

BEING ONE WITH THE LORD IN HIS MOVE FOR THE UNIVERSAL SPREADING OF THE CHURCH AS THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS

Message Four

The Recovery of Living the Life of the Altar and the Tent

Scripture Reading: Acts 7:2; Rom. 4:12; Heb. 11:8-10; Gen. 12:1-4, 7-8; 13:3-4, 18

Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,

Rom. 4:12 And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* in uncircumcision.

Heb. 11:8-10 By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. **9** By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign *land*, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise; **10** For he eagerly waited for the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God.

Gen. 12:1-4 Now Jehovah said to Abram,

Go from your land / And from your relatives / And from your father's house / To the land that I will show you; **2** And I will make of you a great nation, / And I will bless you / And make your name great; / And you shall be a blessing. **3** And I will bless those who bless you, / And him who curses you I will curse; / And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. **4** So Abram went as Jehovah had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he went out of Haran.

Gen. 12:7-8 And Jehovah appeared to Abram and said, To your seed I will give this land.

And there he built an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him. **8** And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

Gen. 13:3-4 And he continued on his journey from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, **4** To the place of the altar, which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah.

Gen. 13:18 And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.

I. **Day 1** As believers in Christ, we are repeating the history of Abraham; the Christian life is the life that Abraham lived—Gal. 3:6-9; Rom. 4:12:

Gal. 3:6-9 Even as "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." **7** Know then that they who are of faith, these are sons of Abraham. **8** And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles out of faith, announced the gospel beforehand to Abraham: "In you shall all the nations be blessed." **9** So then they who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Rom. 4:12 And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* in uncircumcision.

- A. For Abraham to live and walk by faith means that he had to reject himself, to set himself aside, to forget himself, and to live by Someone else—Gal. 2:20.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

- B. Abraham's life of faith is presently being repeated among us; the church life today is the harvest of the life and history of Abraham—Rom. 4:12.

Rom. 4:12 And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* in uncircumcision.

- C. An Abraham is a person who has been called out by God, who no longer lives and walks by himself, who forsakes and forgets everything he has by nature, and who takes God's presence as his road map—Gen. 12:1-4; Heb. 11:8.

Gen. 12:1-4 Now Jehovah said to Abram,

Go from your land / And from your relatives / And from your father's house / To the land that I will show you; **2** And I will make of you a great nation, / And I will bless you / And make your name great; / And you shall be a blessing. **3** And I will bless those who bless you, / And him who curses you I will curse; / And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. **4** So Abram went as

Jehovah had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he went out of Haran.

Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

- D. **Day 2** Abraham's faith did not originate with himself; rather, his believing in God was a reaction to the God of glory appearing to him and to the transfusion of God's element into his being—Acts 7:2; cf. John 14:21; 2 Tim. 4:8:

Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,

John 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

2 Tim. 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, and not only me but also all those who have loved His appearing.

1. Once we have this transfusion, we will experience a spiritual infusion as God's essence infiltrates our being—Rom. 8:6, 11.

Rom. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.

Rom. 8:11 And if the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.

2. Faith is our reaction to God, produced by His transfusion, infusion, and saturation—Heb. 12:2; Gal. 2:20; cf. Mark 11:22.

Heb. 12:2 Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and *it is* no longer I *who* live, but *it is* Christ *who* lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the *faith* of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Mark 11:22 And Jesus answered and said to them, Have faith in God.

- II. **Day 3** If we would walk in the steps of Abraham's faith, we must live the life of the altar and the tent, taking Christ as our life and the church as our living—Rom. 4:12; Heb. 11:9; Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4, 18:

Rom. 4:12 And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* in uncircumcision.

Heb. 11:9 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign *land*, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise;

Gen. 12:7-8 And Jehovah appeared to Abram and said, To your seed I will give this land. And there he built an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him. **8** And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

Gen. 13:3-4 And he continued on his journey from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, **4** To the place of the altar, which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah.

Gen. 13:18 And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.

- A. An altar is for worshipping God by offering all that we are and have to God for His purpose—8:20-21a; Psalms 43:4a; cf. John 1:14, 29; 4:24:

Gen. 8:20-21 And Noah built an altar to Jehovah and took of every clean beast and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. **21** And Jehovah smelled the satisfying fragrance; and Jehovah said in His heart, I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I ever again smite everything living as I have done.

Psalms 43:4 And I will go to the altar of God, / To God my exceeding joy; / And I will praise You with the harp, / O God, my God.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

1. Building an altar means that our life is for God, that God is our life, and that the meaning of our life is God—Exo. 40:6, 29; Lev. 1:3, 9; 6:8-13.

Exo. 40:6 And you shall put the altar of burnt offering before the entrance of the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting.

Exo. 40:29 He also set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meal offering, as Jehovah commanded Moses.

Lev. 1:3 If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall present it, a male without blemish; he shall present it at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, that he may be accepted before Jehovah.

Lev. 1:9 But its inward parts and its legs he shall wash with water. Then the priest shall burn the whole on the altar, as a burnt offering, an offering by fire, a satisfying fragrance to Jehovah.

Lev. 6:8-13 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, **9** Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering shall be on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. **10** And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers he shall put on his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has consumed the burnt offering on the altar, and he shall put them beside the altar. **11** Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. **12** And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it must not go out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it and shall burn the fat of the peace offerings on it. **13** Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out.

2. Abraham first took care of the worship of God by erecting an altar, and then he took care of his living—Gen. 12:7-8.

Gen. 12:7-8 And Jehovah appeared to Abram and said, To your seed I will give this land.

And there he built an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him. **8** And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

- B. Abraham's dwelling in a tent testified that he did not belong to the world but lived the life of a sojourner on earth—Heb. 11:9-10:

Heb. 11:9-10 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign *land*, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise; **10** For he eagerly waited for the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God.

1. The tent is the issue of the altar; the altar and the tent are interrelated and cannot be separated.
2. Erecting a tent is an expression, a declaration, that we do not belong to this world, that we belong to another country—vv. 15-16.

Heb. 11:15-16 And if indeed they continued to remember that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return; **16** But as it is, they long after a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

- C. **Day 4** As the true descendants of Abraham (Gal. 3:7), we should be pilgrims on the earth, moving and pitching our tents as he did (Heb. 11:9, 13; 1 Pet. 2:11).

Gal. 3:7 Know then that they who are of faith, these are sons of Abraham.

Heb. 11:9 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign *land*, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise;

Heb. 11:13 All these died in faith, not receiving the promises but seeing them from afar and joyfully greeting *them* and confessing that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth.

1 Pet. 2:11 Beloved, I entreat *you* as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,

- D. We should walk on the earth but not dwell here, because the Lord is our dwelling place (Psa. 90:1), and "our commonwealth exists in the heavens" (Phil. 3:20); on earth we should "wander without a home" (1 Cor. 4:11):

Psa. 90:1 O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations.

Phil. 3:20 For our commonwealth exists in the heavens, from which also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

1 Cor. 4:11 Until the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted and wander without a home;

1. We need to be migrating ones who spread the church life from city to city, from country to country, and from continent to continent until there are local churches everywhere on earth.
2. The more a church gives up people for migration, the more people it gets; the more a church keeps, the more it loses.
3. Instead of having a burden to migrate to spread the Lord's recovery, we may become set, settled, and occupied—cf. Matt. 8:20.

Matt. 8:20 And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of heaven *have* roosts, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

- E. After Abraham built his first altar (Gen. 12:7), he built a second altar between Bethel and Ai, which stand in contrast to each other (v. 8):

Gen. 12:7 And Jehovah appeared to Abram and said, To your seed I will give this land.
And there he built an altar to Jehovah who had appeared to him.

Gen. 12:8 And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

1. Bethel means “house of God,” and Ai means “a heap of ruins.”
2. In the eyes of the called ones, only Bethel, the church life, is worthwhile; everything else is a heap of ruins.

III. Day 5 Abraham had his failures, and there was the forsaking of the altar and the tent; however, with him there was a recovery, and recovery is a matter of returning to the altar and the tent with calling on the name of the Lord—vv. 9-10; 13:3-4; Rom. 10:12-13; 12:1-2:

Gen. 12:9-10 And Abram journeyed onward, journeying toward the Negev. **10** And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

Gen. 13:3-4 And he continued on his journey from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, **4** To the place of the altar, which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah.

Rom. 10:12-13 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord *is Lord* of all *and* rich to all who call upon Him; **13** For “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Rom. 12:1-2 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, *which is* your reasonable service. **2** And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

- A. Eventually, at Hebron Abraham's tent became a place where he had fellowship with God and where God could fellowship with him—Gen. 13:18.

Gen. 13:18 And Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Jehovah.

- B. Abraham's tent with the altar built by him was a prefigure of the Tabernacle of the Testimony with the altar built by the children of Israel—Exo. 38:21.

Exo. 38:21 This is the sum of *the things for* the tabernacle, the Tabernacle of the Testimony, as they were counted according to the commandment of Moses for the service of the Levites by the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

- C. Abraham, a stranger and a sojourner, “eagerly waited for the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God”—Heb. 11:10:

Heb. 11:10 For he eagerly waited for the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God.

1. By living the life of the altar and the tent, Abraham testified that he was sojourning by faith, as in a foreign land—v. 9.

Heb. 11:9 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign *land*, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise;

2. The excellent and lovely New Jerusalem is the dear expectation of God's elect and the destination, the goal, of the heavenly pilgrims—vv. 13-16.

Heb. 11:13-16 All these died in faith, not receiving the promises but seeing them from afar and joyfully greeting *them* and confessing that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. **14** For those who say such things make it manifest that they seek after a country of their own. **15** And if indeed they continued to remember that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return; **16** But as it is, they long after a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

3. Abraham's tent was a miniature of the New Jerusalem, the ultimate tent, the ultimate tabernacle of God—Gen. 9:26-27; 12:8; 13:3; 18:1; Heb. 11:9; Rev. 21:2-3.

Gen. 9:26-27 And he said,
Blessed be Jehovah, / The God of Shem; / And let Canaan be his servant. **27** May God enlarge Japheth, / And let him dwell in the tents of Shem, / And let Canaan be his servant.

Gen. 12:8 And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

Gen. 13:3 And he continued on his journey from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai,

Gen. 18:1 And Jehovah appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of *his* tent in the heat of the day.

Heb. 11:9 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the land of promise as in a foreign *land*, making his home in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise;

Rev. 21:2-3 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

4. As we are living in the "tent" of the church life, we are waiting for its ultimate consummation—the ultimate "Tent of Meeting," the New Jerusalem—1 Tim. 3:15; Lev. 1:1; Heb. 11:10.

1 Tim. 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

Lev. 1:1 Then Jehovah called to Moses and spoke to him out of the Tent of Meeting, saying,

Heb. 11:10 For he eagerly waited for the city which has the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God.

- D. **Day 6** The overcomers live in tents, looking forward to the New Jerusalem, the eternal tabernacle and the ultimate Feast of Tabernacles—Rev. 21:2-3; Lev. 23:39-43:

Rev. 21:2-3 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

Lev. 23:39-43 Then on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall keep the feast of Jehovah seven days; on the first day shall be a complete rest, and on the eighth day shall be a complete rest. **40** And on the first day you shall take for yourselves the product of stately trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Jehovah your God for seven days. **41** And you shall keep it as a feast to Jehovah seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall keep it in the seventh month. **42** You shall dwell in booths seven days — all who are native in Israel shall dwell in booths — **43** So that your descendants may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am Jehovah your God.

1. The Feast of the Passover signifies Christ as the initiation of God's redemption judicially, and the Feast of Tabernacles signifies Christ as the consummation of God's full salvation organically—John 6:4; 7:2, 37-38.

John 6:4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near.

John 7:2 Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was near.

John 7:37-38 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. **38** He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

2. God ordained the Feast of Tabernacles so that the children of Israel would remember how their forefathers had lived in tents

(tabernacles) in their wandering in the wilderness; the word tabernacles implies the thought of remembrance—Deut. 16:13-15.

Deut. 16:13-15 You shall hold the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after your ingathering from your threshing floor and your winepress. **14** And you and your son and daughter, and your male servant and female servant, and the Levite and the sojourner and the orphan and the widow who are within your gates shall rejoice in your feast. **15** You shall keep the feast to Jehovah your God for seven days in the place which Jehovah will choose, for Jehovah your God will bless you in all your produce and in all your undertakings; therefore you shall be nothing but joyful.

3. Their coming together for this feast to worship God and enjoy the produce from the good land is a real picture of blending—1 Cor. 12:24.

1 Cor. 12:24 But our comely *members* have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the *member* that lacked,

4. The Lord's table is a feast of remembrance, just as the Feast of Tabernacles was a feast of remembrance—Luke 22:19-20.

Luke 22:19-20 And He took a loaf and gave thanks, and He broke *it* and gave *it* to them, saying, This is My body which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of Me. **20** And similarly the cup after they had dined, saying, This cup is the new covenant *established* in My blood, which is being poured out for you.

5. Our enjoyment of Christ today as the Feast of Tabernacles, in our corporate coming together for blending to enjoy the riches of Christ as the produce of the good land, reminds us that we are still in the wilderness and need to enter into the rest of the New Jerusalem, which is the eternal tabernacle—Rev. 21:2-3.

Rev. 21:2-3 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.