

Go To Church On Eagle Wings

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The Lord's people today are frequently a scattered little flock with many individuals and families no longer able to find a church where the gospel is faithfully preached. Local congregations meeting publicly in a building with a dedicated, salaried pastor who preaches the true gospel of sovereign grace and particular redemption are few and far between. If a church does not preach the gospel according to the scriptures it does not form part of the true church of Jesus Christ and the message of scripture to true believers is to come out from them and remain separate.

Where does that leave true disciples who are unable to find a physical church congregation they can join? This is a question that vexes many isolated believers today. In Revelation 12 we are given a vision of the true church of God in this world of Satan's kingdom with its religious harlotry. The church is the woman (Revelation 12:1) who brings forth a Child which is Jesus Christ, the promised Seed of the Woman (Genesis 3:15) and though Satan strives to devour Him, Christ accomplishes His mission of redemption for His church from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). Having fulfilled His work the Saviour returns to heavenly glory leaving the woman (the church) in the world (John 17:15), but not without help.

Revelation 12:14 tells us the church is given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place – a place prepared of God (see v. 6), where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time from the face of the serpent. This wilderness is separation from the world, from its beasts (see Revelation 13) and their mark which permits contented integration and interaction with this fallen world. It is the faith of God's elect (Titus 1:1) which is represented by the eagle's wings; faith which sees the truth of God and the falsehood of Satan's kingdom. The false religion of which Christ warned his disciples (Matthew 24:23) is part of this world from which the true sheep of God are separated. So how is the woman to be spiritually nourished in her wilderness separation?

By the constant provision of gospel preaching. It is my belief that the internet was developed in the purpose and providence of God for this very period in which we live. There has never been easier access to Christ-exalting preaching than there is today. Some faithful gospel churches live-stream their services on Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings with the recordings available to watch at any time. It may not be the same as being a member of a congregation interacting socially as was the experience of most believers in times gone past, but we cannot deny that God has

faithfully kept his promise of feeding His church in the wilderness that is worldly religion.

What about that missing face-to-face fellowship? Use email, social media, and audio and video messaging to keep in touch and interact with true brothers and sisters, they, too, are God's scattered sheep. We can still talk face-to-face though separated by great distances. Too shy? Me too. Let's get over it! What about our children? Do not compromise your children's spiritual wellbeing by introducing them to false religion for the sake of company! If this is genuinely an issue then find ways to meet other believing families for social activities independently. What about communion? Even remotely sharing communion is possible if we have a love for the gospel.

Is this a time to despair and look for ways to return the church to the 'good old days'? Not a bit of it. This is a time to acknowledge gladly how the Lord is working out His purposes of grace exactly as He has revealed and promised. Surely, the time of His return is at hand. Let His people be ready; watching, waiting, with Holy Spirit oil in our lamps. Let our passion be for faithful preaching and genuine gospel fellowship with likeminded believers, and let time and distance be no hurdle.

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