FIRST NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: July 2O26

by Lee Shipp

DAVID'S TABERNACLE REVEALED

[The Lord says, "… I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen … and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old. That they may possess the remnant …and … all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD … Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." (Amos 9:11-13).

David's Tabernacle lies in ruins. Oh, the possibility—a tabernacle desperate for revival, yearning for awakening. David's Tabernacle is under siege, vulnerable to the attacks of false teachers. Yet James, in Acts 15, invokes the prophecy of Amos and assures us that God Himself will restore David's Tabernacle. Surely, this is a foreshadowing of the Church that Jesus is building—a holy dwelling where His presence cannot be shaken.

"… I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." (Acts 15:17).

David's Tabernacle originated in the heart of God. David wanted to build God this house, but God told David he could not; however, his Son would build the house.

The house David saw was the Church of Jesus Christ. Paul's revelation of David's Tabernacle is found in Ephesians 2:19: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

Isn't that wonderful? You are David's Tabernacle. You're not a stranger anymore. You're not a stranger in the Church; you belong; the Church is your family.

You are a saint: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone;

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Eph. 2:20-21.

When Paul says we are "fitly framed together," get this picture in your mind. In the West, we see houses made of bricks held together by mortar. That mortar holds the bricks together and makes them symmetrical. But the ancient temples Paul refers to are not built of bricks and mortar. They are made of marble and stone, chiseled and designed so that each piece of stone sits perfectly upon the other. They are engineered to support one another. No mortar is needed. And when properly engineered, you see this in the ancient pyramids; you cannot slip a piece of paper between them. They are perfectly fit together.

That's how Jesus is building His Church. He builds His Church so that we are fit together. There is a proper place that the Holy Spirit designs for you. You are chiseled and formed for a specific place in the Church. Your resting place is designed by the Holy Spirit. This place may not please you, but it does please the Lord.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, BE IN YOUR PLACE

You must be in that place, giving support to the other stones, and allowing the next stone, the next life that is coming into Christ, to rest upon you. If you do not stay in the place the Holy Spirit assigns, then you jeopardize the whole temple.

A significant tragedy of modern Christianity is the lack of knowledge and revelation concerning the Church. Most people who go to church have no real understanding of what the Church is and how it is supposed to function. If you understood the Church, then you would realize that you don't have the freedom to go wherever you want; you are a living stone, fitly joined together in a spiritual house that the Holy Spirit has placed you in. Your position in Christ will support others and be supported by others. That's what you're born into, and this is what's so beautiful to the heart of the Lord.

We all fit together for this glorious purpose: "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:22

YOUR PURPOSE AS THE CHURCH

The purpose of David's Tabernacle is that it would be the habitation of the Holy Spirit. We can call ourselves whatever we want. We can put any label on our marquee. We can put any sign on the front door. But the true Church is the habitation of God, the Holy Ghost. If it is not the habitation of the Holy Spirit, it is not the Church—no matter what we say. Paul's revelation in 1 Corinthians 12, the Church (David's Tabernacle) is seen as a body, like the human body. This Body is built by the Holy Spirit: "by one Spirit, we're baptized into one body …" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

The body is not one member, but many. By yourself, you are not the Church. The Church is not singular, being one member. The Church is one Body, made from many members.

YOU WILL NOT GO TO HEAVEN IF YOU ARE NOT THE CHURCH

People say, “I don't need to go to church to be saved. I don't need to go to church to go to heaven.” I'm not going to argue with you. But I will tell you this: you're not saved, and you're not going to heaven if you're not the Church.

“If the foot shall say, ‘Because I'm not the hand, I'm not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, ‘Because I'm not the eye, I'm not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? And if the whole body were an eye, where's the hearing? And if the whole were hearing, where's the smelling?” But now God has set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it pleases Him.

Where it pleases who? God. Why? Because He's building something. He's building something through the generations, and He also uses it in the generation for what purpose? To be the habitation of the Holy Spirit. He builds it for His pleasure. It stands to reason, then, if all were one member, where's the body? But the Body is many members, yet one body. The eye can't say to the hand, “I don't need you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I don't need you.” Everyone is necessary, even those members that seem less necessary; God gives them more glory. God gives them more honor and greater comeliness in their lives because every part of the body is beautiful.

This is done so that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

If you have a problem with the members of the Body of Christ, you really don't have a problem with the members—you have a problem with the Head. And the Head is Jesus. If you've got a grudge, your problem is with the Head. The Head will bring healing into the Body. There can be no schisms in the Body of Christ. Because the Church is a living organism, not a social club. It is alive. You can't divide it. You can't amputate it and damage the Body. The hand cannot say to the foot, “I don't need you. I'm cutting you out of my life.” It cannot do that. I must not do that.

Here’s a picture for you: I’m not a handyman, but I try. And honestly, it’s not great. I know what it’s like to bust a finger with a hammer. My right hand does the busting. Every time I take on a project and have to hold a nail or something, it’s always my left hand that ends up in jeopardy, taking the hit.

Now, when I hit my left hand with my right hand, the left hand doesn’t hold a grudge against the right hand that hit it. Why? Because of the head. The head says, “It’s okay. You are not going to be divided. You are not going to hold a grudge against the right hand. As a matter of fact, you are going to pick up the nail and hold it again. The right hand is going to hammer again, putting you, once again, in jeopardy.”

The Head takes the hand that did the busting and holds the hand that took the beating.

That’s exactly how the Body of Christ is supposed to work. When someone hurts you in the Body, when a member fails, when someone makes a mistake or moves where they shouldn’t—the Head, Jesus, is the one who keeps the Body whole. He reconciles, comforts, and sustains, so the Body keeps functioning. There is no room for grudges. There is only restoration and unity.

UNHAPPY MEMBER

Many members of the Body are not happy with where the Holy Spirit has placed them. “I wish I were an eye instead of a hand.” So, they move themselves in the Body where it pleases them. Eventually, they deform the Body of Christ in that generation.

Members of the Body put the nose where the mouth is supposed to go. They put the hands where the ears should be. Members go where they want to go, serve where they want to serve, do what they want to do. They refuse the Holy Spirit.

Some go sit at home in their living rooms, and now the Body looks even more deformed. The feet complain they are not the mouth. They conclude, “I’m not important; I’m going to remove myself from the Body.” And now the Body doesn’t have feet. It’s hindered, encumbered, and unable to function properly, and the Holy Spirit is grieved, quenched, and resisted in that generation.

This is probably how the Church appears to demons, principalities, and powers. These principalities mock David’s Tabernacle, thinking, “They're strange. They don't function very well. They can't move about. Their feet are sitting in their living rooms. Their hearing is impaired. Their mouth is where their nose should be.”

And Satan gains the day, which is the objective of the enemy. Satan cannot stop the Holy Spirit; therefore, he will do all he can to hinder the vehicle in which the Holy Spirit operates. If Satan succeeds, that generation will suffer a surge in darkness and peril. Satan seeks to create schisms in the Body of Christ, for this hinders the Holy Spirit and helps his cause. For the love of God, we must not allow our lives to play into Satan’s schemes.

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Thursday, June 25, 2026