

Don't Leave The House!

Worship and Feast of Unleavened Bread

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I Corinthians 10:11 (*The Living Bible*) All these things happened to them as examples as-object lessons to us-to warn us against doing the same things; [so we could read about them and learn from them in these last days as the world nears its end.]

I think that you are familiar enough with the context of chapter 10 to understand that Paul is relating five experiences that the children of Israel had in the wilderness and how that in each and every case there is an example for us to follow so that we can be instructed by it.

We also are all familiar with the fact that the Bible does a great deal of its teaching through types. In fact you might say the Bible is literally filled with types. And, of course, the children of Israel were a type. They were a type of the church in the wilderness and it is a type of our pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God. Manna was a type of the Word of God, and on and on it goes. There are types we can look back on and we can learn very important spiritual truths from.

Today we are going to be dealing with several spiritual types as parts of object lessons. You will notice this term appeared in the Living Bible. For us, there are real spiritual and practical instructions we can use in our Christian life. An object lesson is an example of a principal in a concrete form. The definition one would get from a dictionary is, "an example of a principal in a concrete form as contrasted to a lesson in an abstract form."

In other words, when you look at something in a book, and a lesson is being described, that is being described, it is in an abstract form. But in an object lesson, the characters are real because it is something that is acted out. In the case of the Bible, they are acted out and written down.

We are going to define some more things for clarity. A "type" is a model or an impression; it is something that is bearing a strong similarity to something else to which it is being compared or used as a teaching vehicle. In the Biblical usage, it can be a person or an event. It can be an object that foreshadows something in the New Testament. So, I think we can find that the intent if these object lessons are to provide a measure of helpful instruction toward the Kingdom of God.

One more definition we need is the word "symbol." A symbol is something that is chosen to stand for or represent something else. With a symbol there is almost invariably a resemblance in quality or characteristics. Symbols are frequently used when one is dealing with an abstract concept as opposed to an object lesson. You will not generally find symbols being used in object lessons but you will find symbols being used in abstract circumstances.

Exodus 12:22-23 And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.

Exodus 12:27 That you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'"

Now, what lessons are there here for us? What does it mean? What does the door symbolize and what does it represent? Is it a type of something? What about the house, what is the symbolism there or what is the type there? Is there an object lesson that is involved in which these things are a part?

In the first two verses we read there is more emphasis on the door and the blood than there is on the house. But the result involved God passing over the entire house. The door in the context of the story represents the entire house. The idea is that if the death angel could not get passed the door, the death angel could not get into the house.

Now, there are Jewish scholars that insist that, originally, the Passover lamb was killed right at the door of the house and there are some good reasons for believing this may be true. The one is that there is ancient art that depicts this being done. The art, usually carved in stone, shows a person with a knife in his hand and he is obviously standing in the doorway of what is, in this case, assumed to be the doorway of his house and there is the lamb at his feet and he is reaching down to cut the lamb's throat.

In this case, the blood of the lamb was not caught in a basin but drained from the lamb's throat directly on the threshold of the door. Then, it was splashed on the doorposts and on the lintel. There is reason to believe this may be true because the Hebrew word for "threshold" is the same as for the word "basin."

The similarity is so striking that when the Jews involved Greek scholars to translate the Bible into Greek, called today the Septuagint, that version translates that word into "threshold" rather than "basin."

If this is true, and it seems there is a strong chance of it being true, then in order to go through the door, the death angel would have been surrounded by blood. It was on the threshold, on both doorposts, and on the lintel as well.

Now, there was something mentioned here we just kind of passed over and that was in verse 22. At this point, it is an abstract idea or concept, something we are going to think about and that is, "none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning." Why were they not allowed to go out and why, when they were allowed to go out, did it have to be morning?

Psalm 105:23-38 Israel also came into Egypt, and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. He increased His people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal craftily with His servants. He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. They performed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. [Then we have a recounting of those wonders] He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they [Israel] did not rebel against his word. He turned their waters into blood, and killed their fish. Their land abounded with frogs, even in the chambers of their kings. He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and lice in all their territory. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He struck their vines also, and their fig trees, and splintered the trees of their territory. He spoke, and locusts came, young locusts without number, and ate up all the vegetation in their land, and

devoured the fruit of their ground. He also destroyed all the firstborn in their land, the first of all their strength. He also brought them out with silver and gold, and there was none feeble among his tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them had fallen upon them.

Now, imagine yourself back in that time if you can, a couple of millennia ago. Imagine yourself a "super policeman" walking your beat. I am sure they had people like that they employed to keep peace within the community and policemen pretty much keep their finger on what is going on in the nation. They know who is doing what, who is having birthdays, who is having births or is sick. They know who the thieves are in the community, who the good guys are, and who the merchants are. Those who walk the beat were pretty much aware of the scuttlebutt going on within their territory, wherever that might have been.

What do you think the people in Egypt were talking about? Do you not think they were out on the street talking to people like the policemen about what was going on within the community? Talking about the destruction, wondering why these things were occurring? Do you suppose they were making offerings and sacrificing to their gods, maybe even cursing the gods for what was occurring?

The things that God did were not done in a corner. They were done purposefully. We saw a bit of that in the sermon yesterday ["The Night to be Much Observed"]. Beginning with Abraham in Genesis 15, God already had it planned out as a part of His purpose that Israel was going to go into captivity. The descendants of Abraham were going to go into captivity. They had not even been born yet, they had done nothing wrong yet, but they were going to go into captivity because God had lessons He wanted to get across to the children of Abraham, and to the Egyptians as well, because He was going to write a Book. We were going to learn from it and a couple of thousand years later, we would see object lessons. So that maybe we could put ourselves back in that time and think about the lessons of that time and update them into your time.

What kind of a lesson is being learned here? These people were in the process of learning and were being used of God so they would be written in a Book for you and me to learn from. So God used these people's lives for you and me to learn from.

God used those people and directed their lives in order that we can get a lesson. These things were not done in a corner. These people experienced them. They were talking about them at dinner; they were talking about them when they got up in the morning, and when they got to work. The policeman talked about it perhaps more than others because everyone on his beat was talking about it to him about what was happening to the land of Egypt.

I am sure he heard about the confrontations that were taking place between Moses and Aaron and the Pharaoh and his court, as well. It must have been common scuttlebutt, because those things would leak out to people who were part of the courtiers around the Pharaoh. They would talk to their relatives who would talk to their relatives and business associates. Though the man on the street may not have gotten the most up-to-date, or accurate, information, they did get the essence of what was done and said even in the courts of Egypt.

It is interesting what is said in verse 27, where it says, "They performed his signs among them." It can be translated; "The words of his signs." There was instruction in what was going on there. And

that would include with it the demands that Moses and Aaron made, the warnings that God gave to Moses and Aaron to give to Pharaoh and his court as well, those things that preceded each plague that came along.

Now think about Joe Egyptian again. It is possible—indeed I think it is highly probable—that he heard in advance the final prophecy, the killing of the firstborn, because it says here that "the dread of Israel was on them", because they **knew** and they knew that they knew that every time this Moses said something, *it happened!*

It was almost like they had a death sentence, and all they could do was wait around and see what occurred. Now, they were not given the instruction that Israel was, to put the blood all around the door. But, it makes me wonder, that even the Egyptians, who were by this time learning that the word of Moses was not to be gainsaid, if the word about the blood around the door did not get out to some of the Egyptians and they did it as well.

I would not be surprised at all if some of them did it as well because there was a mixed multitude that went up out of Egypt with Israel. I am sure that the Egyptian, by this time were wondering about safety, wondering about deliverance, wondering how this awesome force could be turned aside.

I said just a little bit earlier in reference to Exodus 12:22 that the door was put for, or represented, the whole house so it was not necessary for the whole house to be painted with blood. All that was necessary was for one part, the place where you went in, to be painted around the edges with blood.

What we have here is a literary device called a metonymy. What that means is that one part of something represents the whole. So, in other words, the door represents the entire house. Hang onto that because it will become important as we move on here a little bit later. I might not even say anything about it again but you will get the point. The door represents the whole house.

Now, every once in a while, you will find the term "household". I am going to show you a place in a moment where in one translation the word is translated "house" and in another translation, the word is translated "household". We have a metonymy again because the word literally in the Hebrew is "house." Then we have the word "house" representing the thing it contained. Again, we have a metonymy. And, what did it contain? It contained a family.

Our English word "house" has a very interesting origin to it. According to Joseph Shipley in *The Origins of English Words*, house is derived from a root word that means hollow, cover, hide, or conceal. Other familiar words that you use occasionally that come from exactly the same root are hell, (did you know that "house" and "hell" have exactly the same root) hole, (hole in the ground has exactly the same root as the word hell and house) holster (the thing you put a gun in).

You see, what does a holster do? It houses a gun. Holster comes from the same root as house, hole, and hell. Helmet, a football player or men at war wear helmets. That word comes from the same root as the word "house." What do you ladies put dishes in? A hutch. The word "hutch" comes from the same root. What is it you wear on your legs and feet? Hosiery! Hosiery comes from the same root as the words house, hole, helmet, holster, hell.

As you can see, every one of these words has the idea of the word "enclosure," and it gives you the idea that something is contained within something else. So, you get the basic idea, then, that the word house is a receptacle that holds or contains something within it.

Let us go back to Genesis 7:1. This is what I was referring to just a little while ago.

Genesis 7:1 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.

That word "household" is the Hebrew word "house." If you have a King James version of the Bible, you will see that it is translated there as "house." But, what they have done here, in the New King James Version is they have clarified it showing that God's intention here was not to save a building, He wanted to save what was contained within the receptacle, and that is the family, the household.

What I want you to get here now is that, throughout the Bible, this literary device is being used. We will find then that certain words are used interchangeably. We saw a little of that in the sermon yesterday where the words Passover and Unleavened Bread are used interchangeably in the Bible thus indicating a season sometimes in the Bible rather than a specific day.

Whatever the context permits then, sometimes the translators will use one word, sometimes they will use another word, but the Hebrew word will mean essentially the same thing. Now, we are going to see a vivid example of this in II Samuel 7. The subject here is David. A bit of conversation has passed between him and Nathan the prophet, and also God was involved as well.

II Samuel 7:1-7 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains." Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you." But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, "Go and tell my servant David, "Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me an house of cedar?'"

You can see very clearly there that the context is the building of a structure. David lived inside a house of cedar. He got to thinking, "Boy, I live in this nice house and God lives in a tent. It shouldn't be that way. God should have a better house than that. God should live in a house of cedar too."

That was a good thought. He had good intentions. But, God comes back and says, "No, I don't need a house. When the time comes for a house we will do something else but I've never said a word about that. David, don't you worry about that, I am perfectly content to live in a tent."

Let us drop down to verse 11 because God gives other instruction there.

II Samuel 7:11 Since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.

Now, wait a minute. David already said he had a nice house. Is God going to build him another house? An even nicer house? No, because now God is shifting the emphasis from a building to something else: a family. Now we are seeing the word house being a metonymy for a family.

II Samuel 7:12 When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed [it is very clear now, He is talking about a family] after you who will come from your body and will establish his kingdom. [Wow, this house is getting big!] He shall build a house for My name. [Now we know that Solomon, about whom he is specifically talking, did build the temple. So we are back on talking about the house being a building now.] And, I will establish the throne of His kingdom for ever.

II Samuel 7:16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you, your throne shall be established forever.

Now, in this chapter, He begins talking about a structure to live in, first David's and then God's. Then God says He will make a house for David, but he already had one, but verse 16 makes it very clear, He is showing the house God will make for David is a family coming from David.

I Chronicles 10:6 So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together.

Now, houses do not die unless they are living. So, what we are seeing here is the end of the dynasty of Saul. Now we can conclude that the word "house" can be used in the sense of household (would be one sense), family (same sense but a different word), posterity, dependents, or dynasty.

So, we see it in the Bible as the "house of Israel." Not a building, not a structure, but a family—a large group of people. And so we can see then that the word "house" includes ancestors, descendants, and kindred—those who are presently living. And, we can see also its usage in the Bible even in terms of retainers and its officers as well, who may be part of the family but may not be part of the family, but they are included within the family because of the position they hold.

I Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those that do not obey the gospel of God?

Now we were just talking about David's house—David's dynasty, David's family, David's descendants, David's ancestors—but now we see that God has a house. We also see from this verse that God is judging His house and that judgment has already begun on His house.

Peter identifies Christians with God's house by using the pronoun "us." Therefore, the house of God is God's children. Those who are disobedient are not part of "us," they are not part of God's house.

Very frequently, in the New Testament, the word "house" is used in the sense of household, family, or church. Now, do not let Exodus 12:22-23 get out of your mind. The house, the blood, the door, and so forth.

I Peter 2:5 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.

Here the metaphor shifts slightly. The house is still part of the picture. In this case though, we, those who are part of the house, are identified as "living stones." We, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house. Here, "house" is being used as a structure. This structure, if you think of it as a building like a home in which we live, is **alive**.

That is a little bit different than structures we normally think of as being a house. Not only that, but as a living stone, you are joined to other living stones within this structure. So, the Christian is part of a structure that is also a community to which he has responsibilities because he is tied to these other living stones—all a part of the same structure.

Adam Clark, in his commentary, has an interesting comment in which he says, "In the Hebrew, the words son, daughter, house and stone all come from the same root." Just like in English, the word house, hole, hell, holster, helmet, and all those other things came from the same root and all give the same general implication in their meaning as something that is a receptacle that is holding something else. So in Hebrew, the words son, daughter, house, and stone all come from the same root.

Peter adds "living" to this concept because I am sure Peter understood that. He adds the word "living" to it so that we will understand that what we are dealing with here is a dynamic organism—not just a structure that is also an institution. This thing is alive. We are going to see more of this as we go along.

It is interesting also to note that Peter means "stone" and Christ is the Rock. In this building, He is the Chief cornerstone of this house, His family, His community. I want you to notice that in this structure the living stones have functions they carry out. Peter says that they are part of a priesthood that offers up spiritual sacrifices and they also show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness. That last one is kind of interesting if one thinks of building a building out of stone.

A stone that is out lying in a field is of no use at all until it is picked up and then used by the builder and integrated into what he is building. Then the stone becomes useful. Are you getting the point here? We are the stones. As long as the stone is a part of the building, it is useful. Remember reading anything about the stone which the "builders" rejected? They did not consider Him useful to their lives. We need to consider that in relation to ourselves.

We will not dwell on it but only as long as we are part of the building are we useful. If we leave or we are rejected from the building, we are thrown back out in the field and we just become another pebble out there somewhere. If the rock is no longer part of the building, it is not only useless as it was before but because it was wrenched from its source of life it faces a lingering *spiritual* death.

Now, there is a lesson here. This one is a bit abstract but none the less, it is a lesson and that is, there is no such thing as a "freelance Christian." You are either part of the building and you are useful to God, or you are just part of the field and worthless. Let us go to I Corinthians 3 as we describe what the Bible says about this house. We have already seen it is a structure but an unusual structure. It is a structure that is alive. Its stones are shown to be living.

I Corinthians 3:9-17 For we are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, you are God's building. [Sounds like I Peter 2:5] according to the grace of God which was given to me as a wise master building [Hang onto that—Paul is a builder in this building] I have laid the foundation and another builds on it but let each one take heed how he builds on it. [He is beginning to lead to something here.] For no other foundation can anyone lay other than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become manifest for the day will declare it [That is the day of judgment that we are in.] because it will be revealed by fire [tests and trials] and the fire will test each one's work

of what sort it is and if anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. And, if anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss but he himself will be saved yet so as through fire. But, do you not know that you are the temple of God [Very close parallel there with I Peter 2.] and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? And if anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. [Now, there is a very clear identification.]

There are three things I want you to look at in verse 9.

"We are laborers with God." We are not only the building (the house) but we are also working in and on it with God. That certainly, at least to me, indicates the dignity of our Christian responsibilities because how many people in this world can claim that God is their co-worker?

Now, look at the "field." The field brings in the element of life. This could have just as easily been translated "you are God's farm." Now, what does that mean? You know that the ground, the soil, except where it has been destroyed, is filled with life. That is another indication that we are working with a living organism.

The third thing is the word "building." It was this metaphor that Paul chose to concentrate on in the remainder of the chapter. There is only one foundation upon which this spiritual house may be built. This is basic and there better be no misconceptions at all about this. We cannot base Christianity upon good works. It cannot be based upon human factors at all. It cannot be based on science. Christianity has its foundation and begins when a person passes through the door that has the blood around it. That is the only way in. There are many ways out but there is only one way in to this house and that is through the bloodstained door.

Once the foundation is laid, Paul warns us that we have to be careful about how we build because though there is only one foundation, there are many directions the superstructure can be built in. It all depends how each person builds. That is because he is a living stone. He is a co-worker with God and what he is working on is himself. He is not responsible for making sure anybody else is beautiful, well-polished, or fits right into things, because the person can only really answer for himself. That is why Paul says to be careful how you build upon the one foundation.

We find the superstructure is capable of almost endless varieties because of all the different personalities that God is putting into His church. There are almost endless varieties there, but the warning is there: "Be careful how you do it so you do not fall short." Thus, the metaphor is about stone, silver, and gold as compared to that which will burn. So, he is saying, in effect, do not build of any materials that cost you nothing—the cheap things. He is saying, "Go after the hard things, the expensive things, the good things," and those things are involved in the same way that Christ became perfected. How did He become perfected? Through suffering. He became perfected through sacrifice.

Now, we also have here the introduction of the word "temple." This comes from a root that means "to dwell." In the Old Testament, the Temple was seen as God's dwelling place. The Temple was not a place of public access. It was not a place of assembly for people. That is what the synagogues were for. They assembled and heard sermons at the synagogue. But God lived in the Temple. Are you beginning to get the picture?

We are the Temple and God lives in us. We are God's dwelling place now. The only way to get into God's dwelling place is to go through the door that has the blood around it. Once we are in it, we

begin to find we have certain responsibilities. And those responsibilities primarily surround the perfecting of this one stone, ourselves, working in conjunction with God who is co-laboring with us that we might be polished up and be made a sparkling jewel within His building.

So He labors with us that this might take place but we have a great deal of control over what is produced because we can go the easy way and do virtually nothing or we can go the hard way and expend all our efforts on those things that are really difficult and costly.

Are you beginning to see a beautiful object lesson is beginning to be made clear here in which types and symbols are used? But in order to make this practical you see, **work** has to be done. That is why it is always true that an object lesson has to be acted out. It is a dynamic lesson as opposed to one that is passive and abstract. We are beginning to see this lesson form.

You can begin to see why God says if anybody defiles His Temple, they are going to be cast out. It is the same as defiling Him. Because, and we will not carry it this far, but eventually what happens, Jesus' prayer was that we become one with the Father.

Ephesians 2:19-22 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God [that is so plain now], having been built [there we go] on the foundation [another part of the picture] of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

That becomes so plain and clear now, does it not? Here we see that Christ is not only a foundation but He is also the cornerstone as well. The verb used here, referring to the nouns "building and foundation," shows that once we become Christians, we are placed on a firm foundation and then being built.

We are a work in progress—we are being built into the Temple. So, what we see then from this section here is a process, an ongoing project so that we are not only the house, we are working on the house, and we are being worked on at the same time to make us fit better within the house.

Now, the word "Temple" that is used here more specifically means "inner sanctuary," the "Holy Place," or the "Holy of Holies." The purpose of all this work is that the house may be a fit place for God to dwell in by His Spirit.

Paul adds one more thing here that is interesting and that is that we are fellow citizens with the saints. Citizenship indicates a political entity as well. This house, then, or building, or Temple, or family, is also a kingdom requiring citizenship.

You see how all these usages of these words, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, are coming together into something that is multifaceted, and yet actually, on the other hand, very simply seen. There is a very clear lesson involved in all of these things.

Now, let us look at one specific part of the building back in John 10. We are going to look at the door.

John 10:1 Most assuredly I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

You might ask, how is it that somebody other than someone placed there by God can get in there? But, there are other places in the Bible that show there are people that steal their way in. Remember the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares? You see, there is another who is capable of putting people seemingly as though they are part of the house but in reality, they are *not* part of the house, they have *not* gone through the door, they have sneaked in through a window somewhere and planted inside there.

John 10:7 Then Jesus said to them, "most assuredly I say to you I am the door of the sheep."

John 10:9-10 I am the door and if anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and will find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.

Now, a sheepfold is what? It is a receptacle, it is a shelter. In this case, it is a receptacle or a shelter for sheep. It is a holding place, and for the sheep, it is a place of refuge and security.

It is very interesting that in Israel, a sheepfold customarily only had one entrance to it. That is why it was such a vivid lesson to these people. All of the community's sheep were only kept in one sheepfold and they could only get in by this one place. Now, there was a reason for that and it is because each true shepherd felt it was his responsibility to evaluate each sheep as it came by him. Having only one door or only one way to get in enabled him to evaluate the sheep after they had been out in the pasture. He could look them over to see if there were any sores, any insects, infection, contamination, or things that needed to be taken care of. Did they need to be dipped or whatever. It gave him an opportunity to do that.

In addition to that, it made it a much safer place since there was only one door and usually what happened was one of the shepherds would sleep every night with his body right across the door. Now, it did not mean that in the actual situation that the same shepherd was there every night but in our situation, the same Shepherd is there all the time. But in theirs, they would rotate the job and make sure that in order for a thief to get in there, he actually had to go right past the shepherd if he was going to get at the sheep. So, he laid down his life and that indicates protection and care.

A shepherd's main responsibility (I am talking about a real shepherd in this case), is the health of his sheep. In the case of a minister, his primary responsibility to God is to promote and to protect the integrity of the flock. A true shepherd will do that and in so doing, he greatly ensures the salvation of the sheep that are in his care. Under his protection then, with the gifts that God gives him, he enables them to have a step up on salvation.

Let us go from here to I Corinthians 12. Here again, the metaphor shifts but it has the same essential elements. We find the church described again as a receptacle. Only in this case, the receptacle is the human body.

I Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one and has many members but all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ.

So it is with the temple—there was one temple. So it is with the tabernacle—there was only one tabernacle. So it is with the church—there is only one church.

I Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, we were all made to drink into one Spirit.

I Corinthians 12:24-27 But our presentable parts have no need but God composed the body having given greater honor to that part which lacks it that there should be no schism in the body but that the members should have the same care for one another and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, or if one member is honored all the members rejoice with it. Now, you are the body of Christ and members individually.

We have a body that is made up of many parts. Shall we call them sheep? Shall we call them saints? But, all of them are important. There is a great deal of diversity of personality and a great deal of diversity of gifts of the Holy Spirit but the body functions as a unit.

Now, you can see all the metaphors here joining together. They all give similar pictures. You cannot have a building that is so loosely joined together that the bricks fall out, or you open up a door and it comes off the hinges, or you put up a window and it falls out of the wall.

No, you see, there is a solidarity there. Every part of the body, every part of the structure, is responsible to all the other parts of the structure and their responsibility includes not only working on themselves but to make sure they are cooperating with the builder—God who is co-working with them and also every body else—cooperating with all the other stones, all the other sheep, all the other saints, all the other parts of the body. That contributes, then, to the overall well-being and strength of the whole.

Now, let us go back to Ephesians 1:21-23 and look at another specific part of the body.

Ephesians 1:21-23 Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The body has a head. In I Corinthians 12 we had the church described as a body and it had many parts but none of us are part of the head. We might be fingers, we might be fingernails, or eyelashes, or pieces of hair, or whatever the part might be in the analogy, but there is a head and we are not the head. The Head is the Cornerstone. The Head is also the foundation as well. So the church is not just an institution, it is a living organism that functions only by reason of its vital relationship with the head—because a body cannot operate without a head.

Paul, then, here in Ephesians 1, pictures the risen Christ as being ruler of the universe and that powerful being is shown as being a gift to the church which is His fullness. In other words, a head without a body is no good either. In order for a head to function, it has to have a body to function through. So the head, then, functions through the body.

Now we see a further extension of our responsibility. We are not only responsible to each other to make sure the body is well prepared to do its work. We are also, each one of us, individually responsible to the Head that gives the commands.

So, there is an individual responsibility as well as a corporate responsibility to respond to what the Head wants it to do. So, they go together. Both the Head and the body are incorporated as one. The

church then, is not just a people that is being ruled by Him, but a society that is living in vital connection to Him.

This goes one step further and shows the church is filled with Christ's own life. I mean the connection is that vital and dynamic. They go together.

Ephesians 4:3-6 Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. [Every part of the body has this requirement.] There is one body, one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all.

Every part of the body has to strive to add to its unity—otherwise, what will happen? The body will throw it off, because that is what the body does with its refuse—it throws it off. The human body even has parts functioning within it to attack enemies and to drive them away. The analogy here is very interesting.

Amos 3:3 adds to this: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" The answer is no, they cannot. So, what we are seeing here is that the church is not a loosely connected, disjointed, and nebulous entity. It is a body that is solidly locked into a singular mind.

The only unfortunate part of this is that our mind is not the same as His mind. But, that is what the perfecting is for, to bring us so that it is.

II Timothy 2:19-21 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows who are His," [He knows that His church has tares within it, but the Lord knows who are His] and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." [And there is our responsibility that the Days of Unleavened Bread show so well.] But in a great house [structure, dynasty] there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but some of wood and clay [connect that to I Corinthians 3], some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

There is really great hope and encouragement there and that is, that we can actually be transformed from a vessel of dishonor to a vessel of honor. We do not have to stay the way we are. We can be changed. Paul was saying that although the faith of some can be upset, the church will remain secure. There is a solid foundation of God and God knows who are His and the church will go through upsets. There will be disunity from time to time, but He tells us in I Corinthians 11 that there *must* be heresies amongst you. Why? That those who are approved will be made manifest.

It is like the cream rising to the top, or the character coming to the fore. So, there are going to be vessels of dishonor, but if we happen to be one, as long as we have the Spirit of God, we can be changed. We can be transformed if we will just yield ourselves. But do not be too upset if there is some division that comes along from time to time. God is showing here that we can expect that. There are some vessels of honor and some of dishonor.

God knows who are His, and so it is our responsibility to prove that we belong to God through our holiness. Ultimately, though, God is the only one that knows because He is the only one that sees our heart. So, we have to be judicious in our judgments regarding these things. Know this though; Paul is saying here that the church consists of all kinds.

John 15:4-6 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

Here is a different metaphor, but again, we see the same general principal. In this case, it is a tree and it is a receptacle, especially the trunk, holding the branches that are attached to it. Christ shifted the metaphors and so did the apostle Paul, as well as Moses and the others, depending on the specific lesson, teaching, or instruction they wanted to get across. So, this particular metaphor still shows a unified structure, in this case a tree, but He wants to get across something that is specific to a tree's ability. That is that no branch can produce unless it is connected solidly to the trunk.

We can apply the same thing to the other metaphors though it is just not as clear. We can be a stone in the building. If we are **firmly** planted within it, then fine, we are added to its well-being and things will be good.

Now, here is what is necessary. In verse 4: "abide in Me." Continued production of fruit depends upon constant union with the trunk. Branches do not jump off and still produce fruit. Branches only produce fruit when they are still attached.

In verse 5, fruit bearing is certain if one remains connected. If the life of Christ permeates the Christian, **fruit is inevitable!** It *will* be produced. The only one who can stop it is the individual personality. Does He not say that "My Word goes forth and **it accomplishes** what I have sent it forth to do"?

Verse 6 tells us the failure to maintain the vital connection brings its own penalty—rejection—because of uselessness and therefore, death.

I Timothy 3:15 But if I am delayed, I write to you that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God [the temple of God, the family of God, the Kingdom of God], which is the church [Is that not plain?] of the living God [it is a dynamic organism], the pillar and ground of the truth.

The church exists because of truth. The church lives because of truth. The church will accomplish its mission because of truth. The church is the pillar, the support, the ground—meaning the foundation. The two of them together mean "certainty" and "firmness." The church is the buttress of truth. It keeps its standing intact in this world. It is the source of truth from God, or the means through which truth gets into the world, but it has been entrusted to us for the purpose of transmitting it so that others might be guided by it.

We have an awesome responsibility here in responding to God in this way.

Hebrews 12:22-24 But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, who are registered in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel.

If one leaves, where does one go? Who has the truth that leads to salvation? This is important in another regard, and that is that salvation does not come to us one at a time. Salvation, when it comes, is going to come all at once. The whole building, the whole temple, the whole church, is going to be changed at one time. That is something simple to understand but sobering to consider. The church is one body. It is one unit. It is inseparable because of the Spirit of God. If one is cut off from the church, when salvation comes, what? There is nothing!

Let us go back Psalm 92, which is a Sabbath Psalm.

Psalm 92:12-13 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those who are planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

That is beautiful! See, those who are planted and are firmly attached shall flourish because God lives there and He is the master of His family. He says here, in the symbolism that it is a most secure and quiet habitation.

Brethren, the church is indestructible because God has promised that each one of us as a living stone has a responsibility and where we stand in relation to carrying out that responsibility is the basis of our confident hope. God is there, He will do what He says; all we have to do is respond to Him and do what we need to do.

We need to hold fast! But, how long do we hold fast? I do not know. I have no idea. I can only guess just like everybody else, but I can say this, in the symbolism that is given in the Bible, every single one of us *has to hold fast until morning comes* when the Daystar arises.

Is that not a beautiful picture? All the way back in Exodus 12 God was thinking of what He was going to put all the way forward in the end of the New Testament. Morning, someday, is going to dawn, and you want to stay inside the house. Once you go through the door and you pass between the blood, you stay there until morning—until the Daystar comes.

It just amazes me how far out His mind thinks. I would not be at all surprised that He had the Book all written before He started. Someday the Light of the world will come and when He comes either we are dead, secure in our grave and we have held on until then, or we are alive and we have held on till that time.

Regardless of how dark it looks outside, regardless of how much turmoil we hear outside, regardless of how much wailing we hear outside—make sure that you stay behind that door and you stay where you are. Do not leave! If you do, the death angel is going to get you. Make sure that you stay until morning, behind the bloodstained door.

Take advantage of being behind the door to work to reinforce your faith—remembering what you *are*, not forgetting what you *were*; appreciating the awesome cost of salvation, and resisting every pull that will take you out of the house.