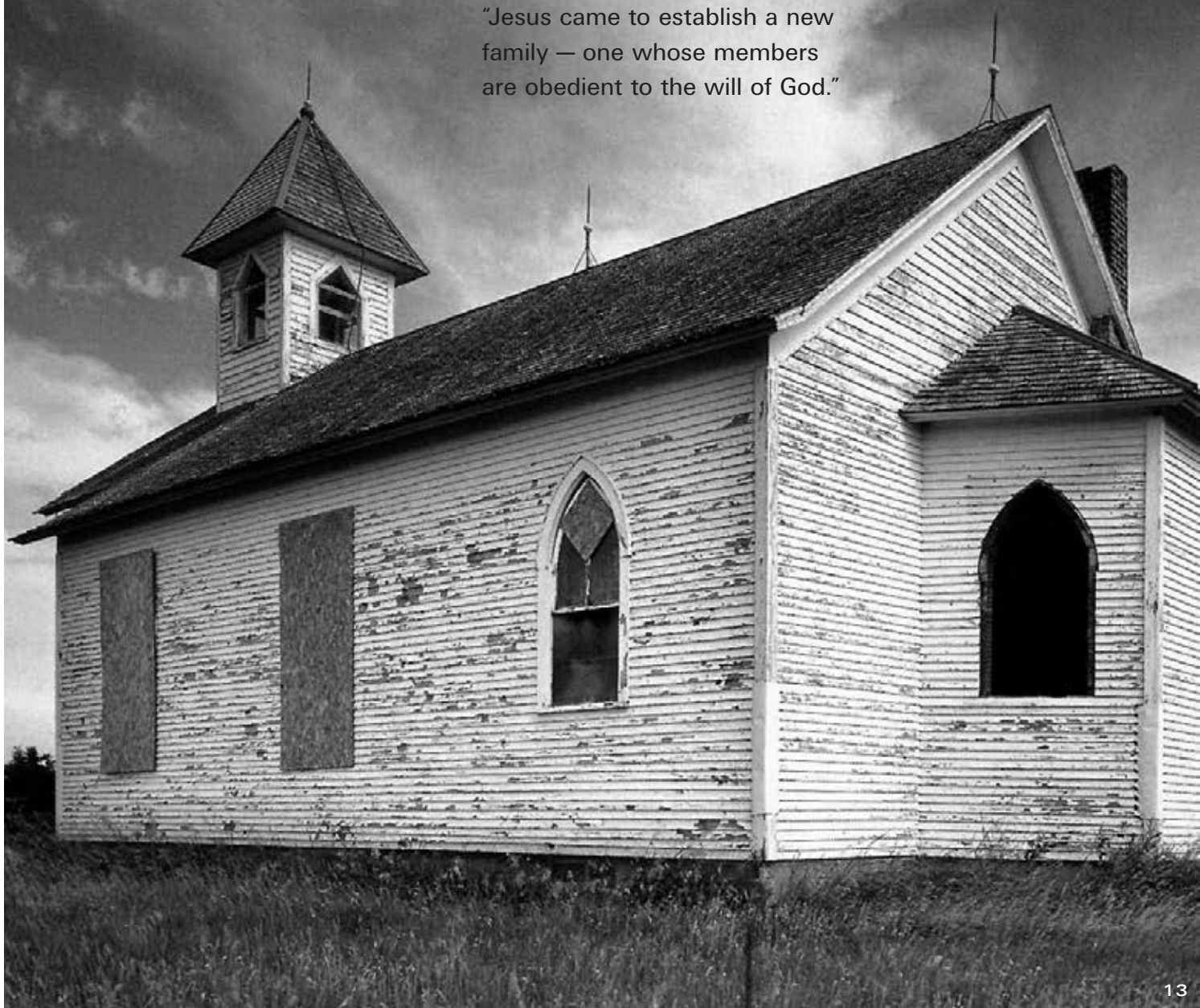


Q&A:

# Circle of Disciples

SOME COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT  
DISCIPLESHIP AND THEIR ANSWERS

“Jesus came to establish a new family — one whose members are obedient to the will of God.”





“The Master required of His disciples a determined turning from all that would distract them from their calling.”

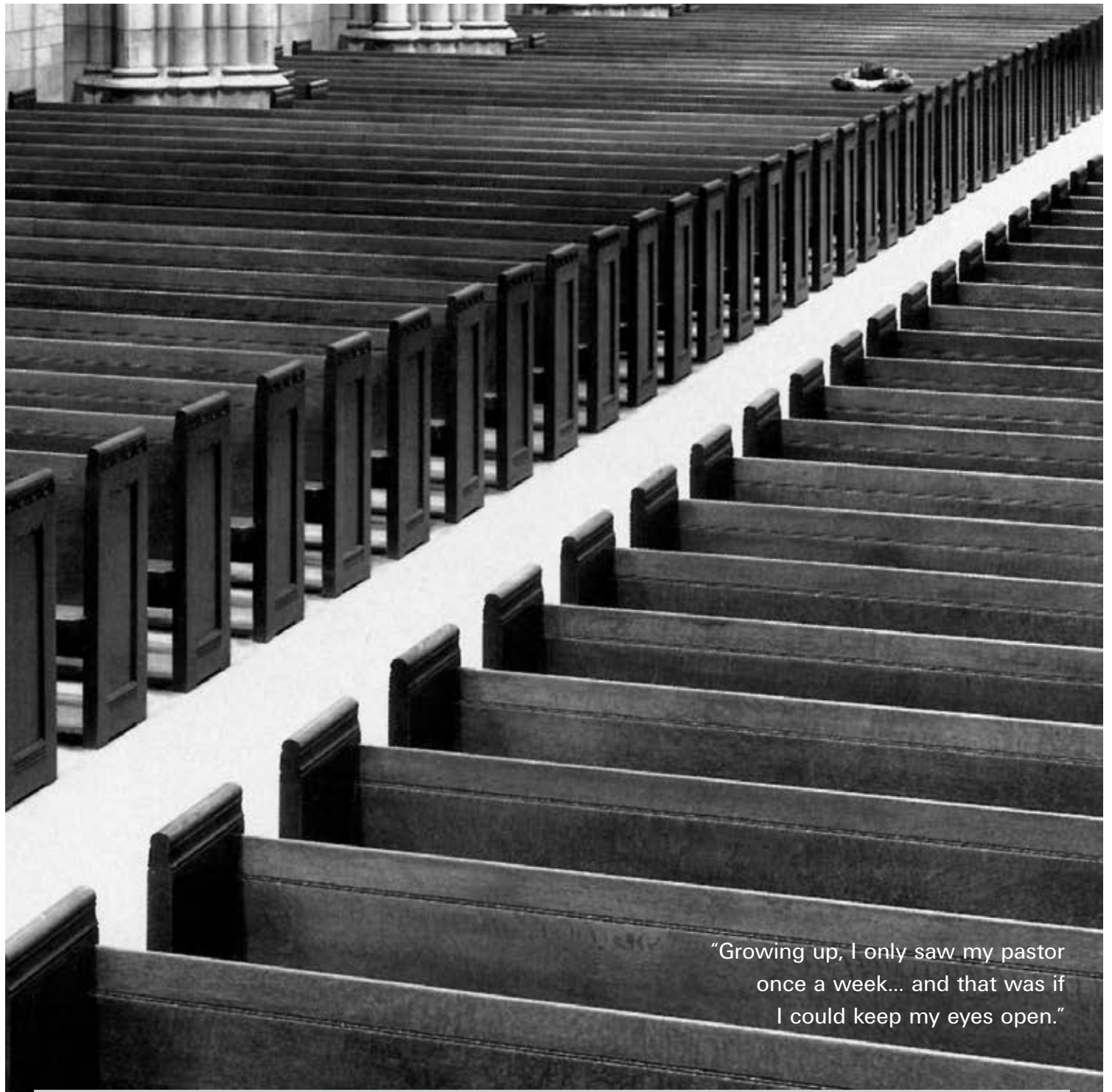
*One Sunday morning as I looked around me at the familiar faces, which seemed to show no guilt for their materialistic and promiscuous lifestyles, I could not help but wonder, “Is everyone who confesses Jesus as Lord really saved?”*

■ **Jesus said**, “For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” The word *does* means brings to pass, attaining the objective, producing and bringing forth what one is saved to do.<sup>1</sup> Doing the will of God for a disciple shows that God is his Father, just as a man who does the will of the Evil One shows that Satan is his spiritual father.<sup>2</sup>

■ **The circle of disciples** who followed the Master was a dedicated group. He called them to *discipleship*, which required that they give up all their prior occupations and, if necessary, their families as well.<sup>3</sup> The gravity of such a demand is clear from what their Master said in Matthew 10:34-39 and Luke 14: 26-33. Thus the Master required of His disciples a determined turning from all that would distract them from their calling. They must sever all ties to their former life, even family ties if they became a hindrance to their following Him and obeying His teachings. This was the gospel the Master told the “rich young ruler” in Mark 10: 17-30 when he asked what he must *do* to inherit eternal life. Only to His disciples has He granted eternal life.<sup>4</sup> Those who respond to Him in this way are the called and the chosen who prove to be the faithful of Revelation 17:14 by their obedience.

■ **A tie** is a restraining power or influence. It is the power to restrain from independence or freedom of action or choice. It is constraint by authority or sometimes even more powerfully, by obligation. Jesus could not come under these influences or any conflicting obligation and still begin the new family He came to establish, the one that took its *name* (meaning its *identity*) from their obedience to the will of God. It takes this kind of community or family to make disciples — one where the determining factor of membership is obedience to the will of God. Discipleship means the *total renunciation* of all other things and *all other ties*.





“Growing up, I only saw my pastor once a week... and that was if I could keep my eyes open.”

*I actually heard a preacher say once, “It is a good thing we don’t live in the days of Ananias and Sapphira or we’d all be dead!” Does God give the free gift of eternal life to the Ananiases and Sapphiras of today who say they’re surrendered to Christ but don’t really give up everything?*

■ **Eternal life is a free gift**, but who does He give it to? Consider how the Master preached the gospel in Mark

1:14-20, calling men to abandon whatever they were doing in order to follow Him. What He had to give these men was freely given, but it was only given to those who would obey Him. The kingdom of God — what could be more important than this? If anyone saw anything else he deemed more important than the kingdom of God, the offer was forfeited.<sup>5</sup> There was only one way anyone could be worthy of the kingdom — walking as the Master walked and following Him.<sup>6</sup> Walking like

the Master produced a common life for those first disciples. To share a common life with their Master meant sharing a common life with one another and this meant more than everything else.<sup>7</sup> This common life superseded all other endeavors and relationships. They cut themselves free from any family or business ties that would hinder their freedom to follow their Master, for otherwise He could not set them free from the bondage of sin and of this world.<sup>8</sup> It is exactly the same way today.



***As a Christian I was always taught that the “radical demands” or “hard sayings” of Christ were only for back then, but if Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever, as Hebrews 13:8 says, why wouldn’t it apply today?***

■ **The radical demand** the Master spoke to His disciples in Luke 14:26-27 was that they must hate their father and mother and even their own life in order to be worthy to obey the radical demand spoken in John 12:25-26, which is that those who follow Him must serve Him where He is. To serve Him “*where He is*” is to come into His visible community of disciples and share a common life with one another. This common life is what produces the fruit of the kingdom.

■ **When the Jews rejected** the Messiah and crucified Him the kingdom was taken away from them<sup>9</sup> and given to those who would truly love Him (which means *obey* Him, as John 14:21 says). The kingdom would be given to no one else except those who produced the fruit of love. The gospel must be obeyed<sup>10</sup> in order to bear this fruit. The circle of disciples that responded to the good news of God’s love for them formed the new community – separate from the apostate old wineskin. The formation of this new nation out of the dust of old Israel was the only way the world could see and taste the fruit of the kingdom. This life of love was the witness by which they could know about God’s good intention, not only for old Israel, but for men of all nations. It was Christ who made discipleship the prerequisite for salvation – producing the new family of Galatians 3:26-29 and Revelation 5: 9-10. Discipleship produces the new family which produces the fruit of the kingdom.

■ **The radical demands** Jesus put on His circle of disciples was applied not only to the twelve, or the 120 who waited in the upper room. They applied beyond even the 3000 that were saved on the day of Pentecost. Indeed, they extend fully and uncompromisingly to all those who would follow Him by obeying the same commandments from His apostles.<sup>11</sup>

■ **Their future was the cause** their Master died to bring about – to become the witness of the kingdom of God by obeying His commandments, such as Luke 14:33; 12:22-32; and John 12:25-26. These verses are but a few of the things He commanded His first disciples, which were included in the “many other words” in Acts 2:40, which had to be spoken and received before anyone could be immersed into the Body and sealed with the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup>



***I couldn't help but notice two distinct categories of believers in Christianity, the "basic believer" and the more serious disciples. Are there really two standards of obedience, one for believers and one for disciples?***

■ **Our Master's gospel** spells out the ethic of discipleship. An *ethic* is a standard. The gospel does not tolerate two standards or ethics for those who will inherit eternal life. All who hear must comply with the accepted standard of obedience. That is why on the Day of Pentecost, or even in Acts 16:31-34, *many other words* were required by the Holy Spirit before He could entrust Himself to them.<sup>13</sup>

■ **There is just one** ethic of discipleship. How could there be two standards or ethics by which a person could become a disciple and inherit eternal life? God would be double-minded and believers would be seen

by the world living by contradictory standards. They would see some believers living "high off the hog" and others, in the same city, living in grinding poverty. They would see Christians in different nations going to war with one another, each praying to the "same" God.

■ **The truth** is that *all* must obey Luke 14:26-33; Mark 10:17-30; Luke 18:29; and Matthew 19:29. This clear standard or ethic is spelled out in three of the gospels, and is summed up in the fourth in John 12:25-26. The gospel does not require anyone to hate or leave his family, wife, or children *if*, after hearing the requirements of eternal life, they come with him as in Acts 16:31-34 and are saved from the world. Our Master requires absolute and indissoluble faithfulness to the gospel and His commandments.<sup>14</sup>

■ **It takes a community** to be as 1 John 3:14,16,23. The ethic of discipleship is lived out according to one level

or standard of conduct, not two. Mark 10:29-30 is absolute, without deviation from the ethic of the word of God. It is essential to grasp the enormity of our Master's words – it entails all a person has, all of his own possessions, all he owns, all of his blood relatives – even his wife,<sup>15</sup> his own father and mother,<sup>16</sup> children, brothers and sisters, and yes, his own life, as Luke 14:26-27 says. This means death to self-life.

■ **Is the cost too great?** Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-37 teaches what one does with his own possessions, as in Mark 10:29-30. This is what the young man asked in verse 17 and why he went away sad, having not received what he sought – eternal life – because he would not give up all his own possessions. It is essential to do so in the obedience required of all disciples of Matthew 28:18-20. This is the gospel for eternal life. Even if one does not have anyone or anything, at least he has his own life.<sup>17</sup>

"The gospel does not tolerate two standards for those who will inherit eternal life."

***How is my church going to be a witness as Jesus said we are to be so that the end can come?***

■ **Everyone who obeys** Luke 14:26-33 does so not only in renunciation of his old life, but in order to gain the kingdom of God. Matthew 24:14 tells of its arrival — for when people actually respond to the gospel as expected, they are immersed into a common life of love that becomes an ever-increasing light that spreads to all the nations. It is for His sake and for the sake of His kingdom that one leaves everything behind, including selfish endeavors, to become part of a new family,<sup>18</sup> the

family of Mark 3:34-35 — brothers and sisters, mothers and children. Just as in the Master's day, this common life with the Master was a community of disciples, which was a community of destiny. That is, it was a community with a *destination* — the fulfillment of the prophetic word.<sup>19</sup> The covenant they made to reach this destiny went so far that His disciples had to prepare to suffer what He suffered — even persecution or execution.<sup>20</sup> As Matthew 10:38 says, "*He who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.*"<sup>21</sup> It takes a community to be this witness, to express this visible life that proves God's love to the world.

To be a part of *this* community is our reward even in this age — along with persecutions.<sup>22</sup>

■ **One hundred times** over what they left behind, all who have left families found new brothers and sisters, parents, mothers, children, farms and lands. Those who left everything were not left to desolation or solitude, only to go on welfare (the dole). That is not the point of discipleship. He called us into a new family of brothers and sisters — being a sign of the approaching kingdom on earth. It will come in its fullness when the King returns, splitting the skies, His angels gathering His elect from the four corners of the earth.<sup>23</sup>



1141  
FAITH TABERNACLE  
CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST  
SERVIC. WEN. MORN. - 8.30  
FRI. MORN. - 8.30  
SUNDAY SCHOOL - 10.30  
ELD. H. SMITH PASTOR  
REG. SERV. 11.30  
IF YOU SICK COME AND LET US PRAY.

"Those who leave everything are not left to desolation or solitude. They are called into a new family of brothers and sisters."



***With all the denominations, how can I know which one is right and have confidence that I am doing the will of God or that anyone is doing the will of God?***

■ **Exodus 19:6** states that His people will be to Him a kingdom of priests and a *holy nation*. The apostle Peter understood that the early church was that holy nation where God's very own people lived. The holy nation of 1 Peter 2:9-10 no longer refers to Abraham's natural descendants.<sup>24</sup> Their status as God's Holy people was lost and given to those who bear the fruit of the kingdom — the *nation* of Matthew 21:43. These

verses are not in any way speaking of private holiness in one individual disciple — as if there were such a thing! The point is that an entire people — a spiritual nation — would give witness to God's plan for the world. God's desire is to have a holy (set apart) people that demonstrate a life together that is a light to the whole world.<sup>25</sup>

■ **This nation set apart** for this very purpose stands in sharp contrast to the world around it. The light is a people who live together in unity in every place.<sup>26</sup> We, the people of God, are chosen to show the world around us an entirely different form of life. This life is made possible *only* by those who

have confessed that they hate their life in this world<sup>27</sup> and begin to live no longer in the society they grew up in, but where He is — serving Him day and night and receiving honor from the Father of their Master.<sup>28</sup>

■ **The Son of God has to dwell** there in His people. You can't serve Him anywhere else — unless you are sent from a place where He is now incarnate in a people.<sup>29</sup> He has to have a place to bring individual people home to, a place to put the lonely in families.<sup>30</sup> Without the reality of these things you only have a mystical body — one that is unreal and ineffectual, like the mystical savior it represents.

**“We, the people of God, are chosen to show the world around us an entirely different form of life.”**



***Shouldn't a child be able to understand the gospel? There are so many divergent and conflicting doctrines, how can I possibly understand?***

■ **There's an old expression** that applies here: "The proof is in the pudding." Children understand simple things like that. The proof that Christ is real and His message is true is that He has a people on the earth who obey and represent Him. The only proof that He loves the people in the world is that He has established His rule and reign on earth in His people who express His love by their life together as a foretaste of the coming Kingdom.<sup>31</sup> This witness is the testimony of the coming Kingdom. It puts the proof before the whole world that God sent His Son into the world.

*This witness does not come about through mere instruction in what the Bible says, but through concrete action in doing what our Master did.*<sup>32</sup> It is this witness of love and unity in a people that makes the gospel clear. Love perfected in unity is what will clear up all the confusion in people's minds.

■ **If God so loved the world,** how then should we live in the world as its light and witness? Every person must judge by the standard of our Master's words whether his behavior bears the fruit that merits him calling himself a believer.<sup>33</sup> The Hebrew word for *church*, which is *edah*, is translated as *community* in English in such passages as Jeremiah 30:20 in the NIV. The literal meaning for *edah* is witness, which is what the Master said the world must see, the witness of the good news, before the end can come.<sup>34</sup>

"Love perfected in unity is what will clear up all the confusion in people's minds."







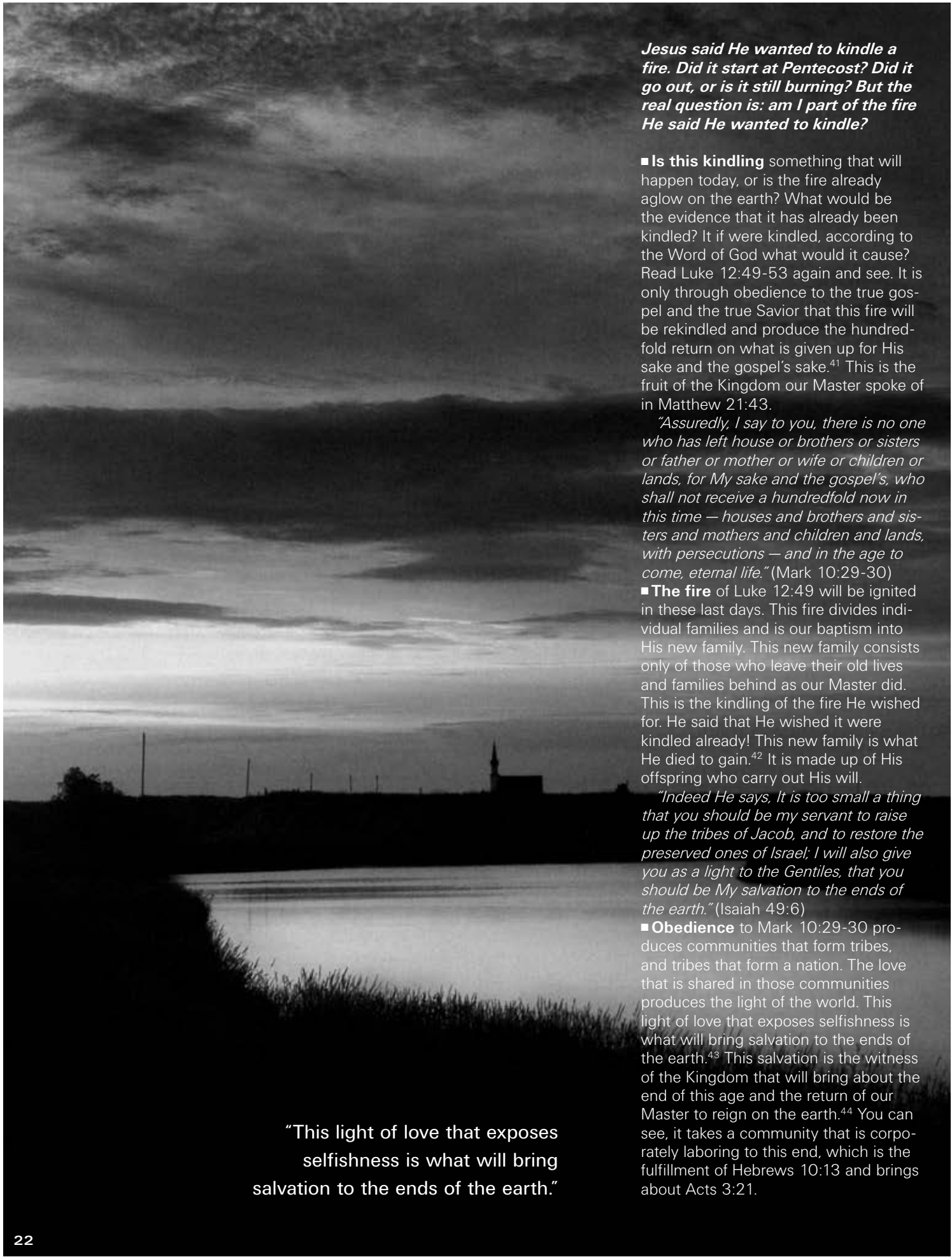
***What is the kingdom of God anyway? How is it going to come on earth?***

■ **The Church** or *edah* or community is His new family. Our Master, whom we follow, disassociated Himself from His natural family and associated Himself with His new family. Who was the new family? Only His disciples who were seated around Him, as Mark 3:32-35 describes, who would *do* the will of God.<sup>35</sup> This new family, as described also in Mark 10:29-30, is a community, the environment where love can grow, producing the light of the world that the whole world can see. It is the witness and testimony of the truth.<sup>36</sup> This life is the new program of the new family the prophet Jeremiah spoke about, “*At that time,*” says the Sovereign, “*I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.*” (Jeremiah 31:1)

■ **Who is the new family today?** This new family is manifested on earth by the obvious love of John 13:35 and unity of John 17:23. Both of these must be manifested corporately, observably in a people living in communities in every place around the earth<sup>37</sup> where men lift up holy hands without wrath or dissension.<sup>38</sup>

■ **To follow Him** we must do *now* what He did *then*. If He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, then so is His message, and so is the ethic or standard for being His disciple. We must live by that one ethic that He lived by. If we do, we will be that witness, a part of that new family. We will become a part of a family of brothers and sisters with houses and farms that grows from one household to a community.

■ **It takes a community** to be the witness of Matthew 24:14, which is the fire He came to start.<sup>39</sup> His message is like a fire that will be cast upon the earth. The message of the reign of God will set everything ablaze, causing division and discord between those who do the will of God and those who do not.<sup>40</sup> Nothing short of this demonstration could bring about the end of this age and the return of our King and Ruler who will reign on earth for 1000 years – or the kingdom of God would have already come on earth.



**Jesus said He wanted to kindle a fire. Did it start at Pentecost? Did it go out, or is it still burning? But the real question is: am I part of the fire He said He wanted to kindle?**

■ **Is this kindling** something that will happen today, or is the fire already aglow on the earth? What would be the evidence that it has already been kindled? If it were kindled, according to the Word of God what would it cause? Read Luke 12:49-53 again and see. It is only through obedience to the true gospel and the true Savior that this fire will be rekindled and produce the hundred-fold return on what is given up for His sake and the gospel's sake.<sup>41</sup> This is the fruit of the Kingdom our Master spoke of in Matthew 21:43.

*"Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions — and in the age to come, eternal life."* (Mark 10:29-30)

■ **The fire** of Luke 12:49 will be ignited in these last days. This fire divides individual families and is our baptism into His new family. This new family consists only of those who leave their old lives and families behind as our Master did. This is the kindling of the fire He wished for. He said that He wished it were kindled already! This new family is what He died to gain.<sup>42</sup> It is made up of His offspring who carry out His will.

*"Indeed He says, It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be My salvation to the ends of the earth."* (Isaiah 49:6)

■ **Obedience** to Mark 10:29-30 produces communities that form tribes, and tribes that form a nation. The love that is shared in those communities produces the light of the world. This light of love that exposes selfishness is what will bring salvation to the ends of the earth.<sup>43</sup> This salvation is the witness of the Kingdom that will bring about the end of this age and the return of our Master to reign on the earth.<sup>44</sup> You can see, it takes a community that is corporately laboring to this end, which is the fulfillment of Hebrews 10:13 and brings about Acts 3:21.

**"This light of love that exposes selfishness is what will bring salvation to the ends of the earth."**



## ***Are the words of the Gospels relevant today?***

■ **You would not think so**, seeing that the thousands of conversions claimed by the evangelists are not causing the uproars and divisions of Luke 12:49-53. Is Matthew 10:34-39 relevant to the gospel of today? Are members of families being set against each other by the gospel where you live? If the gospel is the same as His, including the literal giving up of family, possessions, and careers, then it will rekindle the same fire that our Master spoke of in Luke 12:49-53.

■ **There is no logical connection** between the gospel of Mark 10:29-30 and Luke 12:49-53, and the pattern (or program) of a believer in the churches today. If the gospel you hear does not cause or produce the fruit of the Kingdom, it should raise a serious question in your mind. Either the Master's words have lost their power and are no longer valid in the eyes of God, or the ones speaking them (without doing them) are not valid messengers in His eyes and He cannot cooperate with their message.

■ **Did the Master intend** that His message would be reduced to a personal (or *institutionalized*) set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices that take the teeth out of the gospel He preached? Does individual Christian experience correspond to the fire He promised to kindle on the earth? If only He had come to bring the peace that preserves the status quo, we could be content with what we see and experience in church. But, He did not come to bring peace, but the sword, to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, causing a man's enemies to be the members of his own household.<sup>45</sup> Our Master wanted this to happen so that He could form His new family. (*cont'd*)



■ **The evidence** of this is seen in Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-37. These first believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and fellowship. They broke bread together, prayed together, lived together, shared a common life with each other, and sold their possessions and shared the proceeds, thereby meeting the needs of all. They fulfilled the ancient prophecy that there would be "no poor and needy" among you in Israel.<sup>46</sup>

They had one mind in everything, took their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart. Their numbers grew daily as more and more people saw the evidence of the life of Messiah in them.<sup>47</sup> They saw a family they wanted to be part of, Messiah's family, where everyone did the will of God.<sup>48</sup>

■ **If Jesus** is the same yesterday, today, and forever, then what happened? Why is it that the "Body of Christ" today bears no resemblance to the Body that is so vividly described in Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-35? Perhaps there is a hint in the very next chapter. Ananias and Sapphira

dropped dead after they deceitfully kept back a portion of their money while making a show of laying it at the apostle's feet.<sup>49</sup> It was a dramatic object lesson for the early church, and great fear came upon them all. But sadly, that clean fear of deceiving the Almighty subsided, and others held back from giving all. They died spiritually just as surely as Ananias and Sapphira died physically. And of course those who didn't give all themselves couldn't call others to do so. But the Master's words do not change: "No one can be My disciple who does not give up all he possesses."<sup>50</sup>

■ **This statement** raises the question as to whether there are any disciples among the multitudes of Christians. If there are, they will be dissatisfied. They will sense something wrong and want the living water of Jesus' words. If they are not disciples according to the gospel, they will think they can be a disciple even though they ignore His words. Then they must be "the many" who have been deceived, as our Master warned in

Matthew 24:4-5. Is it the "many" or the "few" who enter in through the "narrow gate" as He said in Matthew 7:13-14? Are the two billion Christians of today the "few"?

■ **Mark 3:31-35 confronts us** with the question of whether we are numbered among His brothers, sisters, and His mother. If we are not, who are we? What family do we belong to? And what gospel have we received?<sup>51</sup>

■ **The water of life** in Revelation 21:6-7, as in John 4:10-14 and 7:37-39, is the Holy Spirit. The coward in Revelation 21:8 is the one who stays in his unbelief after he hears the gospel and is made accountable. This cowardice is the worst of sins one must overcome above all else in order to be saved. All are held accountable to overcome all that would keep them from obeying the gospel. As far as discipleship goes and eternal life, John 3:18,<sup>36</sup> tells the consequence of hearing the message and not obeying it.<sup>52</sup> Those who hear the gospel but will not obey it are categorized as cowards





for all eternity.<sup>53</sup> The water of life is free, but who does He give it to? Only those who obey Him.<sup>54</sup> We see in John 4:14 and John 7:37-39 that those who drink of it will never thirst again. Their "church hopping" days are over since they now know they have the Holy Spirit and eternal life. The Spirit and the Bride say to the one who is thirsty, "Come!" Come and drink, leaving everything behind, for you can drink from this cup and no other.<sup>55</sup> Come and become a new person immersed into a brand new culture! 🍷

- <sup>1</sup> John 7:17; Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:12,16; Romans 12:1-2
- <sup>2</sup> John 8:39,41,44
- <sup>3</sup> Mark 1:16-20; Luke 9:59
- <sup>4</sup> John 10:27-28
- <sup>5</sup> Mark 10:21-22
- <sup>6</sup> Colossians 1:10-11; 1 John 2:4-6
- <sup>7</sup> John 12:25-26; Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-35
- <sup>8</sup> Colossians 1:13
- <sup>9</sup> Matthew 21:43
- <sup>10</sup> Acts 5:32
- <sup>11</sup> Matthew 28:19-20; John 13:34

- <sup>12</sup> Ephesians 1:13; Acts 5:32
- <sup>13</sup> John 2:23-25
- <sup>14</sup> John 8:31,32,51
- <sup>15</sup> Luke 18:29; Matthew 19:29 (KJV, NKJV)
- <sup>16</sup> Luke 14:26
- <sup>17</sup> Luke 14:26-27; John 12:25
- <sup>18</sup> Jeremiah 31:1
- <sup>19</sup> Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 21:43; Hebrews 10:13
- <sup>20</sup> Philippians 1:29
- <sup>21</sup> Acts 13:46; Colossians 1:10-11; Revelation 3:4-5; Matthew 10:34-39
- <sup>22</sup> Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 3:12; Acts 14:22; Mark 10:29-30
- <sup>23</sup> Matthew 24:29-31
- <sup>24</sup> Genesis 12:3
- <sup>25</sup> John 1:4; Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:14-15; John 16:8-11
- <sup>26</sup> Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Peter 2:12
- <sup>27</sup> John 12:25
- <sup>28</sup> Acts 26:7; John 12:26
- <sup>29</sup> 1 John 4:1-6
- <sup>30</sup> Psalm 68:5-6

- <sup>31</sup> John 17:23; Matthew 21:43; 24:14
- <sup>32</sup> John 13:35; 17:23; Colossians 1:10; 1 John 2:3-6
- <sup>33</sup> 1 Peter 2:12
- <sup>34</sup> Matthew 24:14
- <sup>35</sup> John 7:17
- <sup>36</sup> Matthew 24:14
- <sup>37</sup> Malachi 1:11
- <sup>38</sup> 1 Timothy 2:8
- <sup>39</sup> Luke 12:49-53; Matthew 10:34-39
- <sup>40</sup> Malachi 3:18; Luke 12:52-53
- <sup>41</sup> Mark 10:29-30
- <sup>42</sup> Isaiah 53:10-11
- <sup>43</sup> Isaiah 49:5-6
- <sup>44</sup> Matthew 24:14
- <sup>45</sup> Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 12:49-53
- <sup>46</sup> Deuteronomy 15:4
- <sup>47</sup> John 13:35; Acts 2:47
- <sup>48</sup> Mark 3:35; Jeremiah 30:24b; 31:1
- <sup>49</sup> Acts 5:1-11
- <sup>50</sup> Luke 14:33
- <sup>51</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:2-4,13-15
- <sup>52</sup> 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9
- <sup>53</sup> Revelation 22:11
- <sup>54</sup> Acts 5:32
- <sup>55</sup> Revelation 22:17; 1 Corinthians 10:21-22



## Part 1: Call to Discipleship

“Jesus needed a people with nothing better to do than devote their entire lives to His words. This would be their mission in life. In just a short time, He would no longer be with them in a human body; it would be up to them to do what He had done.”

# Cost of Discipleship

IT COSTS JUST AS MUCH TODAY AS IT DID 2000 YEARS AGO.

**People would come to Him** and say that they wanted to follow Him.

*“Lord, I will follow You wherever You go!” But Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, yet the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”*

*Then He said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.”*

*And another also said, “Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*

(Luke 9:57-62)

**Our Master’s face was set** like flint. His mission in life was making disciples, and he had a very short time to do it. Every day was precious. Every hour of the day there was always something to be learned. He had to take that faulty, misfit, but good-hearted handful of men and women who trusted in Him — and from them He had to form the core of a nation which would be everything that God the Creator had ever desired of His people. They would become a nation of servants, having one heart and one way; not divided by strong, personal opinions, willing to suffer with Him and forsake

their own comfort for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Together they would be a people who would put their own needs last. Their banner would be love, and it would be a witness to all the world.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus needed a people with nothing better to do than devote their entire lives to His words. This would be their mission in life. In just a short time, He would no longer be with them in a human body; it would be up to them to do what He had done.<sup>2</sup>

*“Go and make disciples of all the nations ... TEACHING THEM TO OBEY EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU!”*

(Matthew 28:19-20)

### **A people with an awesome purpose!**

Once His disciples realized how much our Father loved and needed them, they set themselves on a course, too. A couple of hours in church once or twice a week wouldn’t have been enough. Just having them bow their heads and admit they were sinners wasn’t what he needed. He needed ALL their time and ALL their attention. Therefore, everyone who desired to be His disciple had to do the unthinkable... they had to actually leave everything behind: their property and possessions, their fishing nets, their tax tables, their careers, their ambitions, their own philosophies, hobbies — sometimes even family relationships! And

they had to follow this outcast renegade who had the reputation of being a demon-possessed cult leader, certainly bound for execution as He would openly challenge the established order.

*“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”* (Luke 9:23-24)

*“Sell what you have and give to the poor; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in heaven that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.”* (Luke 12:33)

*“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all his own possessions cannot be my disciple.”* (Luke 14:33)

What was true for one was true for all — rich and poor alike. A very rich young ruler came to our Master and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life, to confirm his belief. He was told the same thing as all the other disciples:

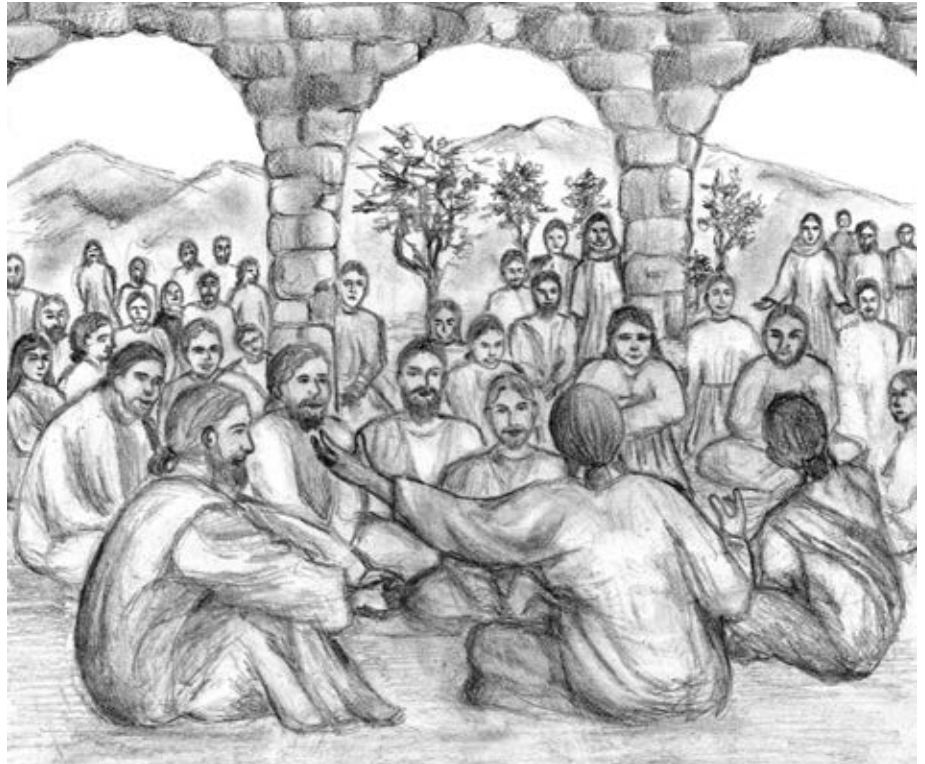
*“Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come take up the cross, and follow Me.”*

(Mark 10:21,28-30)

**To believe in this Teacher** was no light thing! It would literally cost you everything! There could be no turning back. Your own relatives might think you



*“One by one they left everything behind and followed Him. He taught them how to be a people whom God could use to turn the world upside down.”*



were crazy, or they might even think you hate them to just go off and follow this complete stranger.

### **The birth of His “Community”**

Despite the high cost of following the Son of God, many disciples believed — dozens and later thousands. One by one, they left everything behind just as He had done. And they followed Him, and He taught them how to be a people whom God could use to turn the world upside down and get the fire going!

After Jesus’ resurrection, now it was their turn. Now all that He had invested in His disciples would bear great fruit. One by one they began to call others to join them in following the Son of God. Three thousand believed in one single day, and just like the first, they gave up everything to follow Him.

*“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

(Acts 2:42)

*“Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 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.”*

(Acts 2:44-46)

*“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.”*

(Acts 4:32)

*“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.”* (Acts 4:34-35)

And so an amazing prophecy that their Master had spoken (which had once seemed so mysterious) came to be fulfilled:

*“Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.”* (Mark 10:29-30)

How could everyone who leaves a house or farm to follow Jesus gain 100 more *in this age*? It would take 100 house owners each giving up their own houses to be shared in common by all. As disciples received faith to do this,

everyone’s needs were met and all of them were set free from the cares and worries of the world. Their hearts, minds and energy could now be devoted completely to the Kingdom of God. This was the cost of being a disciple, and it was also the witness of faith, trust, and love that would turn the world upside down!<sup>3</sup>

**Modern Christianity** is nothing like the original church. Back then to be a disciple meant literally forsaking everything you had and following the Son of God daily in order to become like Him in every way. Instead today, people have traded the high cost of discipleship for an easy gospel with no real cost. This so-called “gospel” allows you to hold on to your own life in the world, but somehow think that you’ve been saved. But Jesus won’t settle for just a few crumbs of your life. He never has and never will, and His gospel is the same today as it was 2000 years ago. The good news is that there is a place on earth where the sincere in Christianity can come and follow the Son of God where He is, like the first disciples.<sup>4</sup> 🌿

<sup>1</sup> John 12:25; 13:34,45

<sup>2</sup> John 8:31,37,51

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 6:31-33; Acts 17:6

<sup>4</sup> John 12:26







*Weddings in the Community are a joyous celebration, a pre-enactment of our Master's return for His Bride.*

## Part 2: It Takes a Community

# Incarnation

WITHOUT A BODY IN WHICH TO DWELL, THE HOLY SPIRIT CANNOT BE PRESENT ON EARTH. HE IS NOT A DISEMBODIED SPIRIT. HIS VERY PURPOSE IN COMING ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST WAS TO BE EMBODIED IN THOSE 120 DISCIPLES WHO WERE WAITING FOR HIM.

### Following the Master

He was always getting in trouble with the religious leaders of His day. Almost everything He said and did offended them. They were jealous. Large crowds gathered around Him wherever He went, hanging on His every word. They didn't even want to go home... some of them didn't.

One by one a small band gathered around Him. A small community started to form. A dozen, specially selected men began to live with this man night and day. There were other men and women who also followed closely to attend to the various needs that arose among this little community of people. They called him 'Master' or 'Rabbi.' As they went from town to town throughout Judea, those who truly wanted to do the will of God followed them for days at a time. However, when He would go on to the next town, the Master would send most of them back home.

### The Foundation

It wasn't the time for everyone to be together yet. That time would come. But before that could happen something absolutely vital had to take place. The Master would set an example that would become the foundation upon which all future discipleship would be built — He had to die. Those who did *not* want to do the will of God would eventually kill Him. At one point He had said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'<sup>1</sup>

### Joining together

What was this fruit He spoke about and why was it going to be so plentiful? The unmistakable abundant fruit of His death and resurrection was going to be in a people. Not just any ordinary people, but people living together and loving one another the same way that He had loved them. Those who were willing to do God's will would become... *His family!* 'Those who do the will of God, they are My family...'<sup>2</sup> This was the only place where God's will could be done — because it takes a community of people to do the will of God. It takes brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers being joined together in community to do the will of God.

### Christ's incarnation in a people

Acts 2 and 4 give a vivid picture of what community life was like in Jerusalem where the first Messianic community was established. This was the first *witness* of the Body of Christ. A *witness* is that which furnishes evidence or proof. The life in the Body was the incarnation of Christ in a people after He ascended into heaven. The behavior of the first community could be easily observed by those who lived around them in Jerusalem:

*Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. (Acts 2:44-45)*

*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. (Acts 4:32-35)*

### His Spirit in a body

This *witness* of His life in a people was the demonstration of the love that had been poured out in their hearts when they received the Holy Spirit. The *community factor* wasn't left out in this first expression of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2 and 4 was the manifestation of the Holy Spirit on earth. The result was the formation of a *visible body*, the *incarnation* of His Spirit, that could be entered by baptism.<sup>3</sup> It was a *tangible* body, not a *mystical* body. Without a body in which to dwell, the Holy Spirit cannot be *present* on earth.<sup>4</sup> He is not a disembodied spirit. His very purpose

in coming on the day of Pentecost was to be embodied in those 120 disciples who were waiting for Him in obedience to the Master's instructions. The result was the formation of the Body of Christ as a living spiritual organism that would grow and multiply organically from that single original nucleus.

### The corporeal body

*Corporeal* means having tangible or physical form or substance. A Body is an organism, *head to toe*, vitally connected and continually functioning in coordination with itself. It is not a diffuse assortment of disconnected appendages.<sup>5</sup> 'Body life' is exactly what Paul described in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, which disciples are immersed *into*.<sup>6</sup> A person becomes a member of Christ by being immersed (which is the meaning of *baptized*) into the corporeal Body of Christ.<sup>7</sup> As 1 Corinthians 1:13 describes, a corporeal body is not divided. How could it be, and still live? A *body* is made up of many members (just as the human body), which take their orders from the *head*.<sup>8</sup> When Paul compared the Body of Christ to a human body in

1 Corinthians 12:12-27, he was speaking of the practical, full-time participation of every member. The Body of Christ is not a *mystical* body, but a corporate *corporeal* one.

### The holy nation

Where can you find this community today? What is the *Body of Christ*?<sup>9</sup> What is a holy nation?<sup>10</sup> This was a familiar term to the first-century believers, but not to Christians today. The Body of Christ, as the apostles understood it, was a confederation of twelve self-governing tribes.<sup>11</sup> But the terms 'holy nation' and 'Body of Christ' have been systematically 'mysticalized' to the point where there is no practical reality to the life of Christ being lived out in a corporate, visible body or spiritual nation of people. By the second century those who called themselves believers stopped living in community, and the Body of Christ had no more objective, visible reality. It became a mere mental concept. The term 'Body of Christ' needs to be demystified for Christians today so that the sincere ones can see convincing proof that Christ really does

“By the second century, those who called themselves believers stopped living in community, and the Body of Christ had no more objective, visible reality. It became a mere mental concept.”

## Concept or Reality?





live in a people on earth. Christians have subsisted on mainstream doctrinal thought, devoid of the vibrant life of the first communities. They have been taught nothing else for centuries in Papal encyclicals, sermons, catechisms, and systematic theologies. But God makes a home for the lonely. Those who are yearning to do God's will can now begin to see that home, that Body, so they can become part of His corporeal *family*. 🍇

<sup>1</sup> John 12:24

<sup>2</sup> Mark 3:31-35

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:12-13;  
Galatians 3:27

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 4:2-3; John 14:18,20,23

<sup>5</sup> Colossians 2:19

<sup>6</sup> Galatians 3:27

<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 6:17

<sup>8</sup> Hebrews 13:17

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2 & 4; Ephesians 4:11-16;  
1 Corinthians 12:12-13

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 21:43; 1 Peter 2:9-10

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 49:6; Acts 26:7;  
Revelation 7:5-8



## Q. HOW CAN WE RESPOND TO HIS LOVE?

### A. BY POURING OUT ALL THAT WE HAVE ON HIM.

**Jesus was the witness** to the world of who the Father was. He was the reality of the concept of a loving heavenly Father. He said to Phillip, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father."*<sup>1</sup> The scriptures bore witness to Him, but by themselves, those scriptures could not be a true and complete witness.<sup>2</sup> The witness had to be the reality of true love and forgiveness — flesh and blood physically walking it out.

**This man Jesus** affected one woman to the point that she broke her alabaster jar and poured out its precious contents onto His feet. The love and forgiveness He granted enabled her to see the reality of God's love for her. The love of a man who was in communion with the Father caused her to pour out her most precious possession on His feet.

**The Master's response** was to say, *"Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."*<sup>3</sup> Hers was a suitable response for someone who has had his or her sins forgiven. He wanted her story told so that we would know how to respond to His love — by pouring out all that we have on Him. Only that response takes faith out of the conceptual realm and brings it into reality.

**But where is He** that we can pour out all we have on His feet? 🍇

<sup>1</sup> John 14:9

<sup>2</sup> John 5:39

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 26:13





## Part 2: It Takes a Community

# A Place to Belong

THE OUTWORKING OF LOVE MAKES THE BODY A PLACE TO BELONG, A PLACE WHERE EACH MEMBER IS VITALLY NEEDED AND TENDERLY CARED FOR.

“The only way a church can be is a home. It is a place where He resides and where His people reside.”

### Coordinating the body

Can you imagine a human body whose members acted independently from one another, not receiving or obeying signals from the head? Suppose one foot decided to go left and the other foot decided to go right. Or, suppose the hands decided to wrap themselves around the throat and squeeze tightly and not let go for ten minutes. What would become of such a body? Of course this is a ridiculous scenario, but isn't this what the “Body of Christ” today is really like? Individual Christians and entire denominations function completely independently and often at cross purposes with one another, even to the point of going to war against each other.

But within the true Body of Christ there can be no independent discipleship, for such independence causes the Body to cease existing. In a real, live body all the members are vitally connected to one another and to the head, to which they are entirely submissive. They all work together in coordination for the health and growth of the Body.<sup>1</sup>

### No longer alone

It is not merely a matter of mechanics and organization that the Body functions this way. It is actually the outworking of love that makes the Body *a place to belong*, a place where each member is vitally needed and tenderly cared for.<sup>2</sup>

It is actually the very nature of God that the Body that houses His Spirit would make a home for the lonely.<sup>3</sup> There are no *lonely* disciples.

Who has ever tried to be a disciple alone? Does it work? No, because it takes a community for disciples to live and thrive in. The community is a place to belong, *an actual geographic location*, where individual families live and work together — having all things in common.<sup>4</sup> It is not a place to *imagine* you belong. Your home is where you actually live. The only way a church can be is a home.<sup>5</sup> It is a place *where He resides*<sup>6</sup> and where His people reside. He has a residential address in His people, and that is where they *serve* Him. It is a place where *all the disciples* are honored by God,<sup>7</sup> not just counted as equal and welcome on Sundays, but honored, esteemed, valued, and needed all week long. There is no other place to belong, no other place you can serve Christ, because He isn't anywhere else than in His Body. The reality of Jesus Christ having *come in the flesh*<sup>8</sup> is not just that the Word became flesh in the man Jesus 2000 years ago, but that He ascended into heaven and sent His Spirit to dwell in a real, tangible<sup>9</sup> body.<sup>10</sup> If that Body isn't every bit as real and tangible today as was His human body, then how can there be any reality or witness to His resurrection?<sup>11</sup> It takes a community to represent Him.



“It takes a community in order to be a disciple of Christ. It takes daily interaction, a daily taking up of your cross, and daily encouragement from your brothers and sisters whom you are with on a daily basis.”



#### **A place to be tested and observed**

It takes a community for disciples to be *tested*. The Master told parables about the kingdom<sup>12</sup> to show how some would receive the word and bear fruit, others would fall away, and still others would appear to bear fruit, but would prove to be false in the end. Community is the crucible for testing the genuineness of disciples. A community is a *torture chamber* for the *fleshly* ones who live for themselves. The Master said, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow me.”<sup>43</sup> Notice that he said *daily*, not *weekly*. Community depends on each member denying himself to care for the needs of his brothers and sisters, *daily* laying down their lives for one another.<sup>14</sup> A community is the only place where the Word of God and the Gospel can be obeyed and lived out. *It takes a community*.

Anyone who says that he knows God, but does not, cannot, or will not obey His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him.<sup>15</sup> And how can anyone actually obey His commandments except in community where you are daily faced with the needs and shortcomings of your brothers and sisters?<sup>16</sup> Only there can you practically love one another and encourage one another *daily*, seeing to it that no one falls short of the grace of God.<sup>17</sup> How can anyone be saved *all alone*, independent of His Body?

#### **Words alone are not enough**

Contrary to the popular understanding, the gospel must be *obeyed*<sup>18</sup> and this takes a community, not just “my four and no more.” It won’t suffice to just go to church once or even twice a week either. It takes a community in order to be a disciple of Christ. It takes *daily* interaction, a *daily* taking up of your cross,<sup>19</sup> and *daily* encouragement from your brothers and sisters whom you are with on a *daily basis*.<sup>20</sup> How does one know he has passed out of death and into life<sup>21</sup> except





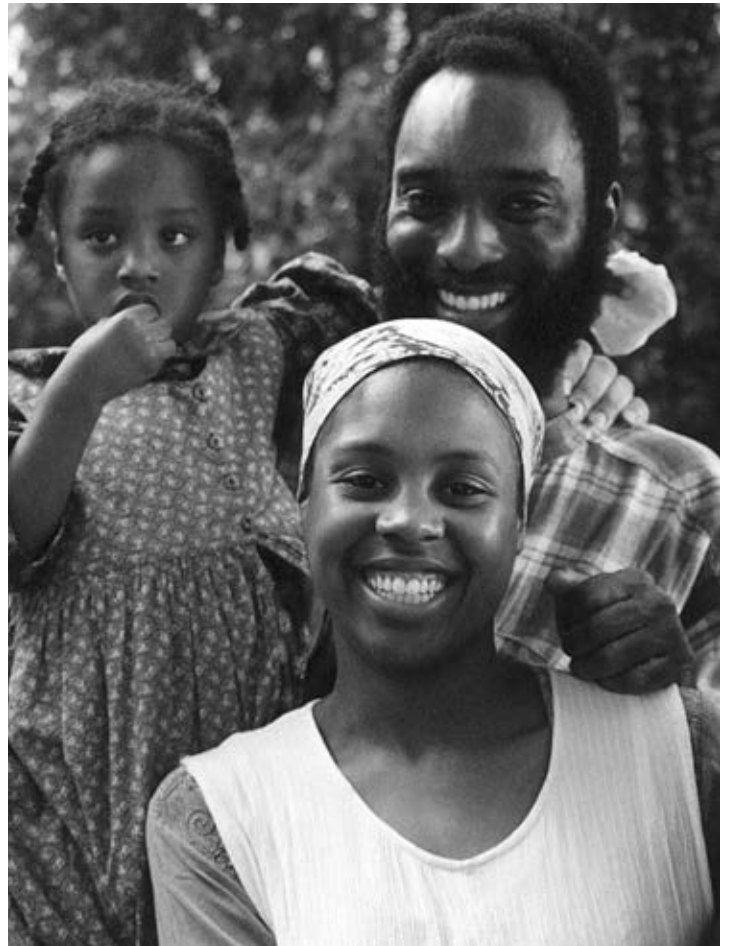


“It takes a community to obey the gospel, and to obey the gospel makes a community.”

by the evidence of his practical deeds of love and service in the Body where he lays down his life for his friends?<sup>22</sup> Words alone are not enough.<sup>23</sup> It takes a community.

### Service in the Body

To *serve* God in the way Paul described the Twelve Tribes<sup>24</sup> is a night-and-day *endeavor*. He was describing what the Master spoke of in John 12:26 — serving Him *where He is*. To serve in this capacity means to care for the needs of the other members of the Body. This is done as each member serves the Head. It is a coordinated effort, with no independent action. We must serve the Head by caring for one another.<sup>25</sup> This is the will of the Head. We help others directly, under the covering of our overseers and elders, who are the ‘servants of all.’ They see all the needs and know who the best one is to serve where there is the greatest need. All are serving the Head as they serve those who are their “heads” in the Body of Christ. This is how the Body works — *it takes a community.* 🍇



<sup>1</sup> Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 4:15-16 <sup>2</sup> Ephesians 5:29 <sup>3</sup> Psalm 68:6 <sup>4</sup> Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35 <sup>5</sup> John 12:26 <sup>6</sup> John 14:18,21,23 <sup>7</sup> John 12:26; 1 Corinthians 12:21-27 <sup>8</sup> 1 John 4:2-3; John 1:14 <sup>9</sup> Tangible means perceptible by the senses, especially the sense of touch. <sup>10</sup> Ephesians 2:19-22 <sup>11</sup> Acts 4:33; John 14:12; 1 John 4:17 <sup>12</sup> Matthew 13 <sup>13</sup> Luke 9:23 <sup>14</sup> John 15:13; John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16 <sup>15</sup> 1 John 2:4 <sup>16</sup> 1 John 3:17 <sup>17</sup> Hebrews 3:13; 12:15 <sup>18</sup> John 3:36; Luke 14:26-33; Mark 10:25-30 <sup>19</sup> Luke 9:23 <sup>20</sup> Hebrews 3:13 <sup>21</sup> John 5:24 <sup>22</sup> 1 John 3:14, 16, 23 and 24; John 15:12-13 <sup>23</sup> 1 John 3:18-21 <sup>24</sup> Acts 26:7 <sup>25</sup> John 13:34-35





# Shepherds Take Care of the Flock

SHEEP REQUIRE DAILY CARE AND FEEDING. THOSE WHO ARE STRONG IN SPIRIT MAY BE SATISFIED WITH A WEEKLY DOSE OF ENCOURAGEMENT, BUT THE POOR IN SPIRIT NEED MUCH MORE THAN THAT.

## Devoted to each other

You have probably heard it said, or perhaps found yourself saying something like, "If Jesus were only here, He would set things straight. He would really care for people..." Few will contest the fact that the Master brooded over His little flock of disciples when He was on the earth. He was constantly encouraging them, correcting them, protecting them, teaching them, and giving them vision of His Father's purpose for their lives. Even when they were completely bewildered about what He was trying to get them to understand, they would not give up following Him, for they knew that He had the words of eternal life.<sup>1</sup>

They were devoted to Him, and He was devoted to them. He was trying to make *apostles* out of them. *Apostle* means "sent one" — He wanted to be able to send them out in His name to represent Him, that is, to *re-present* Him. The way He was with them is the way they were to be with those who received them<sup>2</sup> (and if anyone received them, they were receiving the One

who sent them<sup>3</sup>). The Master laid down His life for them, not only ultimately on the cross, but every day of their life together, and He expected them to do the same for one another and those in their care.<sup>4</sup>

*"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep... The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep."*  
(John 10:11,13)

"We were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children."

1 THESSALONIANS 2:7



### Re-presenting the Master

Where you find true shepherds, you will find the flock that they tenderly care for, night and day. Take the example of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, who were sent to the Thessalonians as those whom *God approved* and *entrusted* with the gospel:<sup>5</sup>

*We were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us... (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8)*

They did not come to the Thessalonians with flattering speech, wanting to please or make a good impression. Nor did they give the credit to God for their achievements while making a name for themselves, but they proved to be humble among the brothers, caring

for them as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. They labored night and day, laying down their lives to care for the sheep. This record gives us a clear picture of the “family” life of full-time commitment that the gospel produces.

### Servants of all

These men *lived* with those who believed in their word. They labored through many hardships to establish a blameless witness among them, imploring them to walk in the *same manner* as Christ. Paul, Silvanus, Timothy, and John had the same message<sup>6</sup> which they themselves had first obeyed. They walked in the same manner as Messiah, not loving their own lives, being a servant to all, even the most demanding of the flock, as He commanded them.<sup>7</sup> Sound impossible?



## Breakfast by the Sea

As Simon was mulling over the backbone of that last piece of fish he had chewed, the Master turned with a smile and piercing eyes in his direction and asked that one question that summed it all up for Simon.

“Simon bar Jonah, do you love me more than these?” and He nodded lightly in the direction of the shore, the nets, the boat and the sea.

Simon squirmed. Something was pinching inside and the pain seemed to spread through his whole being like when a bee stings you on the chest. His throat suddenly felt as if someone had stuffed a handful of gravel down it. He tried to clear it and stammered, “Y-yes, S-sir, uh, you know I’m your friend!” and he choked back that burning which was rising like a fever up his throat. He hardly heard the words that were spoken directly to his heart – him, Simon the Rock – as the Master continued to speak to him: “Feed my lambs.”

Tears reached his eyes as his mind began racing back over the last fishing expedition, the wind whistling through the sail yards as they tacked towards the southern shore of the sea in search of fish, the blaze of the setting summer sun on his sweaty back, the smell of mist in the evening winds, and the squiggly, jumping, leaping catch on the shore after that night’s catch! What could he say? And he knew full well that they would have caught nothing, had it not been for the

Master’s words of authority. He knew full well what all that meant, and what he was being called to give up, once and for all!

“But Simon, do you *love* me?” The question came in full force, albeit just as calmly as before. Simon caught the emphasis and knew exactly what Jesus was asking. Visions of the cross welled up before Simon’s imagination. He saw himself wearing the Master’s skin, peeled back to red flesh, bearing a crude wooden beam up to that place. (Simon shuddered.) Golgotha, to be hammered, nailed and tied to that thing... he *knew* what was being asked of him, he *knew* he was being called to lay down his life, to love without limits, to risk all, to leave all behind... his fishing, his fishing nets, his boat, his life... Through cloudy eyes he looked around at his friends. He had led them to those boats... “Why me?” he thought. John was looking straight at him with kindness in his eyes; seeming to understand what Simon was going through, while the others were sitting quietly, some looking at the Master, others staring at the sand.

“You know I am your friend!” he insisted weakly, not really knowing what to say or how to account for his shame and confusion. He couldn’t help but remember things he didn’t want to remember. That dark, chilly night around the fire, the servant’s girl’s look, that overwhelming fear that filled his empty soul when she asked him that question....



## Daily encouragement

Well, it *is* impossible without the true gospel bringing it about. 1 John 5:12 tells us of the life that we need to have in order to know whether we have the Son, so that we who regard ourselves as believers would have the objective means of knowing whether the gospel we received was the same gospel the Master preached. "The life" is the *body life* that was *observed* by those who did not yet believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:14 says the Thessalonians followed the *same pattern* of the churches that were in *Judea*, which Acts 2 and 4 vividly describe. That pattern was the communal pattern.

The apostles were not speaking of merely the organizational structure of community, but the pattern of John 21:15-18 — "If you love Me, feed My lambs, tend My sheep." *Tending* means to take care of, pay attention to, serve or wait

upon. Sheep require *daily* care and feeding. Those who are strong in spirit may be satisfied with a weekly dose of encouragement, but the poor in spirit, the lambs, the sheep who are bereft (robbed, grieved, and distressed) need much more than that. Make no mistake, when the gospel is obeyed, it establishes *community* so that His people can be taken care of and not taken advantage of.<sup>8</sup> 🌿

<sup>1</sup> John 6:53-68

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 28:19-20

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 10:40; John 13:20

<sup>4</sup> John 15:13-14; 1 John 3:16; John 13:15-17

<sup>5</sup> 1 Thessalonians 2:1-14

<sup>6</sup> 1 John 2:4-6

<sup>7</sup> Luke 22:25-27

<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 4:2-3,12-16; Philippians 2:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-14



"Feed my sheep" came the answer. The Master had, by this time, gone over to Simon and put his hand on his shoulder. He took Simon by the beard and slowly lifted his face so that he could look him in the eye. Simon resisted a little, but felt that firm hold tugging upwards. There was a gentle smile on the Master's face.

"Simon, are you truly my friend?" he asked this time. Simon could no longer resist his tears. They flowed freely now. He blurted out

his answer as if in a final plea for mercy,

"Master, you know everything! You know I love you." It was over. As the Master let go, Simon put his hands over his face and wept unabashedly.

"Feed my sheep" came the final command.

The Master stood up and walked over to the fire, stoked it a bit with a stick and turned again to Simon and said,

"I tell you the truth, Simon, when you were younger, you used to put on your clothes and

go about wherever you liked. But the day will come when you will stretch out your hands, and someone else besides you will come and put your clothes on you and lead you where you do not want to go..."

That was okay with Simon. He lifted his head and looked straight into the Master's loving, yet penetrating eyes. He no longer had any shame, nothing to hide, no more resistance. He saw nothing any more but the love the Master had for him and how he wanted him to love his brothers in the same way. 🌿



*"Simon bar Jonah, do you love me more than these?" and He nodded lightly in the direction of the shore, the nets, the boat and the sea.*

Part 2: It Takes a Community







# Will God Get What He Deserves?

JESUS MAINTAINED HIS COMMUNION WITH GOD AND WAS THEREFORE ABLE TO BE A RANSOM, A SPOTLESS SACRIFICE FOR MANKIND. GOD'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE IS TO HAVE MANY HUMAN BEINGS THAT HE COULD DWELL IN AND EXPRESS HIS PERFECT LOVE THROUGH.



**There is no more powerful force** in the universe than the love of God. Nothing else can reach down into the depths of the human soul and bring true healing and hope. His love and His life were embodied in the man Jesus. He lived every day to love and serve and feed those who needed Him. He was the living example of what God desired when He created man in the first place – that he would be a vessel of His Spirit, a body for Him to dwell in.

**It was not enough** that God dwelt in one man for a brief moment in history. But it was necessary to send this one man, a second Adam,<sup>1</sup> who would overcome the temptations of the evil prince who rules this world. Jesus kept Himself pure and maintained His communion with God and was therefore able to qualify as a ransom, a spotless sacrifice for mankind. God's ultimate purpose in this was to have many people that He could dwell in<sup>2</sup> and express His perfect love through. They are the "Holy Ones," the ruling class who will be His Body among the Nations that will fill the universe for eternity.<sup>3</sup>

**Jesus was like a precious seed** that fell into the ground and died. But death could not hold Him because of His innocence. He returned to those He loved and told them to wait in Jerusalem for the Spirit to come upon them. For a brief time in history the known world witnessed a foretaste of the kingdom,<sup>4</sup> as the love of God filled the hearts of Jesus' disciples. People were coming together to love and care for one another, sharing all they had, because of their love for God and His Son.<sup>5</sup> Communities of Holy Ones began to spring up in every place. They offered hope and a home to those who truly desired to know their Creator.

**In these communities** you could actually live with people who were becoming like Jesus. He was the firstborn and pre-eminent above all others. Yet He made a way for all those with the same heart as Him to become sons of God, His brothers.<sup>6</sup> He blazed a trail so that others could follow Him, walking as He walked. It wasn't a mystical transformation that happened when people professed their belief in Him, but an actual,

**"When the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on the Earth?"**

LUKE 18:8



progressive change occurred in the life of each disciple. Living and working together in His communities created real tests between the disciples that brought about this deep inner change — the salvation of their souls.

**His love is a consuming fire** and this life of the early disciples was designed to purify these Holy Ones in order that they could more perfectly express His love to others who would follow Him. Ultimately they would be prepared, as a bride is prepared for her King,<sup>8</sup> and then Jesus would return for her and together they would set up His eternal Kingdom beginning on earth for 1000 years.<sup>9</sup>

**Sadly, their love waned.**<sup>10</sup> They stopped seeking Him. They lost their simplicity and pure devotion to Him.<sup>11</sup> They lost sight of the great purpose He had for their lives. Selfishness, fear, and division crept in. The disciples began to compromise in so many ways. They lost their confidence and their outspokenness.<sup>12</sup> The strong ones began to dominate the gatherings.<sup>13</sup> Gradually the few faithful ones died off and eventually the Holy Spirit could no longer find a home in their communities.<sup>14</sup> When love left, so did their vision to stay together and suffer to care for one another.

**Eventually Christianity** became the state religion under the Roman Emperor Constantine. The unfaithful Church had given herself to another lover.<sup>15</sup> She went from being “the persecuted” to being “the inquisitor.” All who stood against her were singled out and either banished or destroyed. Liturgy and empty rituals replaced what was once a life full of meaning and purpose. The humble sharing of genuine thanksgiving by each member was replaced by long-winded sermons of men seeking their own glory.

**The confusion continued** through the centuries. Those who claimed to have the truth shed a sea of blood as they sought to promote “the Kingdom of God” as they saw it. The fear of “hellfire and damnation” replaced the “love of God” as the primary motivation for accepting Christ. Giant stone cathedrals, built at the expense of many souls and great sums of money, represented the “awesomeness of God,” rather than the self-sacrificing love of Messiah in His people. All the while, the Church continued to splinter into denominations and sub-denominations.



“He has once again poured out His love in the heart of a people who are being gathered. We are learning to walk with Him. As a result, we are growing in our love for one another. We want to learn from those who have fallen in the past and overcome where they did not. It’s not easy, but He is worth everything to us.”



**“Right Doctrine”** became the “witness of the truth.” But tragically, these precepts were taught by men with blood-stained hands. They became accepted as “the word of God.” Men slowly lost their understanding and appreciation of natural law. The conscience was regarded less and less as something to listen to and live by. Doing “good for goodness sake,” was all “filthy rags.” People actually began to believe that it said in the Bible that God destined certain people from birth to go to eternal destruction and others to heaven.

**So here we are** in the 21st century. The confusion goes on. The deception has become much more subtle and sophisticated. It is no longer legal for those with “right doctrine” to burn those who have “wrong doctrine” at the stake or to hang them from the highest tree. Commitment to Christ has been reduced to weekly church attendance, paying your 10% and trying to be a good example to others, at best. The most pious in the churches tend to exalt their superior Bible knowledge and their “ministries.” Mere knowledge becomes the standard, and they use it to judge the difference between the “nominal” and the “sincere.”



“Real tests between disciples bring about a deep inner change — the salvation of our souls.”



**But where is the love of God?** Is Jesus getting what He paid for with His torturous death and three agonizing days in Death?<sup>16</sup> Is He gaining interest on His investment? Is His Bride being purified and prepared for His return? The answer seems painfully clear.

**He, however, is worthy** of a Bride who loves Him and gives herself to Him completely. He deserves to get what He paid for, what He died for, and what He is waiting for. He is able to do what He said He would do. And for this cause He came into the world. For this cause He was born, to bear witness of the truth and those who are of the truth will hear His voice.<sup>17</sup>

**The good news** is that He has once again poured out His love in the hearts of a people who are being gathered. We are learning to walk with Him. As a result, we are growing in our love for one another. We want to learn from those who have fallen in the past and overcome where they did not. It's not easy, but He is worth everything to us. We hate the way the world is going and the way He has been grossly

misrepresented. We are living to bring Him back to the earth. It's the most important thing that is happening anywhere today.

*The Spirit and the bride say, "Come."  
And let the one who hears say, "Come."  
And let the one who is thirsty come.  
Let the one who wishes take the water  
of life without cost.<sup>18</sup>* 🌿

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 2:22

<sup>3</sup> Revelation 21:2-3; 2:26; 21:24

<sup>4</sup> Mark 1:15

<sup>5</sup> Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-35

<sup>6</sup> 1 John 3:1-3; Hebrews 2:11

<sup>7</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:18:18; Romans 12:2

<sup>8</sup> Revelation 19:7-8

<sup>9</sup> Revelation 20:6

<sup>10</sup> Revelation 2:4-5

<sup>11</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:2-4

<sup>12</sup> Hebrews 3:6

<sup>13</sup> 3 John 9-10; Acts 20:30

<sup>14</sup> Revelation 3:2-4

<sup>15</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:2-4

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 53:10-11

<sup>17</sup> John 18:37

<sup>18</sup> Revelation 22:17





# Who We Are

LIVING A COMMON LIFE TOGETHER LIKE THE FIRST DISCIPLES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

## ■ Thankful for forgiveness

We are disciples of Jesus Christ,\* the Son of God. We are so very thankful that we have found forgiveness for our sins through His precious blood. We have come from every conceivable place in Christianity and we write this paper as an appeal to you, our brothers and sisters, who are still looking for a place to belong.

## ■ Our Master promised

Before we became disciples, most of us had a hard time making sense out of Christianity. The more we read the Bible, the more we saw the contradictions between what our Master promised and what we were experiencing. We saw clear commands in the New Testament that were ignored or explained away. This made us realize that we were not content, that deep down in our souls we had doubt about many things.

## ■ Sincerity and honesty

We were sincere. Deep in our hearts we wanted to serve God. Our Father in Heaven knew our hearts and through many different circumstances led us to cross the path of a people who had a common life together. We fell

in love with the Spirit they had, for He caused them to love one another with a sincerity and honesty that we had never seen. They were actually living a common life together like the first disciples in Acts, sharing all things and being devoted to this special life.

## ■ By His faith and grace

This is who we are — a people in love with the Son of God. He is our life and our hope. We have no other ambition or goal but Him. He is our everything, and by His faith and the grace that He gives to us every day, this love grows. It can't be contained; we are being consumed by it more and more.

## ■ Compelled by His Love

We welcome you, our brothers and sisters scattered throughout the confusing land of denominational Christianity, to come and stay with us for as long as you like. Our homes are open and our addresses are at the back of this paper. We believe you will see what we see, and if you do, you'll never go back. You'll never be content with anything else, because His love will compel you to no longer live for yourself but for Him who died for you and rose again on your behalf.

\*WE CALL OUR MASTER BY HIS HEBREW NAME, YAHSHUA, WHICH MEANS YAHWEH [THE NAME OF GOD] IS MIGHTY AND POWERFUL TO SAVE. THIS IS WHAT HIS MOTHER MIRIAM (MARY), AND HIS FOSTER FATHER YOWCEPH (JOSEPH), CALLED HIM. THIS IS ALSO WHAT HE CALLED HIMSELF WHEN ADDRESSING SAUL (PAUL), ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS. HE SPOKE NOT IN THE GREEK, BUT IN THE HEBREW LANGUAGE (ACTS 26:14-15). JOHN 5:43. HIS FATHER'S NAME IS YAH (PSALM 68:4). HIS SON'S NAME IS YAHSHUA (YAHWEH SAVES). (JOHN 17:11-12 IN THE NIV IS VERY CLEAR).



*We welcome you to come and stay with us for as long as you like. We believe you will see what we see, and if you do, you'll never go back.*



“Our Master stood outside the program of His society, with its cravings for wealth and power, and of its mainstream religion, with its carefully maintained hierarchy of clergy and laity.”

# The Dissenter

*DISSENTER: 1) SOMEONE WHO DISAGREES WITH THE BELIEFS OR OPINIONS OF A MAJORITY; 2) SOMEONE WHO REFUSES TO ACCEPT THE AUTHORITY, DOCTRINES, OR PRACTICES OF AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH. (IN THE PAST THIS WAS ESPECIALLY APPLIED TO PROTESTANTS LIKE THE PILGRIMS, THE QUAKERS, AND MEN LIKE ROGER WILLIAMS, WHO CAME TO AMERICA AND HELPED ESTABLISH FREEDOM OF RELIGION. THEY WERE DISSENTERS FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES.)*

## **Growing up in the traditions**

Simeon was a devout Jew who was in the Temple on the day Jesus was brought by His parents to be circumcised. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he saw the Messiah. Now a very old man, Simeon took this little baby in his arms and said to the mother of the baby, Mary,

*“This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” (Luke 2:34-35)*

What he said to Mary was something she would need to remember time and time again. She had grown up in

the established traditions of Judaism. She lived in a time in Israel when the traditions of the elders had replaced obedience to the word of the prophets and the Law given to Moses. In fact, no prophet had spoken in Israel for over 400 years since the prophet Malachi had rebuked the nation for offering lame sacrifices. When she was betrothed to Joseph, her way of life, like everyone else’s, followed the social and spiritual programs of the Scribes and Pharisees. She knew nothing else. She and many other sincere ones would always talk of the coming of the Messiah, who would lead Israel as its king and deliver the people from the oppression of the Romans.



*Community-held  
open forums  
encourage  
freedom of  
speech on issues  
that rarely get  
discussed.*



### **Recognized by all**

Then, one day the angel Gabriel came to Mary in her hometown of Nazareth. He told her that she would bear a son through the power of the Most High and that He would be called the Son of God. Her son would be given the throne of David and He would reign over the house of Jacob forever. From that day forward she never doubted that her son would grow up to take the throne of David as the king of Israel. She never doubted that He would be accepted by the people and especially by the religious leaders of her day. She could see this beginning to happen when He was twelve years old in the Temple as she observed the teachers marveling at the wisdom and understanding of her young son. Her heart leaped for joy at the thought that in just a few years He would be recognized by all as the one sent from God to reign over Israel.

The day eventually came when her son went out and began to call disciples to follow Him. The sincere ones were in for a big surprise. They had to come face to face with the fact that the only "program" they knew from their religious leaders was not His program at all. His disciples were not the religious leaders of the day, but instead, they were the disillusioned, the poor, and the outcasts of Israel. Throngs of people came to hear Him teach, and to watch Him heal the people of their diseases. He was

becoming known all around the country as a prophet, as one sent from God.

### **Rejected by men**

Mary wondered about His followers and how it would all come together. Right about that time she heard a report that the religious leaders were saying her son "had a demon" — that he was doing the work of Beelzebub, a powerful and wicked evil spirit. She was upset and wondered how it could be that the dignified religious leaders of her day could be talking this way about her son. Still, considering the stature of the priests and the Pharisees, she wondered if perhaps it might be true. If anyone knew what God was saying, surely it was these men.

She decided to get the family together and go down to see Him where He was teaching. She did not expect that He would be rejected by these great men, so she felt it her motherly duty to find out what was going on. She didn't want anything to hinder the fulfillment of what the angel Gabriel had spoken about Him. But much to her surprise, He showed that He was teaching a different program than that of the religious leaders. He dismissed her plea to stop teaching and come home with her, saying, "...*whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and My mother.*"<sup>1</sup> He was not going along with the status quo of His society, but

*The statue depicting the  
four world empires seen in  
Nebuchadnezzar's dream  
is a catalyst to speak about  
the coming merger of  
church and state.*





*"Peacemaker," our double-decker bus, often goes to concerts, festivals, and other events with a volunteer medical team.*

instead was establishing something "outside the camp"<sup>2</sup> of the accepted traditions of Judaism.

### **Standing apart**

His response to His mother and brothers was a public declaration that He was at odds with the authority, traditions, and practices of established Judaism. He, like John the Baptist, was a voice of dissent, taking a stand against the program of the accepted religion of His day. He ushered in a new understanding of God's will. What happened that day was the beginning of the fulfillment of Simeon's prophecy.

The Messiah had indeed become a sign which would be spoken against. He stood outside of the program of His society, with its cravings for wealth and power, and of its mainstream religion, with its carefully maintained hierarchy of

clergy and laity. He was sent to a people trapped in a dead religion that was void of God's presence. When the "sword of His word pierced His own mother's soul," prophecy was again fulfilled. She was a part of this dead religion. He had to go outside the ranks of Judaism in order to establish something new, and all who would follow Him had to go with Him — even His own mother.

He showed them a new way of living based on self-sacrifice, the kind of which He would personally demonstrate. In shedding His blood on the cross He would purchase salvation for His people just as the angel had prophesied. And it was only at the cross, outside the security and comfort of organized religion, that His followers could lay hold of that salvation.

His followers came from the dissatisfied of Judaism — from those quiet

# History of Dissent

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY, THE ONES WHO WERE WILLING TO DO GOD'S WILL HAVE SENSED THAT SOMETHING WAS WRONG.

### **When love grew cold**

Sadly, the decline Paul wrote so fervently against in his many letters soon set in. As soon as love began to die, obedience waned, and the true revelation of God ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup> The people were left to their own understanding about God and His will. Men with great intellects and powerful speech began to dominate the simple believers in the churches. The apostle John wrote that the sincere were being turned out of the churches,<sup>2</sup> just as they had once been turned out of Judaism.

His Spirit had produced one anointing that brought them all into the same revelation, love, and obedience to the Word. But eventually through disobedience the anointing flow was constricted and eventually, it stopped. Denominations began to creep in as different leaders had different understandings and led away followings after their own interpretations.<sup>3</sup> When love died, the community died and they no longer shared all things in common. This is

how the religious establishment of Christianity began. Since that time, the ones who were willing to do God's will have sensed that something was wrong in the established religion. They became dissenters, disillusioned with what they saw and heard. They began to look for something real. But where would they go? Such dissenters have always been persecuted by whichever denomination was in power. This has been the history of the Christian church.

### **Dissent begins again**

Consider the Inquisition and the Crusades of the Roman Catholic Church. Look at what the Protestant Reformers like Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, and John Calvin did to those who didn't agree with them. When the Anabaptists were compelled to follow their "inner conviction" contrary to the traditions and teachings of the established Lutheran Church, Luther pronounced them worthy of death. Dissenting on the issue of infant baptism placed the Anabaptists

**"Dissent will always be in the hearts of the sincere until they find the words of eternal life that compel obedience."**



dissenters who had no authority to expose the hypocrisy of its leaders. On their own they had no authority to call true believers “outside the camp,” but only there was it possible to receive the power to do God’s will and to obey His commandments.

### Removing the threat

This “new program” threatened the mainstream religious leaders, and they, in turn, rejected their own Messiah. Eventually they murdered Him as the Master had foretold in a parable:

*“But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”* (Matthew 21:37-39)

This parable revealed that they would kill Him just as they had killed the prophets of old:

*“You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become.”* (Acts 7:51-52)

### Outside the ranks

From the blood that flowed from His death on the cross, a new society emerged. In fact, on the Day of Pentecost the New Covenant church was born. It was a community of believers. Like its dissident leader, the movement grew up outside of the religious system

of that day. God was free to pour His love out into peoples’ hearts, therefore the members of this movement had a vibrant love for one another. They had revelation of their Master and Savior, like the apostles who had preached the gospel to them. Their love was evidenced by their obedience. This obedience enabled their heavenly Father to reveal Himself to them, just as He had revealed who the Messiah was to Peter.<sup>3</sup> This revelation of the Father and the Son was just as He had promised when He was with them.<sup>4</sup> This ongoing cycle of love, obedience, and revelation bore witness to the world that God sent His Son.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mark 3:35

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 13:11-13

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 16:18

<sup>4</sup> John 14:21

<sup>5</sup> John 17:23

outside the camp of the Reformers’ interpretation of scripture. In 1527 Luther and Zwingli promoted the *total* elimination of the Anabaptists through capital punishment, “for the preservation of the public order.”<sup>4</sup>

John Calvin, founder of the Reformed churches, was responsible for the execution of Michael Servetus. Servetus had the wrong doctrine — that is, he had a doctrine of baptism and the Trinity that differed from that of Calvin. Calvin’s expertise in the “right” doctrine qualified him as an expert witness in the civil trial of Servetus.<sup>5</sup> It was upon the authority of Calvin’s expert testimony that Servetus was found guilty and sentenced to burn at the stake. The sentence was decreed by the town council of Geneva, a body of laymen.<sup>6</sup> As Servetus was being led to the stake, he was accompanied by William Farel, who tried to persuade him to “repudiate his errors.” Servetus was silent. From the flames Servetus prayed, “O Jesus, thou *Son of the eternal God*, have pity on me!” Farel later said that if Servetus had been willing to confess “Jesus, the *eternal Son of God*,” he might have been saved. Essentially he was saying that Servetus was executed because “he put the adjective [*eternal*] in the

wrong place,”<sup>7</sup> referring to God rather than the Son of God!

### Separatists

This pattern of relentless persecution and execution over points of doctrine continued down through the 17th century in the Church of England. Some Puritan dissenters were tortured and killed until they fled England to the new world in 1620. Among these Puritans were a group of dissenters from the Church of England who could not tolerate worshipping in the midst of compromise and contradiction. Their dissent led them to leave the Church of England altogether and form new, separate churches. Beginning as early as the 1570s a number of Puritans did just that and earned the name *Separatists*.<sup>8</sup>

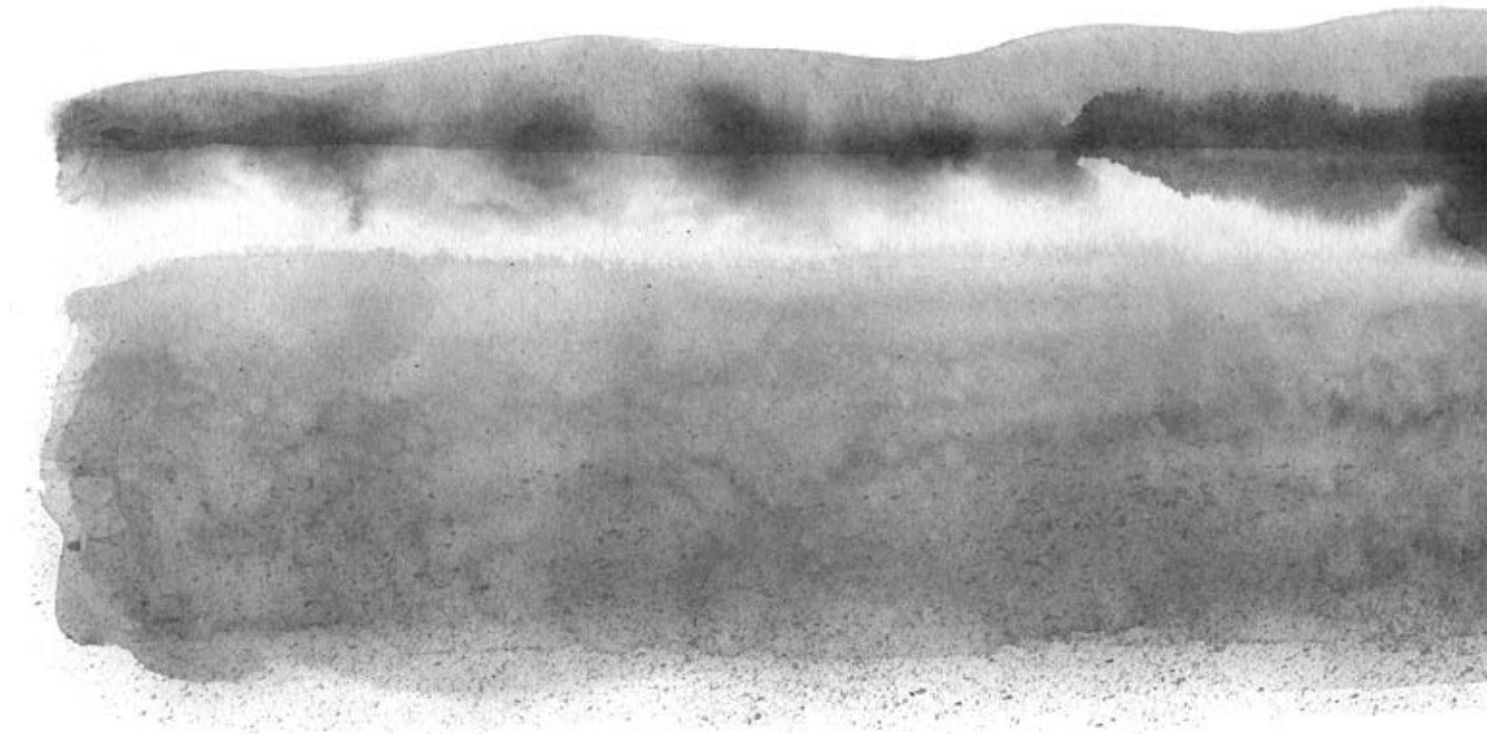
Foremost among these Separatist dissenters who came to Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1631 was Roger Williams. When he called the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in Boston to renounce their ties with the Church of England and be entirely separate from it, he was banished into the wilderness of New England. Williams was a dissenter and a very educated man who knew

*(Continued on next page)*



*Although Roger Williams never took the time to sit for a portrait, he’s been described as “...a charming, sweet-tempered, winning man, courageous, selfless, God-intoxicated — stubborn — the very soul of separatism.”*

FROM *THE PURITAN DILEMMA*  
BY EDMUND MORGAN



that what he saw in Christianity was not the true church. He knew that if there was ever to be a true church, it had to be raised up by apostles and that it would be raised up outside the “wilderness of the world” that the church had become. In effect, in Williams’ view, Christians had lost their church and there was no present way to recover it.<sup>9</sup>

Williams’ life was spared as he escaped into the wilderness and established the colony that later became the state of Rhode Island. He established a secular government based on the separation of church and state to protect the individual believers who were left in the “wilderness of the world” until Christ returned. Many other dissenters were not so fortunate and were imprisoned, beaten, and executed for their dissent in the colonies. It was from the lessons learned from this long, bloody history that the framers of the U.S. Constitution adopted a system of law that protected the freedom of religious dissent and kept the state from adopting any one religion as a state religion to which all must bow.<sup>10</sup>

### Quenching dissent

The Christian establishment has had a program of bloodshed since

Constantine made Christianity the recognized religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. They quenched the voice of dissent just like their predecessors, the Jews, who quenched the voice of their Messiah by putting Him to death on a cross. It is no different today except where religious freedom is protected by law, and even then there are no guarantees that dissenters will not be labeled and targeted as a cult.

### Path of love

Dissenters within the established religion of Christianity have long looked for a prophet to come — one with a different program than the dead traditions and liturgy that replaced the love of God that they desire. The sincere ones in Christianity today parallel the sincere ones in Judaism in our Master’s day. They are looking for the dissident voice “outside the camp”<sup>11</sup> to show them the ancient path — the path of love revealed in the gospel. The revelation that the Messiah is the Son of the living God comes to those with a sincere desire to obey. That revelation is the rock on which our Master builds His church (community).<sup>12</sup> Dissent will always be in the hearts of the sincere until they find the words of eternal life that compel

obedience. Apart from that revelation there is no obedience, but the true words of eternal life bring the lonely into families.<sup>13</sup> This is what Jesus came to establish. He wants a new family where His word is obeyed. It is in this family that dissent is replaced by love that is daily being perfected in unity. 🍇

<sup>1</sup> John 14:24

<sup>2</sup> 3 John 1:10

<sup>3</sup> Acts 20:29-30

<sup>4</sup> *The Secret of the Strength, What Would the Anabaptists Tell This Generation?*, Peter Hoover, Benchmark Press, p. 59

<sup>5</sup> *The Travail of Religious Liberty*, Roland H. Bainton, Harper & Brothers Publishers, p. 55

<sup>6</sup> Op. cit., p.93

<sup>7</sup> Op. cit., p.94

<sup>8</sup> *Roger Williams: The Church and the State*; Edmund S. Morgan, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.; p.17

<sup>9</sup> Op.cit., pp.50-53

<sup>10</sup> First Amendment, U.S.

Constitution

<sup>11</sup> Hebrews 13:11-13

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 16:16-18

<sup>13</sup> Psalm 68:5-6; Jeremiah 31:1





*He is thirsty, dying of thirst, but the cool oasis is a mirage; the water he sees does not exist.*

---

## Part 3: The Voice of Dissent

# Thirsting for the Water of Life

“The one who is truly thirsty will gladly give up his possessions, his career, his social status for the sake of the treasure he has found.”

HE WILL GIVE THE WATER OF LIFE (THE HOLY SPIRIT) FREELY TO ANYONE WHO IS *THIRSTY* ENOUGH TO *OVERCOME* EVERY OBSTACLE THAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF OBEYING THE GOSPEL.

### **Mirage**

You’ve probably lived all your life in towns and never been in a desert, but there is a vivid image imprinted in your mind of a man crawling across the sand towards water. He is thirsty, dying of thirst, but the cool oasis is a mirage; the water he sees does not exist. The costly waste of precious effort — only one who was truly thirsty would risk it all again at another promise of water. Would this oasis be real or another bitter disappointment?

### **The Woman at the well<sup>1</sup>**

So many times she had been to the well to draw water. It was part of life. Every gallon used for cooking and washing had to be fetched in heavy clay jars. So many times a day, she, like everyone else, came to get water. So much water was needed for their animals and for themselves, for their daily existence, and yet the well had never run dry. The people had been drinking from it for many generations. Deep beneath the dry ground the water had a source that

had not failed them. Without it, they could not live, and she knew better than we how precious a source of water is.

When the man at the well offered her "living water" she could only wonder where He could get better water than was in the well. She had not yet perceived that He was speaking of the spiritual realm. Then He said that the water He gave would become a spring of water that would well up in her to eternal life. Oh, what water was this? She desired more than the humdrum life of drawing water and just living. She asked Him for this water that held the promise of life. But was she willing to pay the price?

"Go, call your husband, and come back."

"I have no husband."

"You are right in saying, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true."

Ohhh! That hurt! How did He know that? It seemed like He could look right into her soul. Five marriages... five disappointments... All her life she had thirsted for a covenant relationship that would fulfill something deep in her soul, but it always eluded her. She went into each marriage with such hope that it would satisfy her, but each time hope evaporated like a mirage. Finally she had given up hope, not daring to open up her heart to another man, but just settling for mere physical pleasure as long as it lasted. But it troubled her conscience, and this man saw right through her outward composure. She struggled to overcome the urge to just run away. But obviously this man was a prophet, a man of God. Maybe He could answer some of her nagging questions...

"How is it that we worship according to the faith of our fathers, but you Jews say that God doesn't accept our worship or hear our prayers?"

That question had never come to

rest in her. She had tried to fill up her soul with many things, but still she was empty. Nothing had satisfied her. She was still thirsty, and the offer of "living water" that would well up like a spring within her was very appealing, and she was willing to face the shame of her sin and the futility of her life in order to receive that living water.

The Bible does not say much more about this woman's life beyond the fact that she excitedly told everyone in her village that she had met the Messiah and how He had told her "everything she ever did." The effect this had on them was amazing, considering two undeniable facts: 1) Small villages being what they are, everyone knew very well what this woman's life was like, and what "everything she ever did" entailed; and 2) Most people would not want anyone to tell them everything *they* ever did. But evidently there were many thirsty people in that village, for they overcame the natural urge to keep the



"Our Master said, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.' So you have to be thirsty, truly longing for spiritual life that you don't yet have."

“Nowhere in the New Testament is there a single example of a person getting saved or receiving the Holy Spirit apart from receiving a flesh-and-blood disciple.”



walls up around their hurting souls and they compelled the Master to stay there and teach them, and it says that many believed in Him.

### Living water

What is this “living water” that the Master offered to the woman at the well? Is it available to just anyone? How does one receive it? And how do you know that you have it? These are vital<sup>2</sup> questions. You may be surprised at some of the answers that are found in the Scriptures, which are not the traditional answers you may have heard in church.

The first question is answered very clearly a few chapters later in the gospel according to John:

*On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture says, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

(John 7:37-39)

So “living water” is the Holy Spirit, right? That’s not so surprising. You may have been told that you already have this *living water*, if ever you said the “sinner’s prayer” and asked Jesus into your heart. After all, the Holy Spirit, like salvation, is a free gift, right?

The Holy Spirit is given freely, but who is He given to? To understand this, you must look more closely at the Master’s words. He said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” So you have to be *thirsty*, truly longing for spiritual life that you don’t yet have (for the Master told the woman that whoever drinks of this water will never thirst again).

### Coming to Him

And then you have to *come to Him*. Where is He? Now you may think this means you just need to “draw near to Him in your heart” or something like that, since, after all, He is literally in heaven right now so you can’t physically go to Him, right? Wrong! Another time, the Master said:

*He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves*

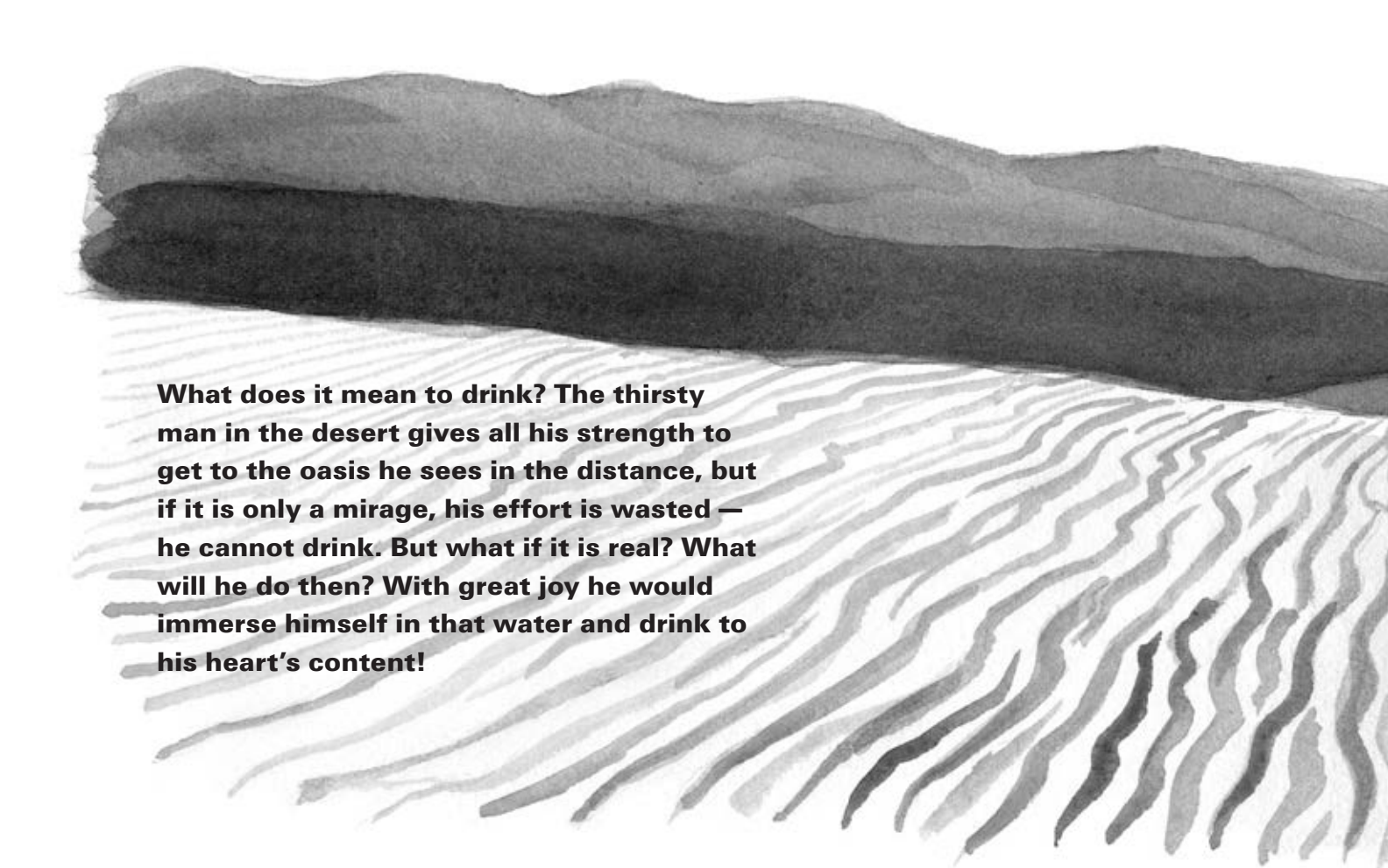
*Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also...*  
(John 12:25-26)

The first sentence describes someone who is *thirsty*, not satisfied with his life in this world. Then it says that someone like that who desires to serve Him must serve *where He is*. Where is He? He is where His Body is — where His disciples are living together in unity, in community. That’s where eternal life is.<sup>3</sup> Now there is a lot written about this elsewhere in this paper,<sup>4</sup> which I will not go into here. But suffice it to say that nowhere in the New Testament is there a single example of a person getting saved or receiving the Holy Spirit apart from receiving a flesh-and-blood disciple (sent from a community of disciples) who preached the good news to him.<sup>5</sup> The notion that a person can pick up a tract on a park bench and say the “sinner’s prayer” and ask Jesus into his heart, all by himself, is totally foreign to the Word of God.

### What it means to drink

So in order to receive the water of life, you must be *thirsty*, and you must *come to Him*, and then you must *drink*. What





**What does it mean to drink? The thirsty man in the desert gives all his strength to get to the oasis he sees in the distance, but if it is only a mirage, his effort is wasted — he cannot drink. But what if it is real? What will he do then? With great joy he would immerse himself in that water and drink to his heart's content!**

then does it mean to *drink*? The thirsty man in the desert gives all his strength to get to the oasis he sees in the distance, but if it is only a mirage, his effort is wasted — he cannot drink. But what if it is real? What will he do then? With great joy he would immerse himself in that water and drink to his heart's content! He will live and not die. Can we relate this to the Master's words?

*"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture says, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive...*

(John 7:38-39)

Clearly, to *drink* is to *believe in Him*. So what does it mean to believe in Him? According to the latest statistics, approximately two billion people claim to believe in Him. Are there really two billion people on the earth who have rivers of living water flowing from their inmost being? That is about one third of the world population. But the Master said:

*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who*

*go in by it. But narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

(Matthew 7:13-14)

Surely those two billion "believers" are not the *few* the Master spoke of. Even if you estimated that only half of them — one billion — were really serious about their Christian faith, could that be considered the *few*? Did you ever consider that what He meant by *believing in Him* might be fundamentally different from the popular understanding?

#### **Believing in Him as the scripture says**

Perhaps there is a hint here: "He who believes in Me *as the Scripture says...*" Most translations associate the phrase "as the Scripture says" with the words that follow it rather than the words that precede it, but remember, there was no punctuation in the original Greek manuscripts, so it is up to the translator to supply it according to the context. If the phrase "as the Scripture says" refers to what follows it, you would expect that to be a quotation or at least a paraphrase of something in the Old

Testament scriptures, but there is nothing even close. We take it as prophetic of the Master's words and the apostles' writings being recorded and preserved as the New Testament scriptures. In that light, the Master was speaking of those who *believe in Him* according to what the *Scriptures* say it means to *believe in Him*.

You see, it is entirely possible to "believe in Him" apart from salvation. For example:

*Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in him. But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men.* (John 2:23-24)

They believed in Him, but He did not believe in them!<sup>6</sup> They *believed*, but not in the way the Scriptures say you must believe in order for Him to entrust Himself (give His Holy Spirit) to you. He only gives His Holy Spirit to those who *obey* Him.<sup>7</sup>

So how *do* the Scriptures say you must *believe* in Him in order to have rivers of living water flow from your inmost being? What does it mean to *drink*? The



Master spoke about drinking another time, and what He said totally separated the true believers from those who only believed in their minds:

*Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him... From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:53-56,66-69)*

What was the difference between those who left and those who stayed? Those who stayed had nowhere else to go. Oh, it's not that they couldn't have gone back to their old jobs and families. Physically they could have done that.

But in their hearts they were totally identified with their Master, totally devoted to Him and dependent upon Him as their source of life. They had all left everything to follow Him<sup>8</sup> — their possessions, their occupations, their causes, and even their families. They believed in Him with their whole hearts, entrusting their whole lives to Him, and even when He said things that shocked them, things they couldn't understand, they trusted Him.

Here is another one of the shocking things He said:

*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple... So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. (Luke 14:26,33)*

And also:  
*Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be those of his*

*own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.*

(Matthew 10:34-39)

You can water these words down all you like, but whoever does not drink them *full strength* is not really thirsty for eternal life, and will not receive the life the Master promised those who believe in Him enough to obey Him.

### **He who overcomes**

Notice that the Master spoke of those who were not *worthy* of Him. Most Christians are not used to thinking in terms of being "worthy" of belonging to or being identified with Christ because they have received a false understanding about the "free gift" of salvation and have revulsion toward anything that sounds like "works salvation." Indeed, salvation *is* a free gift, but *who is it given to?* Only those who show by their obedience to the gospel that Christ is



worth more to them than their own life and possessions. It *does* require effort to obtain the gift of eternal life, as is clear from these words of the Master:

*And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all this, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (Revelation 21:6-7)*

He will give the water of life (the Holy Spirit) freely to anyone who is *thirsty* enough to *overcome* every obstacle that stands in the way of obeying the gospel. That is what it means to *drink*. The one who is truly thirsty will gladly<sup>9</sup> give up his possessions, his career, his social status — all that "his life in this world"<sup>10</sup> consists of — for the sake of the treasure he has found. He will overcome the opposition of family and friends who try to dissuade him from abandoning all for the gospel's sake. He will overcome the tugs of his own emotional attachments to the comforts, pleasures, and security of his old life, as well as the fears of being ridiculed and ostracized by his peers.

Indeed, there is much to overcome in order to obey the true gospel of the

kingdom. And those who *fail* to overcome all that must be overcome in order to obey the gospel will also *fail* to inherit eternal life. Instead, they will inherit eternal death, for that is what the very next verse says:

*But the cowardly and unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8)*

The attributes "cowardly and unbelieving" go together, in contrast to the *courageous* believers of the previous verse who overcame all opposition in order to drink the water of life. It is not speaking of those who never heard the true gospel and therefore had no opportunity to believe unto eternal life, but of those who *did* hear the gospel but were too cowardly to obey it. Such ones do not consider our Master worthy of surrendering their life and all they possess, and He does not consider them worthy of receiving His life. In rejecting the living water He freely offers, they make themselves worthy of leading the pack of abominable perverts, murderers, adulterers,

sorcerers, idolaters, and liars who shall have their part in the lake of fire.

We sincerely hope that you are not one of them, but are instead truly thirsty for eternal life. Just as the Master offered the woman at the well, we offer to you the same living water that has fully satisfied us.<sup>11</sup> It is not a mirage. Please come and drink!

*"And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)* 🍷

<sup>1</sup> John 4:5-43

<sup>2</sup> *Vital* means necessary to sustain life.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 133:1-3

<sup>4</sup> See articles in Part 2: *It Takes a Community*

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 10:40; John 13:20

<sup>6</sup> The word translated *believe* in verse 23 is the same as the word translated *entrust* in verse 24.

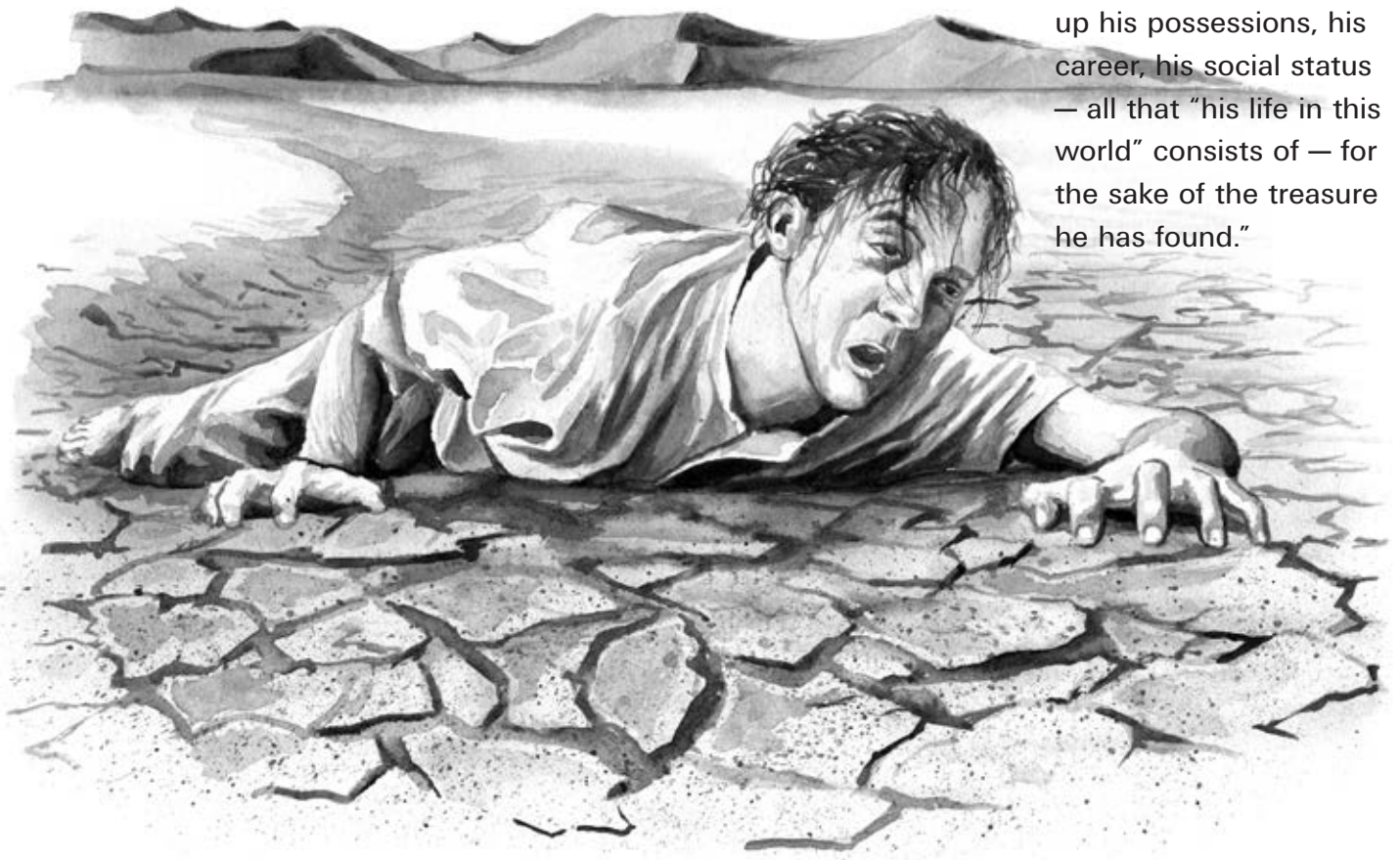
<sup>7</sup> Acts 5:32

<sup>8</sup> Mark 10:28

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 13:44

<sup>10</sup> John 12:25

<sup>11</sup> John 4:13-14



"The one who is truly thirsty will gladly give up his possessions, his career, his social status — all that "his life in this world" consists of — for the sake of the treasure he has found."





AN IN-DEPTH LOOK  
AT TRUE BELIEF:

# Living Water

TRUE BELIEF IS  
AVAILABLE TO ALL  
WHO ARE WILLING

## **“Come to me”**

The Master had much to say concerning the water of life in John 4:10-14, John 7:37-39, and John 6:35,47-58, as Paul summed up in Romans 6:23. To abide in Him and He in us is to eat His flesh and drink His blood.<sup>1</sup>

What is this living water? How can we implement Revelation 22:17, if we are “the bride” and the Spirit dwells in us and speaks through us. Only the thirsty hear His voice.<sup>2</sup> The woman at the well finally understood what He was saying. She didn’t give up, for she was spiritually thirsty. She heard the Messiah and was willing to do His Father’s will.<sup>3</sup> A true sent one was speaking to her.<sup>4</sup>

*(cont’d)*



*The communities in New England sent a crew of men on the "Peacemaker" bus to restore "Avany."*



**"Eternal life is for all whom the Holy Spirit can entrust himself to."**

In Revelation 21:6 it speaks of the water of life, and we know this by John 7:37-39, as fulfilled in Acts 2:38, ten days after the Master ascended, having been with the disciples for 40 days after He rose from the dead.<sup>5</sup> Just before He ascended He commissioned His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 how to baptize new disciples in the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> The message is clear in Revelation 21:6-7, just as the Master spoke in John 7:37-39. Now it is the bride who is commissioned to say, "Come to me"<sup>7</sup> — it is the Spirit of the Father through His people. The bride of Messiah draws others by the persuasion of the Holy Spirit to Messiah where He is.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Overcoming everything**

All who are willing to do His will will renounce the world and their life in it.<sup>9</sup>

Those who are ashamed of Him<sup>10</sup> are those who have never done what John 6:53-58 says one must do in order to not be ashamed of Him.<sup>11</sup> So Revelation 21:6-8 is obviously speaking of the Holy Spirit who is the water of life. All who desire Him and His gift of eternal life must drink. And unless they overcome everything one must overcome in order to obey the good news of salvation, the gift will not be given to them.

Eternal life is for all whom the Holy Spirit can entrust himself to.<sup>12</sup> They have eternal life in the Son.<sup>13</sup> The cowards in Revelation 21:8 are both the cowardly and disbelieving. They are those who, after hearing the truth of the word of God, the offer of the water of life, refused it. They say, "No thanks, I'm all set. I am not thirsty, thank you!" But John 9:41 says, "You claim to see, therefore your sin remains." The word in Revelation 21:8 translated as *unbelieving* is better rendered *disbelieving*. It is not that they never heard the gospel from a righteous sent one, but that they *have* heard and refused it, rejected it, dis-believed it. As in Acts 13:45-47, by their active rejection they make themselves unworthy of Messiah and eternal life. John 3:18,<sup>36</sup> also speaks of the unbelief of those who have had ample opportunities to receive the water of life offered to them.<sup>14</sup> These are the ones who refuse the water of life offered freely to them.

Revelation 21:8 — The fact that they are *unbelieving* means that the One who was proclaimed to them as the Savior was not regarded by them as trustworthy. They do not deem the Master as being worthy of their trust, so they are those who dis-believe the gospel of Messiah after hearing it. Such an unbeliever then is also a coward. After

**“This living water quenches everyone’s thirst eternally, and only Messiah can give this gift that satisfies every soul’s desire who is willing to do His Father’s will.”**

hearing the good news, dread comes upon him instead of joy and hope.<sup>15</sup> This eternal life that the rich young ruler asked for in Mark 10:17 was forfeited by the *fear* of having to give up what he loved more — his possessions.

**A man is no fool to give what he cannot keep, in order to gain what he cannot lose.**

No one ever has even been granted eternal life without forfeiting all he has to gain, as in the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price.<sup>16</sup> The rich young ruler would not give up what he wanted to get what he needed. He wanted eternal life, but he was a coward and did not obey the Word. This put him into the category with all the other wicked people in the world who never had the opportunity to see face-to-face the Word of God in person.<sup>17</sup> A person who rejects or refuses Messiah faces the same repercussions as the wicked.<sup>18</sup> The Master has no other choice but to refuse or reject him, just as He will also deny those who claim to know Him if they do not obey Him. One must understand that if he is of those in Mark 8:38, then he is not of those in John 6:53-56.<sup>19</sup>

The true church, the community, is the bride, betrothed to Messiah to be His wife.<sup>20</sup> To eat His flesh and to drink His blood is to be identified with Him, never ashamed of Him, living for Him, being with Him, gathering with Him, in communion with Him.<sup>21</sup> Revelation 3: 21 is to overcome all our own iniquities for His sake, to be worthy of Him.<sup>22</sup> Our Master said in John 6:56 that the one who dwells in Him is also the one in whom He dwells. That is the one who lives in Him. The word *abides* or *dwells*, means to continue, endure, be present,

remain, stay, stand, be steadfast. John 14:10 — As the Father dwells in the Messiah, He must dwell in us, and we in Him. This is what John 6:56 teaches us as individual members of Him who form His Body on earth.<sup>23</sup>

**Living water**

The promise of living water for the thirsty is found in many places, such as *Psalms 42:1, Isaiah 55:1, Jeremiah 2:13, and Zechariah 13:1*. This living water quenches everyone’s thirst eternally,<sup>24</sup> and only Messiah can give this gift that satisfies every soul’s desire who is willing to do His Father’s will — those who are thirsty. The woman who was willing and thirsty for this eternal water was confused between the physical and the spiritual since she had never heard of it. She had not been inoculated by the false gospel. She had never heard about the spiritual thirst before, so she did not immediately understand all the Master was saying.

It was the same way for the 3000 on the day of Pentecost. It was necessary for them to hear the many other words of Acts 2:40 before verses 41-45 happened. The same was true with the jailer in Acts 16:31-34. The good news must be heard and then the cost counted. Luke 14:28-33 is speaking about the verses right before, verses 25-27, as Acts 2:40-41 says. As to the question in Acts 2:37, they were told precisely in verse 40 what was entailed in drinking the water of life and overcoming all that the Master told them just before He ascended in Matthew 28:19-20. “All He commanded them” was all of the words of eternal life.<sup>25</sup>

John 6:65 — The Father enables all who desire to do His will to be drawn to the Son. How many have betrayed



*Teaching seminars in the community give EMTs and First Responders practice in disaster situations.*

*Helping an injured woman at the Bonaroo Music Festival in Tennessee.*







*Our mobile cafés in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia have gone to many outdoor concerts and fairs during the summer months.*

Him from the beginning (verses 64-65)? Verse 66 — “From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him.” For they, like the cowards in Revelation 21:7-8, were judged already worthy of the second death sentence.

#### **Coming to His dwelling place**

A coward, a dis-believer, would be as Matthew 10:37. This is one of the *scriptures* that spell out true belief, along with Mark 10:17,28-30 and Luke

14:26-33 and John 12:25-26. So the Master said in John 7:38, “Whoever believes in Me as the *Scriptures* say, streams of living water will flow from within him.” Now we understand by John 7:39 what John 4:13-14 and Revelation 21:6 meant by “living water” and by John 7:38 we understand John 4:34-38. So what does it mean to us? Does it mean the clarification of the scriptures? Those who are drawn by the Father and drink the living water will never thirst again or be hungry, and all who serve Him *there* in His dwelling place are honored by His Father. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come and see, and you will also become part of the Bride, and we will all say together, ‘COME! Come drink the living water.’”<sup>26</sup>

#### **Continuing in fellowship**

John 6:56 — To abide, remain, *continue*, to be in fellowship and communion with Him.<sup>27</sup> Revelation 3:21 is speaking of the one who *continues* to abide, who has steadfast love. To *abide* is to dwell, as in John 15:4-10, by which each and every one of us has the privilege to glorify our Father in heaven.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and John 6:53-56 go together, lest we partake as 1 Corinthians 11:27-32. Unless we are actually abiding in Him and remaining in Him, continuing in His care in intimate fellowship with Him, we are in danger of judgment.<sup>28</sup> To love Him is to obey Him, and to know Him is to love Him; to be full of love, joy, and peace, having patience and showing kindness, being faithful in all things. Being good to all, with self-control, shows that you abide in Him.

#### **A new covenant with His new people**

The New Covenant in 1 Corinthians 11:25 is a new way of approaching Yahweh, God the Father. The old way was through the priests and the sacrificial system. Our Master’s death began

*Men and women from communities in Winnipeg, New England, and the Midwest labored for over a month to construct this two-story mobile cafe for the New England communities' use.*



the new way and the only way — a new covenant between Yahweh and His new people in which all of His people can experience intimate fellowship with Him, not just a select few.<sup>29</sup> The New Covenant completes the Old Covenant in fulfilling all God desired in His holy people as a nation. It fulfills everything the Old Covenant looked forward to.<sup>30</sup>

When the Messiah rose from the dead<sup>31</sup> He became all He was ever meant to be in order to have all He was ever meant to have.<sup>32</sup> To enter into the New Covenant today requires the same response to the many other words in Acts 2:37-41 as those early disciples had. The “many other words” includes all the good news of salvation. It entails everything a person must do to become entirely engaged in the covenant with the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Father so as to accomplish everything he is saved for.<sup>33</sup>

### Remembering Him

1 Corinthians 11:20 — The “breaking of bread” represents the good news of the death of the Messiah on behalf of all who would unconditionally surrender to His kingship and obey the gospel as He meant it, as expressed in 2 Peter 1:5-11. Verse 9 means to forget Him and not remember His death for us.<sup>34</sup> Not to have these qualities in 2 Peter 1:5-9 is to forsake Him, to fail to be worthy of Him<sup>35</sup> by not abiding in Him.<sup>36</sup>

His disciples are to remember Him and His death for them — “Do this in remembrance of Me.”<sup>37</sup> He wanted them never to forget Him and His sacrifice for them,<sup>38</sup> which is the basis of their salvation. It is not just the forgiving of their former sins, but having a mediator and an advocate before the Father for all of their future sins.<sup>39</sup> His sacrifice for them is to be remembered especially in the memorial celebration. It is to be a continual reminder of our reconciliation with His Father and ours, and our friendship with Him.<sup>40</sup>



**“To be honored by His and our Father is the greatest honor that any man could ever achieve. It means everything to the ones who serve Him sincerely, in all their gifts He gave them to use for His glory.”**

### **Loving the Lamb of God**

In Old Testament times, under the Old Covenant, God promised to forgive His people of their sins if they brought animals of the highest value for the priests to sacrifice. When this system began, this covenant between God and man was sealed with the blood of animals.<sup>41</sup> But this system looked towards Messiah, the Lamb of God that takes away all confessed sin.<sup>42</sup> Animal sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again, day by day, year after year. But our Father inaugurated a new covenant between Him and man by the death of His Son, once and for all.<sup>43</sup> Unlike the blood of the choicest animals, the blood of this perfect sacrifice of the man Jesus is the once-and-for-all sacrifice. We now can be forgiven, not just for our past sins alone, but our future sins as well.<sup>44</sup>

John 1:29 — “The Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the whole world.” This is what we remember Him for. This is why a person would love Him and serve Him.<sup>45</sup> John 12:26 — To be honored by His and our Father is the greatest honor that any man could ever achieve. It means everything to the ones who serve Him sincerely, in all their gifts He gave them to use for His glory. He will say, “Well done, My good and faithful servant.”

Mark 8:38 concerns a disciple, a foolish virgin who doesn’t abide in Him, getting the oil he needs. He is ashamed of Him because he doesn’t eat His body

and drink His blood.<sup>46</sup> You can put an animal out of its misery due to suffering, sickness, etc. But you can’t put a human out of his or her misery. To put a human out of misery is to put him in a worse misery. Only those who keep His word will escape the pangs of death.<sup>47</sup> Romans 6:23 is true both in the nations and in Messiah. The wages of sin must be paid, either by Messiah or by the one who committed them.<sup>48</sup>

### **The real issue about ‘believing’**

In John 6:37-69 all are offered the water of life, the living water, but some do not believe.<sup>49</sup> John 7:17 is the key, when they hear the words of life through a sent one of highest quality.<sup>50</sup> Faith comes by hearing the words of life through a sent one who is able to impart life to them.<sup>51</sup> Some of His disciples in John 6:66 did not follow Him any longer because they did not believe in Him. In John 6:63-64 He was trying to get the people to see beyond the physical aspects to the real issue. They may “believe” on Him, but they would NOT have eternal life because they did not believe on Him as a spiritual reality, so many did not follow Him any longer.<sup>52</sup>

In John 6:65, the people did not believe because it was not granted to them by the Father. If they had been willing to do His will, to follow Him to death, the Father would have enabled them to believe. He would have been

*The Maté Factor at Fair St. Louis (left) and the Common Ground Café at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney (right).*







*Serving food at the Winnipeg Folk Festival and selling bread at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney.*



able to draw them to Messiah,<sup>53</sup> which is His initiative, but He waits for man's response to His word.<sup>54</sup> So the people in John 6:66 and John 2:23-24 believed like the ones in John 8:30-47. Judas, the one who betrayed our Master, was such a believer.<sup>55</sup> So to believe on Him unto eternal life is John 6:53-56. Eternal life is gained by believing unto Him.<sup>56</sup> In John 6:53, we see what it means to believe, the depth of the commitment required. Both eating His Body and drinking His blood is to believe unto eternal life, so as to never again hunger or thirst.<sup>57</sup> Those who eat and drink are those who were hungry and those who were thirsty.<sup>58</sup> Those in verse 36 were not hungry and thirsty, so the Father could not attract them as in verse 37. He will never cast out anyone who comes to Him hungry and thirsty. Their hunger and thirst are quenched forever as verse 39 says. They are the ones who remain, abide, and continue in Him.<sup>59</sup>

**Belief in the heart**

All who are raised up on the last day<sup>60</sup> are those in John 6:29,35,40,45 who believed and proved faithful and true to their Master.<sup>61</sup> These are the ones who

overcome all things in Revelation 21:6-7 and drink the water of life and continue in Him faithfully until He comes.<sup>62</sup> The pretender will eventually betray Him.<sup>63</sup> But those who endure to the end were the ones who truly believed.<sup>64</sup> Belief is in one of two places, the mind or the heart.<sup>65</sup> Those who believe only in the mind cannot confess from the heart. But

true belief<sup>66</sup> is still available to all who are willing.

Those who are willing to do the Father's will come out of "her" (outside the camp of organized religion) at the beckoning call of the bride.<sup>67</sup> *Beckoning* is a summons, to attract the sincere who are willing to do God's will — the disillusioned and disgruntled ones. 🍇

<sup>1</sup> John 6:56,<sup>51</sup> <sup>2</sup> John 10:27; 18:37  
<sup>3</sup> John 7:17; 4:6-42 <sup>4</sup> John 7:18 <sup>5</sup> Acts 1:3 <sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:17; 12:12-13; Mark 10:30 <sup>7</sup> John 6:44 <sup>8</sup> John 12:26 <sup>9</sup> Mark 8:35; John 12:25 <sup>10</sup> Mark 8:38 <sup>11</sup> John 15:4-8 <sup>12</sup> John 2:23-25 <sup>13</sup> John 8:31,51; 15:7-8; 14:23 <sup>14</sup> John 13:20; Luke 10:16; Matthew 10:40-41; Romans 10:14-17 <sup>15</sup> Mark 10:17-22; Matthew 13:44 <sup>16</sup> Matthew 13:44-46; Mark 10:28-30 <sup>17</sup> John 13:20; Luke 10:16 <sup>18</sup> John 3:18,36 <sup>19</sup> John 15:5-8 <sup>20</sup> Revelation 21:9; 2 Corinthians 11:1-3; 1 John 2:27-28; Revelation 22:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 2:10; 4:12-16 <sup>21</sup> John 6:56-57 <sup>22</sup> Hebrews 10:13; Revelation 3:4-5 <sup>23</sup> John 6:57 <sup>24</sup> Ephesians 1:13 <sup>25</sup> John 6:60-68 <sup>26</sup> John 4:10 <sup>27</sup> John 15:5-8 <sup>28</sup> 1 Corinthians 16:22 <sup>29</sup> 1 Peter 2:9-10 <sup>30</sup> Jeremiah 31:1 <sup>31</sup> Acts 2:24 <sup>32</sup> Acts 2:34-36 <sup>33</sup> Isaiah 53:

10 <sup>34</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14 <sup>35</sup> Revelation 3:4 <sup>36</sup> Revelation 3:20 <sup>37</sup> Luke 22:19 <sup>38</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14 <sup>39</sup> 1 John 1:9,7,6; 2:1-6 <sup>40</sup> John 15:12-17 <sup>41</sup> Exodus 24:8 <sup>42</sup> John 1:29 <sup>43</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:14; Hebrews 10:19-26 <sup>44</sup> 1 John 2:1-2; 1:6; Hebrews 9:23-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Proverbs 28:13 <sup>45</sup> Acts 26:7 <sup>46</sup> John 6:53-56 <sup>47</sup> John 8:51 <sup>48</sup> Hebrews 10:26-29; 9:27 <sup>49</sup> John 6:64; Romans 10:16 <sup>50</sup> John 7:18; 13:20; Luke 10:16; Romans 10:14-15 <sup>51</sup> Romans 10:16-17 <sup>52</sup> John 12:24-26 <sup>53</sup> John 6:44 <sup>54</sup> John 2:23-25 <sup>55</sup> Matthew 24:9-12; 10:21-25 <sup>56</sup> John 6:29,35,40,47 <sup>57</sup> John 6:35 <sup>58</sup> John 6:34,37 <sup>59</sup> Matthew 10:21; Acts 14:22; Philippians 1:29; John 15:18-25 <sup>60</sup> John 6:39,40,44,54 <sup>61</sup> Revelation 17:14; 19:11 <sup>62</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:26 <sup>63</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:23; Matthew 26:23 <sup>64</sup> Matthew 24:13 <sup>65</sup> Ephesians 1:13; Romans 10:9-10 <sup>66</sup> 1 John 5:13, NKJV <sup>67</sup> Revelation 22:17; Hebrews 13:13

*The community in Australia  
at Peppercorn Creek Farm*



AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT 1 PETER 2:9 AND MATTHEW 21:43:

# The Idealized Nation

Paul described the church in Thessalonica as one that closely followed after the true pattern that had been established in Jerusalem by the apostles. To him, it was more than just an ideal: it was a pattern that was to be followed.

IS COMMUNITY IDEAL OR REAL, IMAGINARY OR ACTUAL, A UTOPIA OF THE MIND OR A PATTERN FOR HOW THE CHURCH SHOULD BE?

Where can Christians look today to see believers living the same way they did in the First Church in Acts 2 & 4? They may have a concept of this, but does the concept have any reality to it? Most refer to that chapter in biblical history as an *unattainable ideal*. The thought that this is the way the church is supposed to be has probably never entered the minds of most people.

It is also easy to read about the Holy Nation in 1 Peter 2:9 and think of it merely as an *ideal*. In this sense, an ideal is a concept with no reality attached to it, or one that exists in the imagination only (i.e. a mental image). Therefore, this Holy Nation is reduced to nothing more than a spiritual concept.

But this is not the Word of God. In reality, that Holy Nation has a *vibrant social life*. It is disturbing that this life, so well documented in Acts 2 and 4, is today disregarded and even disqualified.

However, in 1 Thessalonians 2:14, Paul praised the church in Thessalonica as one that closely followed the true pattern that had been established by the apostles in Jerusalem and all the churches of Judea. That pattern was *community*, and it brought *persecution*. To Paul, it was more than just a spiritual ideal: it was the pattern for how the church was to be established in every place. This pattern cannot be imitated without the same Holy Spirit who formed it in the beginning. The

Scriptures give no other model for the Body of Christ to be expressed to the world than it was in the first century.

### No Resemblance to the original pattern

Why do you suppose there is no resemblance to this *archetype*<sup>1</sup> in the churches of today? There was only one designer of the original pattern — He was both architect and builder.<sup>2</sup> Have others been building without following the blueprints?<sup>3</sup> If so, then the structure that has been built is of another design and from another designer and will not stand. Indeed it cannot stand.<sup>4</sup>

The church, both today and for the past 1900 years, has not resembled that first pattern set forth in the Book of Acts. Yet continual excuses and debates are made as to why. This pattern however, explicitly describes what life in the Body of Christ was like — life that came by the direction of the Holy Spirit. There is no other pattern described in the New Testament for the church's foundation. In addition to the vivid description of this life in Acts 2 and 4, the evidence of its existence is found throughout the Epistles,<sup>5</sup> supporting that this was the only true apostolic foundation upon which the church could be established.<sup>6</sup> It was the first and only authentic pattern for how the Church was to be.

So where is this pattern today? If it cannot be located, then where is the Church? The first communities were called "the Way."<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the church of today can be no other way than the way it was when it was *the Way*.

### False security

There is a sense of false security in considering this first pattern of the church as visionary, idealistic, or obsolete. If it is not real, then there is no accountability for not living that way. However, if it is real, and indeed all true believers are to live this way, then a sobering question must be asked: have they ever truly heard the gospel? Christians who merely dwell in their theological comfort zone of daily devotionals and weekly church services are not willing to ask this. It brings into question whether or not someone is indeed saved. If they had heard the same gospel would it not have resulted in bringing about the same dramatic witness we read about in Acts 2 and 4? What standard are we to judge by? Is it by the Word of God or something else? Being saved from our sins includes coming out of the world where sin reigned in us.

This is what it means to be *born again*.<sup>8</sup> We start life over when we are baptized into a new social and spiritual life through the community where Christ reigns.

That is why Peter on the Day of Pentecost said, "Come out of this evil and perverse generation."<sup>9</sup> Those who believed and received his word responded accordingly. They literally *came out* of the life they lived in the world. If necessary they forsook friends and family. They moved into the community where this *new social order* was being formed. They were like pioneers, establishing a new society and a whole new culture on earth where Christ reigned as their Lord. The one who follows Jesus is not capable of living outside the intimate fellowship of the Body of Christ. It is impossible for a disciple to grow in spiritual health outside the context of community, just as a viable<sup>10</sup> seed is not able to live outside fertile soil. The church has to be that fertile soil for every disciple, and it takes a community to do this.

Perhaps, this should be obvious, yet some say that community was the early church's first mistake. But how could this be a mistake when *abundant grace* was upon them all and everyone's needs were met?<sup>11</sup> Oh, that such a mistake might be made again!



**"The one who follows Jesus is not capable of living outside the intimate fellowship of the Body of Christ.**

had judged the Body and themselves rightly,<sup>15</sup> then the demonstration of God's love amongst them would have been an *ongoing phenomenon* for the whole world to see. But tragically, their light went out. Their lampstand was taken out of its place.<sup>16</sup> They stopped living by revelation from the Holy Spirit<sup>17</sup> and settled for a more comfortable lifestyle of *ritual and tradition*.<sup>18</sup> Religious form filled their gatherings.<sup>19</sup> They were no longer the Light of the World and the Salt of the Earth.<sup>20</sup> No longer was Christ there. No one could serve Him for He was gone. He could no longer

### Abandoning the gospel

Eventually, the pattern of the Body of Christ in Acts 2: 42-47 and 4:32-37 was abandoned by those who had *left their first love* and had *soiled their garments*.<sup>12</sup> They chose a broader road to travel down.<sup>13</sup> Due to their disobedience, the Holy Spirit was quenched and grieved, and eventually withdrew from their hearts.<sup>14</sup> Divisions and schisms set in amongst all the churches, as it is to this day. Community life began falling apart, for it could not be maintained where love grew cold. If they



entrust Himself to them.<sup>21</sup> The system God hated took over — that of the clergy and the laity.<sup>22</sup> A new religious system was born out of this darkness of separation and unresolved division. The Bishopric System and the Pope *supplanted* the Son of God.

### Getting back to the foundation

So how does one get back to the foundation and original pattern of the early church as put forth by Jesus and the apostles? John 12:25-26 is the only way and the only place a person can both follow and serve Him:

*“He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”*

You must first hate your life in this world and obey His command to completely surrender all your own possessions.<sup>23</sup> Anyone who desires to serve Him must obey Him.<sup>24</sup> Obedience to the Gospel<sup>25</sup> is the *only* way a person can gain eternal life. All other promises and all other gospels other than the one first spoken by the apostles and Christ Himself will eventually bring disappointment.<sup>26</sup>

Although the rich young ruler in Mark 10 came seeking eternal life, he didn't trust the One whom he thought could give it to him.<sup>27</sup> It was soon evident that he loved his own life more than the eternal life he said he wanted.<sup>28</sup> This rich young man asked what he had to do in order to have eternal life and the Master gave him clear direction. But he would not do it. He didn't trust — and no one can be saved without trusting. It would have been

*possible with God* for this young man to enter the Kingdom if he had only trusted in God's Son — but he didn't.

In stark contrast, what Peter and the other disciples did has been preserved for all to read in Mark 10:28. This was the natural and fitting response from someone who recognized the worth of the Son of God. Verses 29-30 show that when the gospel is obeyed, community comes into being.<sup>29</sup> Obedience from the heart is the key — *it makes a community.*

The Gospel has to be restored and defined according to the original pattern of the early church. Otherwise, there is no way to get back to the foundation set forth by Jesus concerning the good news of salvation. If someone hears the gospel and does not obey it, then he is judged *unworthy* of eternal life.<sup>30</sup>

### The Body of Christ is Community

The way the believers live in these communities *must be seen* by a watching world.<sup>31</sup> The way they live together, caring for the needs of their brothers and sisters, *proves* that they are His disciples.<sup>32</sup> It also proves that God sent His Son, and loved the world, even as He loved His own Son.<sup>33</sup> These communities are located within towns so that people can see their *daily life together.*<sup>34</sup> They are not off in the woods or in some remote location, but on the contrary, they are where people can see their behavior and thus believe in their Savior.<sup>35</sup> The gospel makes no

sense apart from living in community. Where else could all the commandments of Matthew 28:19-20 be obeyed? If not in the context of community, then where?

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter declared all of the requirements of the gospel with *many other words.*<sup>36</sup> Without hearing and receiving these words no one was baptized into Christ's Body. What he said that day outlined



**“When the gospel is obeyed, community comes into being. Obedience from the heart is the key.**

*discipleship*<sup>37</sup> and the *forgiveness of sins* through baptism into the Body of Christ.<sup>38</sup> This is what Peter himself had been taught by Jesus. The result of his words was the formation of a community where "...all who believed were together and had all things in common. They began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."<sup>39</sup> What a graphic illustration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit among those who first believed! And thus, the church began. The foundation was set. It came as no mistake, but was the very intention of the Gospel.<sup>40</sup> The cry of our Savior's heart, "Your Kingdom come, your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven," was at last finding fulfillment. How else would His followers not worry about their food, shelter, and clothing as they were commanded, yet be taken care of by their Heavenly Father, unless it were by seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness in this way?<sup>41</sup> Of course, this was Christ's intent — to establish the church as a community in order to meet all the needs of those who believed in Him.



of their love for Him and trust in Him. Love dictated the pattern of community that was formed. Nothing else did and nothing else ever will. This pattern was not a *mandate*, but the natural outcome of those who had received the Spirit of the Living God. It was not an *ideal* — it was *real*. If a person *obeys* the gospel, then he is truly saved and the Holy Nation that Peter spoke of in 1 Peter 2:9 will not be an *idealized* nation, but a *realized* nation.

That *realized* nation is the restored twelve tribes which the prophet Isaiah said would be raised up by Messiah, the suffering Servant of Isaiah 49:3-6 and 53:1-12. They are the spiritual seed of Abraham, the Israel of God that Paul spoke of in Galatians 6:16. They are the twelve tribes who earnestly serve God night and day, as Paul said in Acts 26:7.<sup>43</sup> Their tribal life in communities all over the earth is that witness of the Kingdom in Matthew 24:14 that will provide the light to the nations and bring salvation to the ends of the earth as Isaiah prophesied,<sup>44</sup> in fulfillment of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. That holy nation of twelve tribes, the Commonwealth of Israel,<sup>45</sup> will bear the fruit of the kingdom the Master spoke of in Matthew 21:43 — love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.<sup>46</sup> When that love is perfected in the unity of a fully formed, twelve-tribed nation, then Messiah will return for His bride, and she will be as radiant and glorious as Revelation 21:9-12 describes. 🌿

### Is community a commandment?

Community as described in Acts 2 and 4 does not *command* anyone to give all their possessions to the apostles for distribution. It simply *shows* what the first disciples did in obedience to the Lord's commands in the gospel.<sup>42</sup> They obeyed and gave up all they had because

<sup>1</sup> *Archetype* — the original pattern, or model, from which all other things of the same kind are made.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 11:9-10

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:10; Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 11:4,13-15; Romans 16:17-19

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 7:24-27

<sup>5</sup> Acts 2:42-46; 4:32-37; 8:3; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:11-16

<sup>7</sup> Acts 9:2; 19:9,23

<sup>8</sup> John 3:3

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2:40; Galatians 1:4

<sup>10</sup> *Viable* — Capable of living, surviving and developing normally.

<sup>11</sup> Acts 4:33-34

<sup>12</sup> Revelation 2:4-5; 3:3-4

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 7:13-14

<sup>14</sup> Revelation 3:20

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:29,31

<sup>16</sup> Revelation 2:4-5; *place*, 1 Timothy 2:8;

*locality, township*, Malachi 1:11

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 16:16-18; John 14:21

<sup>18</sup> 2 Timothy 3:1-5

<sup>19</sup> 2 Tim 3:5

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 5:14-16

<sup>21</sup> John 12:26; 2:24-25

<sup>22</sup> Revelation 2:6,15 (The term *Nicolaitan*

is derived from *nikao*, "to conquer," and *laos*, "people," hence, "people conquerors." The Nicolaitan movement marks the beginning of the separation of people into the priest class and laity.)

<sup>23</sup> Luke 14:31-33

<sup>24</sup> John 14:21

<sup>25</sup> Acts 5:32; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17

<sup>26</sup> Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 11:3,4,13-15

<sup>27</sup> Mark 10:17,21,28-30

<sup>28</sup> Mark 8:34-38

<sup>29</sup> See *Cost of Discipleship* p. 26 in this paper.

<sup>30</sup> Acts 13:47-48; John 3:18,36

<sup>31</sup> 1 Peter 2:12

<sup>32</sup> John 13:34-35; Acts 4:32; 1 John 3:14-17

<sup>33</sup> John 17:21-23

<sup>34</sup> Mark 10:29-30 — Homes full of disciples in a locality make up a clan or community, as in 1 Timothy 2:8. Many clans in a particular geographical area make up a tribe. The twelve tribes in their geographical areas make up the holy nation, in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:1 and Malachi 1:5,11.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 5:14-16

<sup>36</sup> Acts 2:40

<sup>37</sup> Luke 14:33; Matthew 10:34-39;

Mark 10:29-30

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38

<sup>39</sup> Acts 2:44-45

<sup>40</sup> Acts 4:32-37

<sup>41</sup> Matthew 6:25-34

<sup>42</sup> Luke 14:33; Mark 10:17,21,28

<sup>43</sup> James 1:1; Revelation 7:4-8

<sup>44</sup> Isaiah 49:6

<sup>45</sup> Ephesians 2:12

<sup>46</sup> 1 Timothy 1:5



# A Few of Our Homes & Farms

IN SOME OF OUR COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD.

## United States 888-893-5838



■ ■ ■ **Community in Vista**, 2683 Foothill Drive,  
Vista, CA 92084  
☎ (760) 295-3852

■ ■ ■ **Community in Island Pond**, P.O. Box 449  
Island Pond, VT 05846  
☎ (802) 723-9708

■ ■ ■ **Community in Boston** 92 Melville Ave,  
Dorchester, MA 02124  
☎ (617) 282-9876

■ ■ ■ **Community in Plymouth** 35 Warren Ave  
Plymouth, MA 02360  
☎ (508) 747-5338

■ ■ ■ **Basin Farm**, P.O. Box 108,  
Bellows Falls, VT 05101  
☎ (802) 463-3230

■ ■ ■ **Common Sense Farm**, 41 N. Union Street  
Cambridge, NY 12816  
☎ (518) 677-5880

■ ■ ■ **Community in Hamburg** 78 Pleasant Avenue  
Hamburg, NY 14075  
☎ (716) 649-7835

■ ■ ■ **Community in Brunswick**  
815 Albany Street, Brunswick, GA 31520  
☎ (912) 267-4700

■ ■ ■ **Jog Run Farm**, 6311 Wallis Road  
W. Palm Beach, FL 33413  
☎ (561) 686-7561

■ ■ ■ **Community on the Lake of the Ozarks** 1140 Lay Ave  
Warsaw, MO 65355  
☎ (660) 438-4481

■ ■ ■ **Community in Colorado Springs**, 406 Karr Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80916  
☎ (719) 573-1907

## Canada 888-893-5838

■ ■ ■ **Community in Winnipeg**, 89 East Gate,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 2C2, Canada ☎ (204) 786-8787

■ ■ ■ **Community in Nelson**, 202 Vernon Street,  
Nelson, British Columbia V1L 4E2, Canada  
☎ (250) 352-0325

## Germany

■ ■ ■ **Gemeinschaft in Klosterzimmern**, Klosterzimmern 1,  
86738 Deiningen, Germany  
☎ (49) 9081-272847

## England 0800-0743267

■ ■ ■ **Stentwood Farm**, Dunkseswell, Honiton,  
Devon EX14 4RW, England  
☎ (44) 1823-681155

## Spain

■ ■ ■ **Comunidad de San Sebastián**, Paseo de Ulia 375, 20014  
San Sebastián, Spain  
☎ (34) 943-58-00-29

## France

■ ■ ■ **Communauté de Sus**, 64190  
Sus/Navarrenx, France  
☎ (33) 5-59-66-14-28

## Argentina

■ ■ ■ **Comunidad de Buenos Aires**, Batallón Norte y Mansilla,  
1748 General Rodr'guez, Argentina  
☎ (54) 237- 484-3409

## Brazil

■ ■ ■ **Comunidade de Londrina**, Rua Jayme Americano 420,  
Jardim California, 86040-030 Londrina, Paraná, Brazil  
☎ (55) 43-336-5857

## Australia

■ ■ ■ **Peppercorn Creek Farm**, 1375 Old Hume Highway,  
Picton, NSW 2571, Australia  
☎ (61) 2- 4677-2668



For a complete list of our community  
addresses, please call:

**888-893-5838**

or visit our web site at:

[www.commonwealthofisrael.org](http://www.commonwealthofisrael.org)