

## AGAPE LESSON 5

### CITY CHURCH/BODY OF CHRIST

*Put together by Bongie Kuzwayo*

*What is meant by City Church? Regular meetings of the body (as a culture) – local houses coming together in the Spirit of **oneness** within a particular vicinity as ordained by God.*

*Other names for the Body of Christ = the Bride, the Temple, the House, Mount Zion, Heavenly Jerusalem, General Assembly, Church of the First-born, City of the Living God, the Royal Priesthood, the Holy Nation.*

*God is forever speaking and leading His people, the church. In the wilderness He led Israel with a **cloud** during the day and a **pillar of fire** during the night. Whenever the cloud/pillar of fire stopped, Israel camped. And whenever the cloud/pillar of fire moved, Israel broke camp and followed. Manna was only found where the cloud/pillar of fire was. If you were to be left behind, there would no manna for you, you would have worms from yesterday's manna.*

*In today's language manna is:*

- (a) A proceeding word (Matthew4v4)*
- (b) A life-giving word (John6v63)*
- (c) A river (Spirit-filled) word (Psalm46v4)*
- (d) That which the Spirit says to the churches (Revelation2v7).*

*Today God continues to speak, and **His present demand** is an expression of Mount Zion in every city – understood as the City church. As Agape we want to be **where God is** – not where God **was**. Fresh manna is only found in His presence. In other words, we want to keep migrating as the cloud/pillar moves, and be found positioned **in His perfect will**.*

*[2Chronicles3v1] Now Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on **Mount Moriah** where the lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite.*

*This is the same mountain where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac as commanded by God to go sacrifice his only son he loved (Genesis22v2). This is where the nation of Israel (**all the tribes together**) met for the feasts of the Lord.*

*[2Chronicle7v12—16] Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him, "I have heard your prayer and **have chosen this place for Myself** as a house of sacrifice. (13) When I shut up the heavens and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people. (14) If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (15) Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. (16) For now, I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and heart will be there perpetually."*

*Solomon's eyes were open to realise something, and he testifies:*

*[2Chronicles2v6] But who is able to build Him a temple, since the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him?*

*[2Chronicles6v18] But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!*

*And this is what God said through the mouth of Isaiah:*

*Heaven is My throne, and the earth My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me?  
(Isaiah66v1)*

*God does not dwell in a house made with mortar and brick. You will notice that God did not dwell in Solomon's temple:*

- (1) He chose it for Himself as a house of sacrifice, (2Chronicles7v12) but said nothing about dwelling there.*
- (2) He put His name there (2Chronicles7v16).*
- (3) His eyes were open and His ears attentive to prayer made there.*
- (4) He chose and sanctified the place (2Chronicles7v16).*

*[Psalm 132v13—16] For the Lord **has chosen Zion, He has desired it for His dwelling place.** (14) **This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell for I have desired it.** (15) I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. (16) I will also cloth her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.*

*The early church gives us a pattern of what a City church looks like. We have three model cities to look at, viz: Jerusalem, Antioch and Ephesus. Together they provide a key to **oneness**.*

*From **Jerusalem** we learn of the restoration of David's tabernacle and observe the first principles of the Christian life and community expressed in the rhythm of temple worship and house fellowship.*

*From **Antioch** we observe the dynamic elements for the birth of apostolic ministry to the nations, including the modality of the City church and the sodality of apostolic work. We see the city wide plural collegiate, leadership, fasting and prayer, ministry to the Lord, prophecy and laying on of hands.*

*From **Ephesus** we learn of Christ as head of the church. The partnership between apostle and city-wide eldership, and the strategy for multiplication and regional impact through the miraculous and apostolic bases of operation.*

*In simplest terms, City church comprises Local houses within a vicinity **coming together in one Spirit** at times appointed by God. The early church met in homes and not in auditoriums as we see today. See:*

*1Corinthians16v15—20*

*Philippians4v22*

*Colossians4v15*

*Philemon1v2*

*2Timothy4v19*

*Romans16v5—11*

*Acts 10v34—48*

*[Matthew 8v19—22] Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, 'I will follow You wherever You go.' (20) And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." (21) Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." (22) But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury the dead. "*

*[Hebrews 10v5—7] Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. (6) In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have no pleasure. (7) Then I said, "Behold, I have come--in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God."*

*Jesus will not lay His head on a local house, (it is a very tiny fraction of the Body). The local house is only a quarry to shape the stones so they fit into the body (the City Church). When the Body (Mount Zion) come together, Jesus comes to lay His head to complete Himself.*

*We realise the power of prayer made in the specific location that was chosen by God:*

**King Jehoshaphat** was in great distress, facing Moab, Ammon and Mount Seir, all coming against him. *[2Chronicles 20v3—9, 12] And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (4) So Judah gathered together to ask help from the Lord; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. (5) Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assemble of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, (6) and said, O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? (7) Are You not our God, who drove out the nations of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Your friend Abraham? (8) They dwell in it and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, (9) "If disaster comes upon us- sword, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save. (12) O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon you.*

*Results of Jehoshaphat's prayer:*

*[2Chronicles 20v14—17] Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. (15) And he said, "Listen you of Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid or dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. (16) Tomorrow go down to them. They will surely come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the wilderness of Jeruel. (17) You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them for the Lord is with you.*

*[2Chronicles 20v22--23] When they began to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. (23) For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of Mount Seir they helped to destroy one another.*

*Dead bodies were lying all over – none of them escaped.*

*Jehoshaphat and his people came to take the spoil of valuables on dead bodies.*

*They stripped off valuables more than they could carry, and it took them three days to collect valuables.*

**King Hezekiah** was facing an enemy bigger than himself:

*[2Kings19v14—16] And Hezekiah received a letter from the hand of the messengers; and he read it. And Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. (15) Then Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, "O Lord, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone of all the kingdoms of the earth, You have made heaven and earth. (16) Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear, open Your eyes, O Lord and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the Living God. (19) Now therefore, O Lord, Our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord God, You alone*

**The result of Hezekiah's prayer:** -- God responded (2Kings19v32—37) God said:

*He shall not come to this city or shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with a shield, nor build a siege mound against it.*

*By the way he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come to this city, says the Lord -- for I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and My servant David's sake.*

*The angel of the Lord killed 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians.*

*Sennacherib departed and returned home and remained in Nineveh.*

*As Sennacherib was worshipping his God -- his two sons struck him down with a sword and they escaped to the land of Ararat.*

**Daniel's life was threatened:**

*[Daniel 6v10—12] Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. (11) Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.*

*Now deep down in Daniel's heart, when he opened his windows toward Jerusalem, -- he was kneeling at the place that God had chosen and sanctified (2 Chronicles7v15—16), Remember that Daniel was in exile in Babylon. God had promised that His ear would be attentive to prayer made in this place.*

*As Daniel was in the lion's den, King Darius went to his palace and fasted the whole night.*

*He rose early in the morning and went to check on Daniel.*

*God had sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions and Daniel was saved.*

*King Darius was exceedingly glad for Daniel and ordered that he be taken out of the den of lions and no injury was found on Daniel.*

*Daniel's accusers with their wives and children were thrown into the lion's den and were eaten up.*

*King Darius wrote that all men in his kingdom must tremble before the God of Daniel.*

*When the body in the city comes together—Jesus comes to lay His head to complete Himself. The city receives a lot of benefits that you might not even realize. But let us believe God together.*

*As we look forward to the New Year, we hope the City church meetings will resume. It is imperative that we take these gatherings very serious and be part of what God is doing. As Agape let us make sure we never miss out. Let us endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. God*

*promised that, He will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valley. He promised to make the wilderness a pool of water (Isaiah 41:18). One such river He has opened in Phoenix and its tributaries are mushrooming all over the globe. For now, this is what we have, and let us take full advantage of it.*

*I urge you family, to honour these meetings. This is not like any other meeting you have attended. Put everything aside and be there. See everything else as less important. Prepare a special seed, just for this meeting. Know that an empty altar will not yield results. Go to the meeting with a special prayer in your heart – you are sure of answered prayer when you pray at this particular location. Some of us are facing very serious challenges that desperately need God’s intervention. Also make it a habit that when you reach home from the meeting—you summarize it by partaking of the covenant meal (the Lord’s Table). In the spirit realm, this is where we meet the rest of the body of Christ in the whole universe – remember, **we are one.***

*Our prophetic declaration reads:*

***Oneness is the only key designed to open***

***Only in the temple will I find a joint to supply***

***As He comes to lay His head, He lays His hand on all***

***And instantaneous healings manifest.***

*Do read and declare this declaration aloud as often as possible. Remember that a spoken word will never lose character until it performs. This was given to us Family of Agape for a reason. Let us own it and believe that God will perform it in its time.*

*In the Book of Joshua chapter 10 – the expression, “**Joshua and all Israel with him**,” is mentioned seven times – and seven is a number of divine perfection. This means that the Nation of Israel worked in one accord with their sleader. If we Agape can do that, we will be sure to reach our God-ordained destiny together. s*