

# AFTER CONFINEMENT COMES RELEASE!!!

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Some of us may remember that as children the last day of school each year was often the happiest day of the year. The calendar, with the days carefully crossed out one by one, was our countdown to freedom until the day of release finally came where no more "X's" were necessary. School was out! The nine month lockdown in the class room had come to an end and the holidays and days of freedom had arrived.

The past year 2020 - the year of Covid brought immeasurable misery around the world - not only to those who became sick or lost loved ones, but to many isolated, unable to work or to meet with friends. Much of the misery was unavoidable, but some of it could perhaps have been alleviated by different government strategies. Either way it has been a trying time for many people. But now, we believe, a year of release - 2021 is upon us.

When something we are familiar with is taken from us we appreciate it all the more - absence makes the heart grow fonder. When we are not able to meet with friends we realize in a new way our need for one another - our need to be able to show and receive love through friendly words, gestures, and helpful acts.

Though the subject of the God of the Bible has become taboo in the public discourse of the news and entertainment industries, the hunger in the heart of all people for God can never be repressed, suppressed, sidelined or driven away. The word of God tells us that He has put eternity in our hearts and it cannot be removed by atheistic, secular propaganda. (Ecclesiastes 3.10-12)

When we cannot get together to sing songs of praise, to study the word of God and to gather around the presence of God, Our Father, and Jesus, our Good Shepherd, we realize all the more how central to life these things are.

After the past year of confinement we are expecting to experience a major release that will cause people to seek out God's presence, His ways and the fellowship and friendship of other believers.

As we move into this year of release there are ways to prepare for it. First of all we need to keep our forgiveness up to date by receiving God's forgiveness, through the blood of Jesus, of all past sins and mistakes and forgiving others for anything wrong they have done to us. This will restore the joy of our salvation and realign us with the life of praise and thanksgiving to which we are called.

Another way to prepare for the coming season of release is to **DELIBERATELY** embrace our new identity in Christ and to give ourselves entirely to His plans and purpose. This is the freedom for which Christ has made us free - freedom from guilt, freedom from sin, freedom from the past, freedom from self and selfishness and freedom from the agendas of the world. This is what makes us the ek-klesia - the company of the called out ones.

We can also prepare for the time of release by praying for the advance of God's kingdom in our neighborhoods, cities, nations and on the nation of Israel and for the outpouring of the Spirit on 'all flesh' - that the world may be convicted supernaturally of its need for God and turn to Him, and to receive what Jesus won for each one on His Cross.

2021 is a gift from God to us. Let us use it wisely as He directs. If we give ourselves **CONSCIOUSLY** and **COMPLETELY** to live for Him, we will experience a liberation from the blindness of this world and be equipped to be a glorious team bringing the light of salvation, hope and meaning to a world that has lost its way.

*"One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3.13-14)*