

## BETHEL - HOUSE OF GOD!!!

Firstly God is building His church

**Matt 16:18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Secondly He builds His church through you and me – a divine partnership

- All work together in the body
- Every part must do it's share

**Eph 4:11, 12, 16** 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

The church as God's house – Bethel – House of God

**Gen 28:10 – 22** 10 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11 So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. 12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. 14 Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." 16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." 17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" 18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. 22 And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Text : 16 – 17 16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." 17 He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

Jacob after his encounter with God Calls the house of God:

- The gate of heaven – stairways to heaven
- Place of communion
- The place of revelation
- The place where he will serve God with his tithes – 400 years before the law
- Place of sacrifice

Every believer needs a revelation of God's House – just like Jacob

- What God's house is
- Why be planted in the house
- Why come to this house on Sundays?
- Why serve God through the house?
- Why bring your tithes and offerings to the house?
- What is it about God's house that is so special?

**Ps 92:12-14** 12 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Those who are planted in the house of the Lord, Shall flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing,

Many Christians out there are anti-church

- You don't need to belong to a church.
- You don't need to be planted in a local church
  
- There is no perfect church. We are still a work in progress.
- God is still building His church

The church then is His:

- Bridge
- Family
- Body
- Dwelling place
  
- We need a revelation of God's house.
- We need to love God's house and teach our children to love his house.

**Ps 122:1** I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."

Jesus loved the house of God.

**John 2:17** His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

I know that this is only a building, but it is still God's house where his family gathers and where his presence resides.

**Ps 23:6** surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord, Forever

**Ps 26:8** Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, And the place where Your glory dwells.

**Ps 27:4-5** 4 One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord, And to inquire in His temple. 5 For in the time of trouble, He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle, He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

**Ps 84:10** For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

3 Things about God's house

### 1. The house of God is a place of communion.

We come here to have communion:

- Firstly with God
- Secondly with His family

It is impossible to have communion with God outside of His family.

**1 John 4:7-12** 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

The cross is both horizontal and vertical. God and man and also man and man

- Focus today on communion with God
- It is in Bethel that Jacob has communion with God
- The Father longs to have communion with you.
- He birthed His church firstly to be a place of communion.
- CROSS IS BOTH

**Mark 11:17a** Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' "

**Matt 18:19-20** 19 "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

- The house of God is a place where you come to fellowship and have communion with God.
- When we gather – God meets with us.
- When we draw closer to God, He draws closer to us.
- It is a place where God reveals Himself to us.

Jesus said

**John 17:3** And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

**Ps 22:3** And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

- The Bible is clear that the church is God's dwelling place in the earth.

**Eph 2:19-22** 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

**2 Cor 6:14-16** 14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God As God has said: "I will dwell in them, and walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

## 2. The house of God is a place of revelation

Because God's presence resided in our midst when we gather together it is:

- A very fertile place
- Birthplace of visions and dreams
- The place of healing and restoration.

Jacob said - House of God is "the Gate to Heaven!" Here he receives his vision and revelation of God.

**Gen 28:17b** "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

- When you are planted in the House of God you have Easy access to the Stairways of Heaven!!!

- Here, in the House of God Jacob receives a Revelation of Heaven!!
- Not only do we receive Dreams in the House of God - The house of God is also a Place where we are nurtured and our character developed!!
- Too many dreams are abandoned and aborted because people disconnect from God's House!!!
- People outside the House always wither and die!!

**Ps92** Those who are planted in the House shall flourish!!

On the day of Pentecost the church was birthed and the gateway to heaven was opened.

**Acts 2:14-21** 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in heaven above, And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and a pour of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. 21 And it shall come to pass, That whoever calls on the name of the Lord, Shall be saved"

- The people then responded to Peter's sermon. What must be done? Peter answered – be planted in the house of God.

**Acts 2:37-47** 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

In the house, where we are planted:

- We receive revelation of the word being taught
- We receive God's vision for our lives
- We receive revelation of our redemptive purpose
- We receive revelation about our personal destiny
- We receive revelation through gifts or spirit operating – through our brothers and sisters that are with us in the house.

3. Finally the house of God is the place that we offer spiritual sacrifices to God.

Jacob made a vow:

**Gen 28:20-22** 20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. 22 And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

400 years before the law he honours God with His Tithe!!

- Tithing is one of the major ways we serve God – we acknowledge His Lordship over our lives.
- It is not legalism – it is called serving God.

**Mal 3:6-17** 6 “For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. 7 Yet from the days of your fathers You have gone away from My ordinances And have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” Says the Lord of hosts. “But you said, ‘In what way shall we return?’ 8 “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing, That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11 “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts; 12 “And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the Lord of hosts. 13 “Your words have been harsh against Me,” Says the Lord, “Yet you say, ‘What have we spoken against You?’ 14 You have said, ‘It is useless to serve God; What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the Lord of hosts? 15 So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free.’” 16 Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name. 17 “They shall be Mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them, As a man spares his own son who serves him.”

- You bring your tithe to the house where you are planted.
- We are called Priests of God even in the New Testament
- As Priests – we are called to offer spiritual sacrifices to our God.

A sacrifice that costs you something:

- Time
- Talent
- Treasure

**1 Pet 2:4-10** 4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion, A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” 8 and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

- We sacrifice, not to gain favour or approval from God.
- We sacrifice, to serve our purpose – which is to take Jesus to the nations of the world.