

THE STEPS OF  
*S*alvation

The ministry of the New Covenant

PART 7

VICTOR HALL

with Peter Hay & David Baker

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September 2019

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# Preface

The New Testament was written by the apostles from the basis of their testimony. They were able to minister the message of the New Covenant because it was effective in their lives. The apostle Paul was particularly candid in this regard. For example, he explained the principle of the flesh by testifying to its operation within *himself*. He said, 'But I see another law in *my* members, warring against the law of *my* mind, and bringing *me* into captivity to the law of sin which is in *my* members. *O wretched man that I am!* Who will deliver me from this body of death?' Rom 7:23-24. Paul was not being rhetorical; he was saying that when he lived by the other law, he was in a wretched condition. He needed to be delivered from this way of living.

Paul then joyfully declared that he had found deliverance from captivity to the law of sin and death by walking according to the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, sin in his flesh was being killed. Rom 8:1-4. Paul further testified that walking in the Spirit involved treating his own righteousness - his religious heritage, theological training, and self-defined works - as excrement! Php 3:8. His focus was to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings,

being conformed to His death, in order to obtain resurrection life, or *exanastasis*, in his mortal body. Php 3:10-11.

Summarising the way in which he lived as a Christian, Paul said, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Gal 2:20. To be crucified with Christ meant that the sufferings that Paul experienced in life were no longer the sufferings of his own death as part of fallen humanity. Mankind's death, in Adam, is because of sin. Rom 6:23. It is a judgement that cuts us off from *life*.

Paul had been illuminated to see that Christ, through His offering as the Son of Man, had gathered the mortality of fallen humanity, with all of its suffering, sin, and other law, into Himself. By the grace of God, *Jesus made it all His death*. Heb 2:9. As He journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary, Jesus suffered and satisfied both the judgement and the provision of mercy that are the righteous requirements demanded by the Law. He came back from the death of our sin by the life of God that was in His blood. Heb 13:20. Moreover, He made this life available to become the life of the world. Let us consider this further.

In the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim's* own covenant, before the creation of the heavens and the earth, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit agreed together to create and to bring to glory a great multitude of sons who would be in Their image and likeness. Gen 1:26. This was Their Everlasting Covenant. The word of the Everlasting Covenant, which was motivated by Their fervent love, was spoken from the fellowship of Yahweh, by faith. This word established the one faith of God for the Everlasting Covenant. Eph 4:5. By this faith, each Person, according to Their name, laid down His life to reveal the other Two. Consequently, Their life, in all of its diversity, was multiplied to be expressed as 'Eternal Spirit'. Eternal Spirit is the capacity of Yahweh to implement Their Everlasting Covenant. It is the expression of the Everlasting Covenant in all of its *diversity*. Paul described this expression as 'the *manifold* [meaning, many and varied] wisdom of God'. Eph 3:10.

Within the fellowship of the Everlasting Covenant, Yahweh Son's expression of Their one faith was to empty Himself, by Eternal Spirit, to an endpoint, or death. He did this so that He could become the beginning of a new creation by being begotten as Yahweh Father's Son. The Father, by Eternal Spirit, declared, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' Heb 1:5. In the word of this command from the Father, the Son received

the faith of God the Father to be born as the Father's Son. He then proceeded, by faith, to be born of God the Father as His Son, and to become the Seed and source of new creation. The life that the Son of God had received from the Father through birth was *resurrection life*. As the Father's Son and Seed, the life and names of all whom the Father would bring to birth, as He had promised in the Everlasting Covenant, were in the Son.

The offerings of the Father and the Son were possible because of the offering of the Holy Spirit, by Eternal Spirit. By offering, the Holy Spirit revealed the Father and the Son by empowering and sanctifying Their unique offerings. Through His offering, by Eternal Spirit, Yahweh Father and Yahweh Son were enabled to offer Themselves by the capacity of Eternal Spirit. He separated the end (the Father's initiative) from the beginning (the Son's initiative) by establishing time and space as the context in which the Everlasting Covenant would come to pass through an immutable, or ordered, process. This revealed the Holy Spirit's expression of faith.

The Son of God then became flesh when He was born of Mary as the Son of Man. The resurrection life that was given to Him by the Father was now in His blood as a man. His blood was 'precious' because it contained the life of God. 1Pe 1:19. As Christ, by Eternal Spirit, offered Himself from Gethsemane to Calvary, this life was multiplied and then given to be our life when His blood was shed and sprinkled on His body as a mercy seat. Lev 17:11. Heb 9:14. Rom 3:25. Further to this, as His blood was shed, the resurrection life of God the Father that was in the blood of Jesus was bringing Him back from the death of our sin. Heb 13:20. Paul called this '*exanastasis*'. Php 3:11.

Paul, the apostle, testified that he was born again when the Father sent the Spirit of the Son into his heart. Gal 4:6. The Son joined Paul to His offering and sufferings. In the season of Paul's conversion, Jesus also made it clear to him that he had to be joined, through baptism, to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Paul would only be able to inherit eternal life in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Baptism was Paul's response of faith because of Christ's initiative toward him. Through new birth and fellowship in the offering of Christ, Paul was made alive and was delivered from the death of sin, with Christ. He now lived because the Spirit of Christ had come into his spirit to become his life. Christ gave the capacity of His life to Paul's natural spirit, giving new expression and meaning to his life and identity. Paul was no longer a

natural man; he was born again as a son of God. He had become spiritual. This is what Paul meant when He said, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.' Gal 2:20.

The life that Paul then lived as a son of God, *he lived by the faith of the Son of God* who lived within him as the capacity and expression of his life. Gal 2:20. Paul received the faith of the Son of God by hearing the word of the Father through the ministry of Christ. Rom 10:17. This was the same faith that the Son had received from the Father when the Father said to Him, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' Heb 1:5. The faith of the Son, that had become Paul's faith, then motivated him to reveal the Father and the Son, by the Spirit, through his obedience as a son of God in Christ. He no longer lived by his own faith.

Paul's own faith had been limited by his natural capacity to believe and understand God's word. Although Paul was a well-recognised and devout scholar of the Scriptures, his faith brought him no understanding or sight concerning God or His covenant purpose. Act 22:3. Paul thought he was enlightened and believed that he was doing God a service by persecuting Christians. Php 3:6. However, when the Lord met him on the road to Damascus, Christ, the light of life, revealed to Paul that he had in fact been persecuting Jesus, and was an enemy of God! Act 9:3-5. Rom 8:7. In a moment, Paul was able to see just how great was the darkness of his own way. Mat 6:23. All of Paul's good works were dead works. They had no enduring value. Paul was under condemnation as part of the old creation that had been reserved for destruction. 2Pe 3:7.

Once Paul received the faith of the Son of God, he no longer lived from the basis of his own understanding and self-righteous motivations. By the faith of the Son of God, he, for the rest of his life, presented himself each day for fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Php 3:10-11. In this fellowship, his sin and other law were being put to death, and his heart was being sprinkled clean from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus. Heb 9:14. Importantly, Christ's life was being multiplied and given to Paul to be his life. By this means, Paul was passing from death to life! 1Jn 3:14. He was no longer living according to the principles of an old creation. He was a new creation in Christ. 2Co 5:17.

Having shared his testimony with us in his letters, Paul encouraged us to imitate him and to walk in the same manner that he did. 1Co 11:1. We find, as Paul found, that when we struggle with temptation and sin, we are not being cut off from God and losing His life. Rom 8:9-10. This is a great comfort to us. We can believe, with the faith of Christ who dwells

within us, that we are dying to sin and that, as God's sons, we are living to Him. Rom 6:10-11. As we approach our sufferings in this way, the resurrecting life that is in Christ Jesus will give life and strength to us, giving us victory over sin. Rom 8:2. It is important that we pray in the Holy Spirit in times of difficulty, because it is the Holy Spirit who is our Helper and who leads us away from temptation. Joh 15:26. Joh 16:13.

## Walking in the kingdom of light

All of the apostles ministered the New Covenant by the Spirit through testimony. Like Paul, they had been delivered from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son. Col 1:13. The light of their sonship from the Father had been shone into their hearts from the face of Christ through the ministry of the Spirit. 2Co 4:6. They were born as 'children of light' who, by the Spirit, were joined in fellowship with the Lord and with their brethren in Christ. Joh 12:36. Eph 5:8. They lived in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as members of His body. Paul, and the apostle John, described this fellowship as 'walking in the light'. Eph 5:8. 1Jn 1:7. As they walked this way, they were being delivered from the darkness of their own fallen and fleshly ways of living, and were living by the life and faith of the Son of God.

The apostles were ministers of the New Covenant. The word of the New Covenant proceeded *from* their fellowship, which was a fellowship of 'one Spirit' with the Lord and with each other. 1Co 6:17. 1Co 12:13. Through the ministry of the apostle Paul, the fellowship of the apostles and the elders became known as a 'presbytery'. 1Ti 4:14. The church now receives the word of the New Covenant as 'present truth' through the ascension-gift graces of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers whom Christ has given to equip everyone for the work of their ministry as members of the body of Christ. Eph 4:11-12. 2Pe 1:12. The early church, with its presbyteries, heard the word of the Father, received illumination, responded in repentance and faith, and rightly divided the word of truth that was contained in the Scriptures. 1Jn 1:1. This was the mode of their fellowship and life together.

The New Testament Scriptures are a record of this culture of testimony and discussion. John said that they wrote and proclaimed this testimony so that their hearers could be joined to their fellowship discussion, which was with the Father and the Son. 1Jn 1:3. Their hearers then had the same testimony of faith for new creation life that they had received.

In this present season, the Lord is calling us to join the fellowship that John described in his first epistle. 1Jn 1:1-3. Restoration to this fellowship is not possible without repentance from other 'gospels' and fleshly modes of ministry. There must also be a practical commitment to walk in first love with our brethren. Rev 2:4-5.

As we respond to the initiative of the Spirit, the testimony of the New Testament writers becomes our testimony. Through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, those whom He is calling to be presbyters are being restored to Christ's hand as ministers of the New Covenant. Through the ministry of *their testimony*, all who hear them are being called to join the same fellowship discussion, and to have the same testimony of illumination that they have received. As each of us responds to this ministry of the Spirit, we also are enabled to minister the light of life to others as part of a lampstand church. Mat 5:14-16.

### The ministry of the Spirit

The kingdom of God is the fellowship of Christ that we join by hearing, receiving and walking in the word of the Father. Jesus said that, in order to enter the kingdom of God, we must be born of water and of the Spirit. Joh 3:5. The water that Jesus spoke of is the *substance of the Father's word*. This substance is our sonship. The Father's word proclaims our name and works as sons of God, in Christ. The Holy Spirit broods over the water of the word of our sonship that we have received, in the same way that He brooded over the waters of the earth when it was without form and void. Gen 1:1-2. Just as the Spirit caused the land to rise up out of the water, the substance of the word of our sonship is formed in our lives as we are anointed with the Spirit and walk in the way in which He leads us. Joh 16:13.

For this reason, it is important that we give heed to Paul's exhortation. He said, 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also *walk in the Spirit*. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.' Gal 5:25-26. Paul was saying that we must continue to live and walk in the Spirit and not turn again to former, fleshly ways of living. 1Pe 1:13-15. In particular, we must not let the theologies and commentaries of Bible scholars be the basis of the truth that we believe and walk in as Christians. The doctrines founded on the musings of these historical figures have, for many, become nothing more than vain traditions and religious philosophies. Paul warned us in this regard, saying, 'Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty

deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.' Col 2:8.

Our preoccupation must be *only* what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Rev 2:7. The Father, through the Son, is revealing His great salvation to us *through the Spirit*. As Paul explained, 'The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God'. 1Co 2:10. Through the washing of regeneration by the word, and the renewing of our spirit by the Holy Spirit, we have been made spiritual. Tit 3:5. We have received ears to hear, and eyes to see, what the Spirit is teaching us. The Spirit is illuminating us concerning the eternal reward of sonship that God has prepared for those who love Him. 1Co 2:9. Those who love God have been born of His life and joined to His fellowship.

### Continuing steadfast in the faith

The ministry of the Spirit that calls us to be restored to sonship and to the fellowship of first love in the Lord grants to us the faith of the Son of God. Rom 10:16-17. Gal 2:20. Having received His faith, we are able to believe what the Spirit is saying to the church. We are able then to respond in obedience to the word of God as we participate in the offering and sufferings of Christ. 2Co 4:13-14.

Although we have delighted in the illumination that the Lord has graciously ministered to us over many years, and have indeed received faith by hearing God's word, our journey as a church movement has not been without difficulty. Individuals and families have suffered because of the teaching and influence of some whose ministry profile followed the model described by the apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians. Paul described those who ministered this way as 'messengers of Satan', whose goal was only to gain advantage over the church. 2Co 11:13-15.

The sufferings that we have experienced as a consequence of our acquiescence to these fleshly influences have been a death to us. However, they have not robbed us of our faith. This is because we have received the faith of the Son of God. The measure of our faith is not the success or failure that we experience in life as Christians. Faith is the capacity for participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In the times of difficulty that we have experienced as a church movement, the faith of God that we have received by hearing His word has enabled us to testify, with the apostle Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ, *nevertheless I live!*' Gal 2:20. We accept that Christ made these

failings His own, and that He came back from the death of these sufferings by offering. In the fellowship of His offering, we are coming back from the death of our sin with Him and are being established in His life. We are able to bear testimony to the fruit of His life in us.

For this reason, we give thanks to the Lord for His mercy and grace that have been abundant toward us. 2Co 4:15. As those who are spiritual, we must continue to receive and to walk in the light of the word that the Spirit is ministering to us through Christ's messengers. In this regard, our testimony is the same as that of Paul: 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith".' Rom 1:16-17.

# Chapter I

## Illumination

Illumination is the focal point of the gospel. Establishing this point, the apostle John declared, ‘This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light [illumination] and in Him is no darkness at all.’ 1Jn 1:5. John’s statement teaches us that receiving illumination is much more than simply coming to know something that we had not previously seen or understood. Illumination is essential to our new birth and to our maturing as sons of God. Those who are born of God are light in the Lord. Eph 5:8.

### **Four aspects of illumination**

From the Scriptures, we can identify four aspects of illumination that are fundamental to our salvation: (1) the light of life shines in the darkness of our fallen condition; (2) the eyes of our heart are enlightened; (3) we are born and live as children of light; (4) as members of the body of Christ, which is the church, we shine as lights in the world. We have been illuminated when these four aspects of light are the ongoing reality of our lives.

### *Light shines in the darkness*

The first aspect of illumination is the command of God the Father, by which the light of God's life shines out of darkness. 2Co 4:6. This describes illumination coming to a person. Jesus Christ is the light of life. Joh 1:4. He said that He ministered this light by proclaiming the command, or word, of the Father so that those who believed in the light would become sons of light. Joh 12:36. The Father's word declares the sonship of every person, in Christ.

Jesus also said that those who received the *messengers* He sent, received *Him*, and received the *Father* who sent Him. Joh 13:20. In the book of Revelation, Jesus described the messengers He sends as 'seven stars in His right hand'. They minister the light of life, by the Holy Spirit, to those who are in darkness because of their slavery to sin. Jesus explained that a star in His hand is an angel, or messenger (Greek: *aggelos*), of a church. Rev 1:20. The *aggelos* is a lamp presbytery that provides the light for a lampstand church. Their message is the gospel of God that shines as light from the face of Christ into the hearts of those who hear and receive them. 2Co 4:6.

A messenger, from the context of being 'in Christ', is sent from God. They then speak with sincerity in the sight of God. 2Co 2:17. Their work is to diffuse the knowledge of the nature of Christ into the hearts of their hearers, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit whom the Father has poured out upon them. 2Co 2:14. This anointing is the fragrance of Christ Himself. 2Co 2:15. The messengers who are in Christ are able, by this anointing, to reveal the Spirit of Christ and to write the knowledge of His presence upon the hearts of their hearers. 2Co 3:2-3.

### *The eyes of our heart enlightened*

The second aspect of illumination involves the healing of our spiritual sight so that we are able to receive the light of life that is ministered by Christ's messengers. From the book of Proverbs, we learn that the spirit of a man is the lamp of the body. Pro 20:27. Jesus taught that the lamp of the body, which is their spirit, is the eye. Luk 11:34. Evidently, the capacity of a person to distinguish between light and darkness is in their spirit, which is their identity. Jesus then said that the condition of a person's eye, or spirit, affects whether they are able to receive the rays of light that shine from a lamp. He was specifically referring to the light of life that shines from a lamp presbytery. Luk 11:36.

Jesus said that an eye, or spirit, that is healthy is able to receive the light of the proceeding word. Consequently, this person will be full of light. However, if a person's spirit is degenerate, or evil, their whole being will continue to be in darkness. Luk 11:34.

'Darkness' is the fallen human condition. When mankind fell from fellowship with Yahweh, they were alienated from the life of God. Eph 4:17. Not only were they physically dying but, also, their spirit was degenerating. This resulted in the blindness of the hearts of men. That is, they were unable to see the things of the Spirit. 1Co 2:9-12. Consequently, their understanding of God and His plan for them was darkened. Eph 4:18.

When the gospel is ministered by those whom the Father has anointed as messengers of Christ, a spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon their hearers. God's grace enables them to look into Christ's face and to hear His voice. By the work of the Holy Spirit, the word of the Father that they receive from Christ is able to regenerate their identity so that the eye of their body is made healthy. Tit 3:5. Paul described regeneration as the work of the Father to strengthen a person in the inner man, or spirit, so that Christ, who is the light of life, may dwell in their heart by faith. Eph 3:14-17.

A believer whose sight is being healed through the regeneration of their spirit is able to receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it shines from the face of Christ. 2Co 4:6. The apostle Peter said that, through this knowledge, the divine power of the Father gives to us everything that pertains to life and godliness. 2Pe 1:3. This includes the recovery of our sight through regeneration, as well as the faith of God to believe and obey the Father's word concerning our sonship. Peter then said that we receive everything that pertains to life and godliness from the Father so that we might escape the corruption of this world and be partakers of the divine nature. 2Pe 1:4. By this, Peter meant that we would abide in Christ, and His life would become our life.

### *Children of light*

The third aspect of illumination is to be born of the light and to live as children of light. Joh 12:36. 1Th 5:5. Eph 5:8. This happens when Christ, who is the light of life, dwells in our hearts by faith. Once we have been born of God and have come into Christ through baptism, we are to live by the faith of the Son of God. Gal 2:20. His faith is given to us 'from faith to faith' as we continue to receive the light of the gospel that is ministered

by Christ's messengers at the communion gathering. Rom 1:17. Rom 10:17. By this faith, Jesus offered Himself for our sake. Gal 2:20. Having received this same faith, we are to live and walk each day in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, Christ's life is multiplied and given to us to become our life. The apostle Peter described this aspect of illumination as the morning star rising in our heart. 2Pe 1:19.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul taught that when Christ dwells in a person's heart by faith, they enter the kingdom of God and are rooted and grounded in love. Eph 3:17. As the Scripture states, 'He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.' 1Jn 4:16. God becomes their dwelling place; God Himself is their kingdom. They are able then to participate in the fellowship of offering with the Lord and with their brethren in Christ. Offering is the expression of the love of God and demonstrates that a hearer has received illumination. They are able to comprehend and apprehend the love of God, and are, therefore, being filled with the fullness of God, who is love and light. Eph 3:17-19. 1Jn 4:16. 1Jn 1:5.

Later in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul said, 'You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.' Eph 5:8. What an amazing statement - *you are light in the Lord!* This is true illumination. We become the light as we continue to receive the light of the Father's word, which is shone into our heart from Christ's face, through the preaching of His messengers. This light is the word of truth from the Father, concerning our sonship. To become the light is to mature as a son of God, and to fulfil the works that the Father prepared for us in Christ.

Paul exhorted those who had received this illumination to 'walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord'. Eph 5:8-10. Those who walk in the light of the illumination that they have received will have fellowship with others in the body of Christ. 1Jn 1:7. In particular, they will remain connected to those who have been called by Christ to minister His word to them. 1Jn 1:3.

A hearer is only able to comprehend the word of truth in the fellowship of offering. Our understanding of the truth does not begin with the capacity of our mind for rational thought. In fact, Paul said that the love of God passes knowledge. Eph 3:19. When we present ourselves as living sacrifices in the fellowship of Christ's offering, we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Rom 12:1-2. We are enabled to think and see

differently from the way that a person who remains in the flesh thinks and sees. 1Co 2:9. True understanding is to know Christ and to be in Christ. John concluded his first epistle with this tremendous point. He wrote, 'And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.' 1Jn 5:20.

Curiously, the final statement of John's letter was, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.' 1Jn 5:21. Having declared such a wonderful message, why did John end his letter in this way? The prophet Jeremiah said that 'a wooden idol is a worthless doctrine'. Jer 10:8. With this in mind, John was warning those who are born of God to remain faithful to the illumination that they are receiving through the ministry of Christ's messengers. Inherent in John's warning is the reality that a person can turn away from the light and return to living in the darkness of their own way. This happens when repentance is no longer a foundation in a Christian's life. Heb 6:1.

Repentance means turning to the Lord. A person ceases from turning to the Lord when they no longer recognise, nor accept, the need to receive the light of life from Christ as it is ministered by the Holy Spirit through the presbytery. Accompanying this reticence to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God is their withdrawal from the fellowship of offering in the body of Christ. Instead, they entertain other gospels, including their own perspectives on what it means to be a Christian. These ways of viewing, or approaching, life foster the pursuit of their fleshly desires. For some, this will be their own self-righteous works. For others, it will be power and control over others. For many, it will be the pursuit of pleasures and a comfortable life. A person who does this chooses the darkness of their own fleshly perspective over the light of life that Christ ministers to them. They are deceived, believing that their darkened perspective is the light. Mat 6:23.

Mercifully, when an individual turns to the Lord in repentance, the veil of the flesh is taken away from the eyes of their heart. They are able to look into the face of Christ and receive the light of the word into their heart. 2Co 3:16.

### *You are the light of the world*

The fourth aspect of illumination is that we are to be the light of the world. On this point, Jesus said, 'You are the light of the world. A city

that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.' Mat 5:14-16.

A person who has become a light in the Lord, and who walks in the light of fellowship with their brethren in Christ, is part of a lampstand church. They are able to express, or minister, this light to others through their conversation and conduct in the contexts of life in which the Father has placed them. These contexts may include, for example, their extended families, their neighbourhoods, their schools, their work places. They are messengers who have been sent to proclaim the gospel in the world.

### **I AM is the Light of the world**

The Lord ministers the light of the gospel of sonship to us as 'I AM'. We first observe this principle in His interaction with Moses at the burning bush. Moses was tending a flock of sheep in the wilderness when the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. When Moses turned to see the great light of the burning bush, God called him and spoke to him concerning the works that He had prepared for Moses to do as His messenger. Exo 3:1-12.

In response to Moses' desire to know who was speaking to him, God introduced Himself to Moses, saying, 'I AM WHO I AM.' Exo 3:14. The Lord then said that the *beginning point of the message* that Moses was to minister to the children of Israel was, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Exo 3:14. Moses was then to say, 'The Lord [Yahweh] God [*Elohim*] of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.' Exo 3:15.

By revealing Himself first as I AM, God was inviting the children of Israel to join His covenant fellowship, which is revealed by His name, Yahweh *Elohim*. Yahweh said that if the Israelites believed and obeyed His word, spoken through Moses, He would deliver them from their captivity to the Egyptians, and would bring them into the land of their inheritance, which He had promised to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Exo 3:7-8. This message was the light of the gospel that I AM proclaimed to them. Paul noted that the word did not profit the children of Israel because it was not mixed with faith in those who heard it. Instead, they departed from the living God because of their *unbelief*. Heb 4:2. Heb 3:12.

Why does God reveal Himself as I AM? It is because, as I AM, He is able to meet us and to be met by us. Without this initiative of Yahweh to make Himself known to us by revelation, it is impossible for man, who is created and mortal, to know and understand who God is. When we receive Him as I AM, we are able to perceive and receive all that He is as Yahweh. Eph 3:19. Furthermore, we are able to participate in Their fellowship. God is light, and He revealed Himself to Moses as I AM from the burning bush. To participate in Their fellowship is to join the fire of offering. This is the way of life for those who 'abide in the light'. 1Jn 2:10.

Jesus Christ is I AM. The apostle Paul said that it pleased the Father for all the fullness of the Godhead to dwell bodily in Christ. Col 1:19. This was the outcome of the offering of Yahweh, and happened when the Father said to the Son, 'You are My Son, *today* I have begotten You.' Heb 1:5. Jesus Himself testified that He is I AM, saying, 'I AM the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.' Rev 1:8. From His testimony, we recognise that Jesus was not I AM only after His resurrection; He was I AM as He ministered on earth and offered Himself on the cross.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus declared, '*I AM the light of the world.* He who follows Me shall *not walk in darkness*, but *have the light of life.*' Joh 8:12. As I AM, and the Light of the world, the Son had come to reveal the Father to all who would receive His words. This is because, by receiving the light of life from the Father, through the gospel that Christ proclaimed, they would be born as sons of God in Christ. Having become 'sons of light', they would no longer live and walk in darkness. Joh 12:36. Joh 12:44-46.

The key to obtaining illumination is to hear, receive, and believe the words that Christ speaks through His messengers. Joh 12:47-48. Having established that He had come as a light into the world, Jesus said, 'For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.' Joh 12:49-50.

God the Son was begotten as the Son of God by the command of the Father - 'You are My Son, *today* I have begotten You'. Heb 1:5. The Father births us by the same command of the Father when we receive His word as it is ministered by messengers of Christ who have been anointed with the Holy Spirit. This is why it is the Holy Spirit who says, '*Today*, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.'

Heb 3:7-8. Receiving the command of the Father through the word of His messengers is the means by which we obtain eternal life. Joh 12:50.

### **Anointed to bring illumination**

At the commencement of His earthly ministry, Jesus testified of His work as the Messenger of the covenant. Mal 3:1. Reading from the prophetic Scriptures, He announced, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to *the poor*; He has sent Me to heal the *brokenhearted*, to proclaim liberty to *the captives* and recovery of *sight to the blind*, to set at liberty those who are *oppressed*; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Luk 4:18-19.

Christ was anointed to minister the word of the Father to those who are *poor in spirit*. He explained to His disciples that those who receive this ministry are recipients of a blessing, saying, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Mat 5:3. The blessing of illumination that the poor in spirit receive includes the healing and regeneration of their sin-sick spirit; their deliverance from the kingdom of darkness; their release from their captivity to sin and death; and the healing of their spiritual sight, so that they can continue to receive the light of life. By this means, they are able to walk in the light and to share with others what they have received.

The focal point of Christ's work as the Messenger was 'to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord'. Luk 4:19. 'The acceptable year of the Lord' refers to the three and a half year ministry of Christ, including His journey from the first communion service until He was raised from the dead to immortality, and seated on His throne at God the Father's right hand. Within this timeframe, Christ, through His ministry and offering work, established God's New Covenant initiative by which many sons of God would be born again and brought to glory. The implication of Christ's statement is that the blessings of the New Covenant begin with illumination, which is given to those who believe in Christ. By receiving the faith that He supplies, they are joined to the fellowship of His offering. Gal 2:20. Rom 10:17.

A person who is born from above, and abides in the light, will exhibit the fruit of illumination. Jesus identified this fruit as the blessings outlined in the Beatitudes. Mat 5:3-12. As we live and walk in the light, we are being changed and made more glorious in our expression as sons of God. 2Co 3:18. Through our ongoing fellowship in the offering of Christ, our spirit is being regenerated, and we are able to put off the deeds of the

flesh. Christ's life is becoming our life. The darkness of our own way is passing away, and the light of Christ's life is growing increasingly bright within us. 1Jn 2:8. Pro 4:18.

## The lordship of Christ

Jesus said, 'If you do not *believe* that I AM, you will die in your sins.' Joh 8:24. Believing that Christ is I AM is the beginning point of receiving illumination and being delivered from captivity to sin and death. Jesus made this statement after an interaction that He had with a woman who had been caught in the sin of adultery. Joh 8:3-4. The scribes and Pharisees had brought the woman to Jesus in order to test Him so that they might have something of which to accuse Him. Under the Old Covenant, the penalty for adultery was death by stoning. Lev 20:10. Joh 8:5. However, Jesus said to the woman's accusers, 'He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.' Joh 8:7. Convicted by their own conscience, every man went out from His presence.

When they were alone, Jesus said to the woman, 'Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no-one condemned you?' Joh 8:10. The woman replied, 'No-one, *Lord.*' Joh 8:11. As Jesus spoke to her, she received the capacity to see and to acknowledge His lordship. The confession of Christ's lordship is the first evidence that a person has begun to receive illumination. Jesus then said to the woman, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.' Joh 8:11. The woman was delivered from her sin and given an opportunity to walk in a different way. Having received faith from Christ when He spoke to her and said, 'Go and sin no more', she was able to walk in the light of His word.

## Paul received illumination

The apostle Paul had a similar experience when He met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. As Paul neared Damascus, a light from heaven shone around him, and Jesus spoke to him, saying, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' Act 9:3-4. The effect of the spirit of grace upon Paul was that He was able to recognise the Lord whom he was persecuting. As the light began to shine, and as he heard Christ speak to him, Paul received illumination and was able to acknowledge the lordship of Christ. He said to Jesus, '*Who are you Lord?*' Act 9:5.

Although Paul had confessed Christ as Lord, he was still in darkness. He was not born from above through this interaction. Rather, he had looked upon Him whom he had pierced and had begun to mourn alone. The

Scripture recorded that when Paul arose from the ground, he opened his eyes and *saw no-one*. For three days he was without sight, during which time he neither ate nor drank. Act 9:8-9. Under the influence of a spirit of supplication, Paul was praying and mourning. Act 9:11.

Psalm 107 aptly describes Paul's predicament and his response to the light of the gospel as it broke in upon him. 'Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted. Their soul abhorred all manner of food, and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.' Psa 107:17-20.

Paul's first illumination was that the Lord was going to send to him a messenger named Ananias. The Lord said to Paul that Ananias would lay his hands on him so that he might receive his sight. Act 9:12. Christ's messenger would tell Paul what he must do, and his salvation depended on his obedience to this word.

Jesus sent His messenger, Ananias, to lay hands on Paul so that he would receive his sight. Act 9:12. This was much more than simply restoring Paul's physical ability to see. Christ spoke to Ananias about Paul's sonship, saying, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.' Act 9:15-16. The message of Paul's sonship was written by the Father on the heart of Ananias, as an epistle of Christ, which he was then to deliver to Paul. 2Co 3:2. The Lord had laid this charge on Ananias, and he needed to put off the misgivings that he had about Paul, his history, and his intentions, in order to deliver the message that Christ had sent him with. Act 9:13-14.

Ananias entered the house where Paul was staying, and laid his hands on him. The laying on of hands signified the initiative of Christ's messenger to connect Paul, his hearer, to the fellowship of the Father and the Son through the message that he had been sent to minister. 1Jn 1:1-3. Clearly, Ananias' message to Paul was not merely better theological information for Paul to consider. He was ministering to Paul the word from the beginning. Christ, the Seed, is the word from the beginning, in whom Paul's name as a son of God was written.

To this end, Ananias said to Paul, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may

receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ Act 9:17. Ananias, as a messenger of God, sent by Christ, was shining the light of the glory of God from the face of Christ to Paul. As Paul turned to the Lord by receiving Ananias and his message, there immediately fell from his eyes something like scales. Act 9:18.

These ‘scales’ symbolised an impediment to Paul’s spiritual sight. We can liken them to a veil over the eyes of his heart that inhibited his ability to receive the light of life that was shining upon him from the face of Christ through the ministry of a messenger. Paul was turning from his theological training, cultural heritage and religious zeal, which not only caused him to walk in darkness, but also made him an enemy of the cross and of God.

As this veil was removed from the eyes of his heart, he was able to receive the light of life into his heart. Christ, the Seed of the Father, entered his heart, birthing him as a son of God. 1Pe 1:23. He was then baptised with the Holy Spirit, and joined to the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings through baptism. Act 9:17-18. This is what it meant for Paul to ‘receive his sight’. He had received *illumination*, and this illumination transformed his life! The illumination that he had received became a light that was in him and in which he would now walk. For Paul, illumination was more than receiving true knowledge and understanding; it was a fellowship in the light. He called this light ‘knowing Christ, the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, through which the light of life, *exanastasis*, was becoming his’. Php 3:10-11.

### The daystar arising in our heart

The apostle Peter summarised the ministry of the New Covenant as ‘making known the *power* and *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ’. 2Pe 1:16. Through the testimony of the apostle Paul, we learn that the *power of Christ* is the grace of God that a believer receives from the Father in the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings. Jesus said to Paul, ‘My *grace* is sufficient for you, for My *strength* is made perfect in *weakness*.’ 2Co 12:9. Jesus was referring to the weakness that Paul experienced as the Jews, energised by Satan, persecuted him in every place where he proclaimed the gospel. Paul described this suffering as a thorn in his flesh. 2Co 12:7. The suffering caused by this thorn was Paul’s participation in the sufferings of Christ. Php 3:10.

Paul explained that ‘grace’ was the strength and power of the Lord that was given to him in the fellowship of these sufferings. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul described this grace as being *resurrection life in his mortal body*. Php 3:11. The fellowship of Christ’s sufferings was the context in which this grace, or resurrection life, was becoming his life. For this reason, Paul said, ‘Most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.’ 2Co 12:9.

When Yahweh the Son emptied Himself to the Father, and was begotten as the Son of God by the word of the Father, the Father granted the Son to have life in Himself. Php 2:6-7. Heb 1:5. Joh 5:26. Referring to this life, John said that Jesus was full of the grace of God. Joh 1:14. This resurrection life was multiplied and given to become the life of every son of God when Christ’s blood was shed. Lev 17:11. When Christ dwells in a person’s heart by faith, the life of God in the Son is given to them as they fellowship with Christ in His offering and sufferings. This fellowship of offering becomes a pathway that leads to life. It is the means by which the Lord Jesus Christ comes to us, and this is what His messengers are declaring. Mat 7:14. 2Pe 1:16. Jesus is coming in, and with, a great cloud of witnesses, who are His messengers. They are all journeying on the pathway of offering that He pioneered. Rev 1:7. Heb 5:8-10. Heb 12:1-2.

Peter testified that he and his fellow messengers did not minister this word of the New Covenant through cunningly devised fables. 2Pe 1:16. By this, he meant that the basis of their ministry was not theological expertise, nor the craft of the sermon, nor commentary on the Scriptures; neither were they espousing helpful principles for achieving a successful life. Rather, the apostles were eyewitnesses of Christ’s majesty. 2Pe 1:16.

Explaining what it meant to be eyewitnesses of Christ’s majesty, Peter wrote, ‘For He [Christ] received from God the Father honour and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.’ 2Pe 1:17-18. Christ’s majesty as King was for Him to be the Son whom the Father declared Him to be. By the word of the Father, Yahweh Son was brought forth and declared to be the Son of God with power. Heb 1:5. Rom 1:4. In this way, His kingship was established. Furthermore, having laid down His intrinsic capacity for priesthood, the Son was called by God to be High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Heb 5:5-6. He received honour and glory from the Father, signifying the two offices of this king-priest order. Heb 2:7,9.

We see that Christ's majesty was not His own glory. The Father was pleased with the Son because He had revealed the Father throughout His Melchizedek ministry on earth as the Son of God and King-Priest of God Most High. Heb 5:5-6. Gen 14:18. His work was to reveal the life of the Father as the light of life. Those who received Him, by believing His words, received the Father and would no longer abide in darkness. Joh 12:44. Peter and his fellow messengers, who were eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty, became His ministers because they accepted the call of the Father to minister in the same manner as Christ ministered. Joined to the fellowship of Yahweh, they ministered by the Holy Spirit, and according to the command of the Father. For this reason, they were able to reveal the Father and the Son to their hearers. As Peter testified, 'And *we heard this voice* which came from heaven when *we were with Him* on the holy mountain.' 2Pe 1:18.

The success or otherwise of their ministry as messengers was not measured by how their message was received, nor by how many people responded to their ministry. This is because, as Christ's messengers, they were not revealing themselves. The same was true for the apostle Paul. Towards the end of his life and ministry, Paul lamented that the whole of Asia had turned away from him and his gospel. 2Ti 1:15. Yet, Paul had remained faithful to the Father's call on his life to be a bondsman as part of Christ's *aggelos* presbytery. For this reason, Paul was able to testify, 'Finally, there is laid up for me the *crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have *loved His appearing* [as eyewitnesses of His majesty].' 2Ti 4:8.

The apostles and their fellow presbyters were the Father's messengers, who were in Christ. Through their ministry by the Spirit, the prophetic word of the Scriptures was made more sure, or confirmed, to their hearers. 2Pe 1:19. Through their preaching they were able to illuminate to their hearers what was written in the Scriptures concerning the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They understood the deep things, or mystery, of God, which were contained in the Scriptures. Their ministry was not just information; it was life and Spirit to their hearers.

Peter said that his readers would do well to heed the word of Christ's messengers. Their word, which was proclaimed from the Scriptures, was unique. It was a light that shines in a dark place. Peter and his fellow messengers preached the gospel of God that shone from the face of Christ into the hearts of their hearers. Christ, who is the light of life from

the Father, was being shone into their hearts through their message. Peter said that they would do well to heed their message 'as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts'. 2Pe 1:19. The morning star rising in their hearts was Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith. When this happened, they became light in the Lord. Eph 5:8. To receive this illumination is truly a marvellous blessing!

### **An outline of Paul's gospel**

In the first five chapters of his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul outlined the whole gospel of sonship. In this letter, he explained that the culture, power, quality and uniqueness of the Christian life, ministered through this gospel, is *exanastasis*.

*Exanastasis* is a Greek word that Paul 'coined' in his letter to the Philippians. It literally means 'out-resurrection'. Paul used this word to describe the life that a Christian receives from Christ through new birth, and through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Paul testified that he had suffered the loss of all things for the purpose of knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection (*anastasis*), and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, as the means by which he would 'attain to the resurrection [*exanastasis*] from the dead'. Php 3:7-11.

In this passage, Paul used the term *exanastasis*, rather than *anastasis*, to highlight the reality that, in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, Paul was receiving and living by resurrection life from God while still in a mortal body! The life of God that was in Christ was progressively becoming his life in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Php 3:16. Elsewhere, Paul explained that this is what it means to live by the faith of the Son that is received by the word of the Father. Gal 2:20. Rom 10:17.

While the progressive attainment of *exanastasis* was the focus of Paul's personal pilgrimage as a son of God, it was also the goal of his ministry as a messenger of the New Covenant. Drawing from Paul's summary of this ministry in his second letter to the Corinthians, we have identified ten points that are foundational to the ministry of the New Covenant. Through this ministry, a hearer is born from above and is able to grow to maturity as a son of God in Christ. In the section below, we have summarised these ten points. Each point has been developed in more detail in Chapter 2.

### *Point one – exanastasis is the grace of God*

The call to be a messenger of Christ comes from the Father. 2Co 1:1. As God's messengers experience tribulations in the fellowship of Christ's offerings and sufferings, they receive comfort from the Father. With this comfort, they are able to minister comfort to others. The *comfort* that they receive from the Father, in Christ, is *exanastasis*. 2Co 1:4.

The ministry of *exanastasis* by the messengers of the Lord is the ministry of grace from the Father. Through offering, Jesus tasted the suffering of death for every person, and came back from the dead, by the grace of God. Heb 2:9. In the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, the Father's messengers are recipients of this grace, which they then minister to their hearers. Those who receive, from Christ's messengers, this grace that is being given in abundance to them, are able to join and participate in the fellowship of Christ's offering. 1Jn 1:1-3.

### *Point two – the testimony of the messenger*

The messengers of God, who speak in Christ, minister the New Covenant from the basis of testimony. Establishing this point, Paul wrote, 'For our boasting is this: *the testimony of our conscience* that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.' 2Co 1:12.

The basis of their ministry is not their natural intellect, nor their capacity for reason; nor is it their theological qualifications, or charisma. In and of themselves, these are expressions of fleshly wisdom. Jas 3:15. The simplicity and godly sincerity of a messenger's conduct is the reality that Christ dwells within them, and that they abide in Christ. Their ministry is according to the call of God on their life, in Christ. 2Co 1:1.

### *Point three – fellowship with the messenger*

A person who receives the wisdom of the cross as it is ministered by God's messengers is joined to their fellowship, which is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. 1Jn 1:3. In this fellowship, they are able to receive understanding. Paul made this point, writing, 'For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust *you will understand*, even to the end.' 2Co 1:13-14.

Receiving Christ through the preaching of His messengers joins us to the fellowship of the Father and the Son. This is the fellowship of Christ's

offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, the life that was with the Father, and is in the Son, is given to us to become the life that we live in our mortal bodies. Paul described this life as *exanastasis*. Php 3:11. In short, *exanastasis* is found in fellowship.

The evidence that a person is 'getting understanding' is that *exanastasis* is becoming the culture of their life. They are motivated and equipped to make offering in the fellowship of Christ's body. Furthermore, they continue to walk in the light of the word with those whom the Father has sent to proclaim this word to them. 2Co 10:13. 1Jn 1:3,7.

#### *Point four – the messenger is anointed*

The messengers of God, who are in Christ, have been anointed by God for this priestly service. Testifying on behalf of his fellow presbyters, Paul said, 'Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.' 2Co 1:21-22. This was the same anointing that Christ received for His ministry as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Spirit, in symbol, is the fragrant oil of the anointing of the Spirit of God, which mandates the priestly work of a messenger. The fragrance of the anointing of the Spirit is on the garments of a messenger's priesthood. The messenger comes to his hearers as the fragrance of Christ, by the power of the Spirit.

#### *Point five – the authority of the messenger*

The messengers of God have received authority from Christ to minister His word to the church and to call believers to the obedience of faith. We note, in this regard, Paul's words to the Corinthians, 'For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.' 2Co 2:9.

Because of the authority that God gives to Christ's messengers, the faith of the Son of God is able to be ministered to those who receive them and their message. Rom 1:5. Rom 10:15-17. However, faithful messengers, who are servants over the house of the Son, do not use this authority to take dominion over the faith of others. Luk 12:42-46. 2Co 1:24.

#### *Point six – the fragrance of Christ*

Having been anointed with the Spirit for their priestly service, the fragrance of this anointing is diffused in every place by a messenger

through their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Describing the nature of this ministry, Paul wrote, 'Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place'. 2Co 2:14.

The Father diffuses the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ through His messengers by making them a spectacle to the world. 1Co 4:9. This suffering is the sentence of death that they carry in themselves. 2Co 1:9. It is the death that Christ died. Conformed to His death, and in the fellowship of His sufferings, they are able to diffuse the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ. That is, they are able to proclaim, through testimony, the name of the Lord that was poured forth as an ointment through the offering of Christ. Son 1:3. Psa 45:6-8.

The sufferings that the messengers of Christ experience as they proclaim the gospel of sonship causes the aroma of Christ's offering to be diffused to their hearers. It is the aroma of life or death to those who hear them. 2Co 2:16. Whether it is an aroma of life or an aroma of death, depends on how their message is received by their hearers.

#### *Point seven – an epistle written on the heart of the messenger*

A messenger's hearers are epistles of Christ that have been written by God the Father on the heart of the messenger. 2Co 3:2. The Father uses His finger as a 'pen' when He writes the gospel of sonship in the hearts of His *aggelos* messengers by the Spirit of God. Exo 31:18. This letter is not written with ink, but with the Spirit of God. 2Co 3:3.

The Father does this through Christ, the Messenger of the covenant, who has ascended to the right hand of the Father. Mal 3:1. Eph 1:20-21. Eph 4:10. The knowledge of the glory of God is written in the hearts of *aggelos* presbyters through the exercise of the ascension-gift graces of the apostle, prophet, evangelist and pastor-teacher, that are sent to them from Christ, in the presbytery. Eph 4:11. The gospel of sonship is written on their hearts so that they can give this knowledge to those to whom the Father sends them as an *aggelos* company.

At the beginning of this chapter, we noted that Jesus used the Greek word *aggelos* to describe His messengers. He likened them to stars in His hand. Rev 1:20. The *aggelos* are messengers of light who are part of a lamp presbytery. Their work is to minister illumination among Christ's lampstand churches.

*Point eight – sufficiency is from God*

The sufficiency of *aggelos* messengers to minister the New Covenant is not in themselves; it is from God. Paul testified, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.' 2Co 3:5-6.

The sufficiency of Christ's messengers is that they are born as sons of God and have joined the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, their hearts are being circumcised and sprinkled by the blood of Christ. By this means, their conscience is cleansed from dead works so that they can acceptably serve God, who is their Father. Heb 9:14. Furthermore, as we noted in point one, they are recipients of the comfort of *exanastasis*, which overflows as comfort and consolation to their hearers. 2Co 1:4.

*Point nine – light that shines from the face of Christ*

The Father shines the word of the New Covenant, which is the word of sonship, into the hearts of His *aggelos* messengers who are part of a presbytery. 2Co 4:11. From their face, the glory of Christ, which is the life of Christ, shines. This life is *exanastasis*. It shines from the face of the messengers as the ministry of the New Covenant in the same way that the glory of the Law Covenant shone from the face of Moses. 2Co 3:7-8.

The light of life shines from the face of Christ's messengers because the Son of God dwells in them, and because His resurrection life is being multiplied to them in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. They have the treasure of *exanastasis* in their mortal bodies, which overflows to their hearers. 2Co 4:7. 2Co 1:4. Because they embody the word of the New Covenant, they are able to proclaim this message, and to minister the light of life to their hearers.

A hearer turns to the Lord by receiving His messengers and their word. As they turn to the Lord, the veil of their own law is removed, and they are able to receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as the messengers of God shine it from Christ's face into their heart. The apostle Peter likened this to the morning star rising in their heart. 2Pe 1:19. He was speaking of Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith. Eph 3:17. By this means, they are born of God and have become children of light. Eph 5:8.

*Point ten – assurance of eternal life*

Those who are born of God and have come into Christ have received from Him the anointing of the Spirit. 1Jn 2:20. This anointing teaches us all things. That is, it teaches us to abide in the Son, which we do as we continue to receive and live by the word of the Father that He ministers to us. Those who abide in the Son have this testimony – God has given them eternal life, and this life is in the Son. 1Jn 5:11.

The apostle John wrote these words in his first epistle so that those who believe in the Son will know that they have eternal life, and will continue to believe in the fellowship of His name. 1Jn 5:12-13. When a person believes in the Son, they abide in Him and He abides in them. 1Jn 4:15-16. The faith that they have received, which enables them to believe, is the gift of God that ministers to them the assurance that they have eternal life. They are able to confess, with the apostle Paul, that ‘if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, *eternal in the heavens*’. 2Co 5:1.



## Chapter 2

# The gospel of God

There are many Christians who only have a limited understanding of what the gospel is and how it works. They may have been born again; however, in the absence of illumination they live by their own understanding of what it means to be a Christian. Pro 3:5. Their perspectives on the Christian life are informed by various theologies that fundamentally deny the need to receive and live by the faith of the Son, and the need to participate in the fellowship of His offering. Veiled by their loyalty to these fleshly teachings, they are unable to see that *the hope of the gospel is sonship*. They do not comprehend that this hope is attained when they are born of the Father and live by the faith of the Son of God in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. Rom 5:5. Php 3:10-11. Gal 2:20.

Without a true understanding of the gospel, which comes through illumination, a person will only be able to set their mind on the flesh. That is, they will live and walk according to the sight of their own eyes and will pursue a righteousness that they have defined for themselves. The prospects of this way of living are not good. As Paul observed, 'To be carnally minded is death'. Rom 8:6. Indeed, as life rolls over them, those who have set their minds this way find that their faith is powerless to sustain them in seasons of trial and temptation. They become anxious,

depressed and dissatisfied with the Christian life. Eventually, many turn away from the Lord altogether.

Jesus said that in the last days there would be a great falling away from the church. The love of many believers would grow cold because of lawlessness. Mat 24:12. Lawlessness abounds in the church when the word of truth has been exchanged for the lie that a person can have life through their own faith and good works. Rom 1:18-19. Rom 1:23-25. Paul described the word of truth as 'the gospel of God'. Rom 1:1. Through this message, a person is born of God and is joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and suffering.

Thankfully, the Lord is restoring the gospel of God to those who will heed what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Rom 1:1. Rev 2:7. This New Covenant message is ministered by the Spirit of God, through messengers of Christ who have been sent by the Father. As they preach the gospel of sonship, the light of this word is shone from the face of Christ, into the hearts of their hearers. 2Co 4:6. As we receive and walk in the light of this word, Christ abides in us and we abide in Him. In this fellowship, we are able to grow to maturity as the sons who the Father predestined us to be.

In Chapter 1, we identified ten key points that the apostle Paul made in his second letter to the Corinthians to explain how the New Covenant is ministered and received. In this chapter, we will consider these ten points in further detail.

### **Point one – *exanastasis* is the grace of God**

The light of life from the Father is ministered by Christ through messengers who are in His right hand. In the book of Revelation, Christ described these messengers as seven light-bearing stars. He explained that each star in His hand is an angel of a lampstand church. Rev 1:20. The Greek word that is translated as 'angel' in these passages of Scripture is '*aggelos*'. It literally means 'messenger'.

The *aggelos* of each church is a messenger administration called a 'presbytery'. 1Ti 4:14. A presbytery is a fellowship of overseers, elders and deacons who have been called by God to care for the church. Within the presbytery, Christ has given some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastor-teachers, to equip the members of the church for their work of ministry. Eph 4:11. The work of a presbytery, or *aggelos*, is to be the lamp of a lampstand

church. They are to minister the light of life among Christ's lampstand churches so that the church, which is the body of Christ, can be a light to the whole world.

God the Father places every son of God in the body of Christ according to His will and purpose. 1Co 12:18. This is also true for those He places in Christ's hand. Their work as part of an *aggelos* is according to His call on their lives; it is not through the exercise of their own will. As they participate in the fellowship of offering within the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit sets them apart for the work of ministering the word of God in the church. There is a witness within the presbytery, and in the church, of their sanctification by the Holy Spirit for this work. Act 13:2-3.

Paul identified himself as 'an apostle of Jesus Christ *by the will of God*'. 2Co 1:1. He had received his apostleship from God the Father. This was proclaimed to Paul by Ananias, who was sent to him by Christ. Act 9:10-19. Jesus said to Paul that Ananias would tell him what he must do. Act 9:6,12. The call of God on Paul's life was also confirmed in the midst of the church in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas were set apart and anointed by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles. Act 13:2-3. This work was according to Paul's sonship. He noted this in his letter to the Galatians, writing, 'It pleased God, who *separated* me from my mother's womb and *called* me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me'. Gal 1:15-16. Similarly, Paul introduced his letter to the Romans by testifying that he had been '*called* to be an apostle, *separated* to the gospel of God [the Father] which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures'. Rom 1:1-2.

Explaining the purpose for his ministry, Paul said, 'Through Him [the Father] we have received grace and apostleship for *the obedience of faith* among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ.' Rom 1:5-6. Like Paul, Christ's messengers receive grace and authority from God the Father so that, as they preach the word of God, their hearers are able to receive and live by the faith of the Son of God. Rom 10:17. Their hearers demonstrate by their obedience that they have received this word of faith. By the faith that God gifts to them through His word, sons of God are able to participate in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Paul described this fellowship as 'grace in which we stand'. Rom 5:2. He then explained that this fellowship of grace is the context in which sons of God are established and are able to grow to maturity. Rom 5:2,5.

The *aggelos* messengers of God minister grace and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ to their hearers. 2Co 1:2. They do this by preaching the word of the Father, which Paul called 'the gospel of God'. Rom 1:1. Rom 15:16. 2Co 11:7. 1Th 2:2-9. Their ministry of grace and peace, through the gospel of God, is only possible because they are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

Paul described God as 'the Father of mercies and God of all comfort'. 2Co 1:3. By the mercies that they receive from the Father, the messengers of Christ present themselves as living sacrifices in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Rom 12:1. In this fellowship, the Father *comforts* them in all of their tribulations so that, with this comfort, they are able to comfort those who are in any trouble. 2Co 1:4. Paul further described the comfort that a messenger receives from the Father as the *consolation* that abounds to them in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. 2Co 1:5. This consolation, which is obtained through participation in Christ's death, is the *exanastasis* that he described in his letter to the Philippians. Php 3:10-11.

The consolation that God's messengers receive in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings abounds from the Father, through Christ, because the Son of God abides in them and they abide in the Son. As the sufferings of Christ abound in Christ's messengers, the resurrection life from the Father, which was in the blood of the Son, is being multiplied and given to them. This is the life by which they are to live; and it is the life that they are to minister to their hearers. Gal 2:20. This consolation enables their hearers to endure in times of suffering in the same way that the messengers endure.

Paul reiterated this point, writing, 'Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.' 2Co 1:6-7. *Exanastasis* from the Father overflows to the messengers as they fellowship with Christ in the sufferings that He endured in the shedding of His blood. This life then overflows from their fellowship in Christ's sufferings, and is given to their hearers through the ministry of the word. When their hearers receive this ministry, they are also able to endure suffering. This is the culture, life and consolation of the whole community of Christ.

*Exanastasis* is the grace of God. This is a key point. Paul testified, writing, 'We had the *sentence of death* in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who *raises the dead*'. 2Co 1:9. God sustained Christ by the *exanastasis* life in His blood, which He shed as He endured the sufferings of death for everyone. Heb 13:20. Christ did this 'by the grace of God'. Heb 2:9. The sentence of death that the messengers have in themselves is the sufferings of Christ that abound in them. 2Co 1:5. The life that they receive in the fellowship of these sufferings is the same grace that enabled Christ to endure as He suffered the sentence and condemnation of death that had been passed upon all men because of sin.

The Corinthians received *exanastasis* through the ministry of Paul and from those who had been sent to minister with him. As they received the messengers' word, the Corinthians were able to participate in the same fellowship of offering through which the comfort of God had abounded to the messengers. That is, they were living by grace. They, too, were able to minister grace to others. On this point, Paul said that they were helping together in prayer for him and his fellow messengers, 'that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift [of *exanastasis*] granted to us through many'. 2Co 1:11.

## Point two – the testimony of the messenger

Christ's messengers minister the New Covenant from the basis of *testimony*. To this end, Paul testified, 'For our boasting is this: *the testimony of our conscience* that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.' 2Co 1:12.

In this passage of Scripture, Paul was contrasting the ministry of those who are spiritual with the ministry of those who are carnal, or fleshly. Paul's qualification to minister the gospel was not his capacity for communication. Neither was it his natural intellect and theological expertise, even though he had obviously been a talented scholar. Act 22:3. In and of themselves, these are expressions of fleshly wisdom, and are characteristics for which worldly teachers and leaders are recognised. By contrasting fleshly wisdom with simplicity and godly sincerity, Paul was implying that fleshly wisdom is nothing more than a sophisticated projection that is *deceitful*.

A person who presumes to minister by way of their fleshly wisdom deceives others, because their ministry is a projection. They are a liar and

the truth is not in them, because they are not ministering according to the word of truth that defines their name and works as a son of God. 1Jn 2:4. They are deceived, because they believe in the veracity of their projection. Their projection is a veil that prevents them from seeing and knowing the things of the Spirit. 2Co 4:3. 1Co 2:14-16. Later in his letter, Paul described ministry practices that are based in fleshly wisdom as 'the hidden things of shame'. 2Co 4:2. These hidden things of shame need to be renounced, or turned from, through repentance if a person is to be a minister of the Spirit as part of an *aggelos* presbytery.

The simplicity and godly sincerity of a messenger's conduct is the reality that Christ dwells within them, and they abide in Christ. Their conduct in the world is not their own good works, which reveal the glory of their natural identity. It is their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. In this fellowship, the grace of life from the Father, by which Christ offered Himself and came back from the death of sin, overflows from Him to them to become their life. This overflow of life is then able to be ministered 'abundantly' towards their hearers. 2Co 1:12.

A spiritual person ministers the grace of God as *exanastasis*. This was the basis of Paul's apostleship, and is a foundational condition for ministry as part of an *aggelos* presbytery. Paul warned that if this is not the testimony and conduct of Christ's messengers, they are at risk of being taken advantage of by Satan. 2Co 2:11. Later in his letter, Paul identified those who continue to minister from the basis of fleshly wisdom as being messengers of Satan. He described them as 'false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ'. 2Co 11:13-15.

The grace of God is the wisdom from above. Jas 3:17. This is the word of the cross. Paul made this point in his first letter to the Corinthians, explaining that the wisdom of God was a mystery which God had ordained before the ages. 1Co 2:7. Paul had not ministered this mystery with excellence of speech nor according to fleshly wisdom but, rather, by knowing Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and then revealing Him in this very way to his hearers. 1Co 2:1-2.

### **Point three – fellowship with the messenger**

As we have been considering, the messengers of Christ proclaim the word of life from the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. This is their participation in the fellowship of the Father and the Son. The apostle John explained that those who receive their message are joined to the same fellowship. 1Jn 1:1-3. Those who participate in this fellowship

are able to obtain understanding and the knowledge of the Holy One. Pro 2:2-5. This was Paul's desire as he exhorted them, 'For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust *you will understand*, even to the end.' 2Co 1:13-14.

Understanding comes to individuals when they meet together for fellowship in the word of present truth, which is the wisdom of God. 1Jn 1:1-2. In this fellowship, light is shining in relation to the implications of the word, so that each person is gaining further illumination concerning how to live as a son of God and to function as a member of the body of Christ. The evidence that a person is 'getting understanding' is that *exanastasis* is *becoming the culture of their life*. They are motivated and equipped to make offering in the fellowship of His body.

Paul's commitment to fellowship in the word with the Corinthians was motivated by his obedience to the Father who had called him to be a messenger to them. He was certainly not compelled by their enthusiasm for his message, by their appreciation for his ministry, nor by their affection for him. In fact, the Corinthians treated Paul dreadfully. For example, they maligned him for his weak bodily presence and contemptible speech. 2Co 10:10. They rejected his message in favour of other deceitful workers and their more appealing gospels. 2Co 11:3-4,13-14. Moreover, they queried his competence, and even his sanity! 1Co 4:10-13. He said to them, 'The more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.' 2Co 12:15.

From a natural perspective, there seemed to be little merit in persisting with his care for the Corinthians. However, the Father had given Paul to the Corinthians, and the Corinthians had been given to Paul. Noting this reality, Paul wrote, '(as also you have understood us in part), that *we are your boast as you also are ours*, in the day of the Lord Jesus'. 2Co 1:14. Later in his letter, Paul affirmed this point, saying, 'We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere *which God appointed us* — a sphere which especially includes you.' 2Co 10:13. For this reason, Paul testified, 'I am jealous for you with godly jealousy.' 2Co 11:2.

The salvation of the Corinthians depended upon receiving the message that Paul had been sent by the Father to proclaim, in Christ, to them. 2Co 12:19. Although the Corinthians entertained many other teachers, these alternative messengers were unable to minister the word of life to them. 1Co 4:15. The same is true in the church today. Only those who have been sent by the Father can minister the word through which a

person is born of God and is able to mature. Their message is ministered in weakness to those who have been written on their heart, by the Father, as an epistle of Christ. 2Co 3:2-3.

#### **Point four – the messenger is anointed**

Stating his next point, Paul wrote, 'Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has *anointed us* is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee'. 2Co 1:21-22. Having identified that it was God the Father who established Paul and the *aggelos* in fellowship with the Corinthians, Paul then explained that they had been anointed by God the Father for this priestly ministry toward them. This was the same anointing that Christ had received for His ministry as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Luk 4:18.

The Holy Spirit, in symbol, is the fragrant oil of the anointing of the Spirit of God. The anointing of the Spirit sanctifies, or consecrates, a messenger to their priestly mandate. Lev 8:12. This anointing is a mandate of authority that a person receives from God the Father to do the works that He prepared for them to do as His son, in Christ. It is symbolised in the Scriptures as a person's 'priestly garment', which is also called 'a robe of righteousness'. Isa 61:10. We receive this robe by being clothed with Christ. Gal 3:27.

The anointing oil of the Spirit is applied to the head of a messenger. This anointing then flows from their head and onto the garments of their priesthood, commissioning them to serve as priests. Psa 133:2. The head of a messenger is anointed only when they fellowship in the presbytery with an open face. This signifies that their head is uncovered because they are submitted to the order of headship in the body of Christ, the church. 1Co 11:3-7. A man covers his head when he acquiesces to any relational obligations that hinder, or impede, his submission to Christ. This will include the obligation to serve the agenda of his wife.

The anointing of the Spirit is essential to the priestly ministry of every believer. The evidence of this anointing is a person's commitment to, and participation in, the fellowship that they have been joined to by the Father. 1Co 12:18. King David highlighted this point, writing, 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing - *life forevermore*'. Psa 133. The blessing

of God is eternal life that is received, lived and expressed through fellowship.

Paul explained that the anointing of the Spirit was a seal upon the messengers and upon those who received the gospel of God from them. 2Co 1:22. The seal of God is the sign of ownership. For example, Paul wrote, 'Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, *having this seal*: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity".' 2Ti 2:19. In Part 5 of *The Steps of Salvation*, we identified three dimensions of being sealed.

The first dimension of being sealed by God happens when the Son asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to a hearer to be with them and in their heart. Concerning this gift, Paul explained that it is God the Father who 'sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge [or, down payment, of our sonship]'. 2Co 1:22.

Baptism into Christ is the second dimension of being sealed. Through baptism, we join the fellowship of Christ's offering and *circumcision*. Col 2:11-12. Journeying with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and circumcision is what it means to live and walk by faith. Gal 2:20. Fellowship in the circumcision of Christ is an authentication of, or testimony to, the reality that we have received the righteousness of faith that comes from God as a seal, or a sign. Paul explained that circumcision for Abraham was a sign that he had received the seal of the righteousness of faith, imputed to him as a gift, before he had been circumcised. Gen 15:3-6. Gen 17:11. Rom 4:11-12.

When we have the righteousness that comes from faith, we have the seal of God upon us. Having been joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and circumcision through baptism, we are then baptised with the Holy Spirit, from the Father, as the guarantee of receiving and expressing our sonship. Act 2:38-39. Regarding this third dimension of being sealed by God, Paul wrote, 'Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption'. Eph 4:30.

A seal is a statement of guarantee, a sanctification, and an authority to facilitate the sonship of the one who has been sealed. This is so that the Holy Spirit can reveal our sonship life in us. The Holy Spirit is the expression of the firstfruits of a person's sonship in the kingdom of heaven and as a member of the body of Christ.

### Point five – the authority of the messenger

In his first letter, Paul admonished the Corinthians for accommodating serious sexual immorality within the church. 1Co 5:1-6. He gave them specific instructions regarding the approach that they needed to take to deal with the matter, writing, 'Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus'. 1Co 5:5. Paul addressed this same matter in his second letter to the church. He acknowledged that the Corinthians had obeyed his directions and had mourned for their sin. 2Co 2:6. 2Co 7:9-11. He then charged them to forgive and comfort the man, and to reaffirm their love for him, lest he be permanently lost to the Lord on account of his unbearable sorrow. 2Co 2:7-8.

Significantly, Paul explained that he had written to the Corinthians about this matter to *put them to the test* regarding their obedience to his word. 2Co 2:9. This initiative was an expression of the authority that the Father had given to Paul as a messenger of Christ. With this authority, Paul was able to speak the command of the Father to the Corinthians. Through this command, the faith of the Son of God could be received by his hearers. Rom 10:16-17. Paul wanted to ensure that the Corinthian Christians were demonstrating the *obedience of faith* as sons of God who were holy and acceptable to the Lord. Rom 1:5. Rom 16:26. Rom 12:1. This is because, through their obedience to the word of the Father, they would obtain the reward of eternal life.

It is for this purpose that Christ's messengers, who are His bondslaves, receive authority from the Father. Bondslaves who have received authority from God, and ascension-gift grace from the Son as apostles, prophets, evangelists or pastor-teachers, are set as rulers over His household. By the Spirit, they are to feed those who are in the household with the word of present truth. Luk 12:42. Because they have been sent by God, their word grants faith to their hearers. Rom 10:16-17. By this faith, their hearers are able to believe in the Son and to fulfil the works of their sonship in the fellowship of Christ's offering. 2Co 4:13.

Christ's messengers do not receive authority from God to exercise power and control over others. Their mindset and demeanour should be the same as that of the apostle Paul, who wrote, 'Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; *for by faith you stand*'. 2Co 1:24. Jesus likened messengers who abuse their authority in the church to slaves who beat the male servants and female servants, and who eat and drink and become drunk. He said that He would *personally*

deal with them. He would come on a day when they are unprepared and would cut them in two and appoint them their portion with the unbelievers. Luk 12:45-46.

Those with authority must not use the word of God as a law to compel their hearers to comply with their directives. To do this would be to 'beat their fellow slaves'. Instead, they are to exercise their authority in the same manner as Paul, who said, 'I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.' 2Co 8:8. The authority of the presbytery to proclaim the word of faith establishes the ground of fellowship. Christ's *aggelos* do not impose this fellowship on others. Rather, they entreat their hearers to join them in their fellowship. 1Jn 1:1-3. In this fellowship of offering, the sincerity of a person's faith is tested. 2Co 8:8. That is, the sanctification of a person's name and works as a son of God is proven through offering. Rom 12:1-3.

Living by faith is the implication of Christ's dwelling in a person's heart. To this end, Paul himself testified, 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by [the] faith [that is] in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Gal 2:20. As a messenger with authority to minister the word of faith to the Corinthians, it was also Paul's prerogative to call the Corinthians to *test themselves* as to whether they lived by faith; that is, whether Christ dwelt within them. To this end, he wrote, 'Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? - unless indeed you are disqualified [lit: reprobate]'. 2Co 13:5.

### Point six – the fragrance of Christ

Describing the nature of his ministry as a messenger of Christ, Paul wrote, 'Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place'. 2Co 2:14. Paul's triumph in Christ was because of *exanastasis* life that he received through fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings. Php 3:10-16. As we have already considered, Paul, through fellowship in Christ's sufferings, had ceased from trusting in himself and his own capacities for his ministry. He had been made sufficient as a minister of Christ through the grace that he received because of the Father's call on His life. 2Co 3:5-6.

The Father diffuses the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ through the ministry of His messengers. This happens when the Father makes them a

spectacle to the world. In this regard, we note Paul's testimony, 'For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.' 1Co 4:9. The messengers of God have in themselves the sentence of the death that Christ died. It is for this reason that they have become a spectacle to men and angels. As a result of being conformed to Christ's death and the fellowship of His sufferings, they are able to diffuse the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ wherever they minister. They are able to proclaim, through testimony, the name of Christ that was poured forth as ointment upon them through the offering of Christ.

King Solomon wrote, 'Because of the *fragrance* of your good ointments, *Your name* is ointment poured forth'. Son 1:3. Notably, this song was sung as part of the Feast of Passover. It speaks prophetically of Christ, who is our Passover Lamb, and of His offering and sufferings. 1Co 5:7. The fragrance of Christ was His name that was being poured forth as He offered Himself as a living sacrifice for His bride, the church.

In a song of love, which spoke of Christ and His offering, the sons of Korah wrote, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions. All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.' Psa 45:6-8. Paul quoted this psalm in the introduction to his letter to the Hebrews, and applied it to Christ. He did so to explain how the Son of Man had obtained, *by inheritance from God*, a more excellent name than the angels. Heb 1:4.

Jesus obtained the inheritance of a name more excellent than the angels by priesting Himself as a living sacrifice in obedience to the Father. Paul explained that Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest. Rather, it was the Father, who had said to Him, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You,' who also said, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' Heb 5:5-6.

As our great High Priest, Jesus had been *anointed* with the Spirit to offer Himself as the Lamb of God. By this anointing, He was *progressively glorified*, and *revealed by name*, as King-Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. This was accomplished as He offered Himself in each wounding event as He journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary. As Paul explained, 'Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered [through His ministry as priest and offering]. And

having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek” ’ Heb 5:8-10. As He ministered, Christ’s name was the fragrance of His anointing as our Melchizedek King-Priest. The fragrance of His name that was *evident* as He journeyed revealed that He was receiving the inheritance of the name that the Father was giving to Him. He was ministering this also to those who received this salvation.

Prior to His ascension back to the right hand of the Father, Christ commanded His disciples to go into all the world and, *in His name*, to preach the gospel. Mar 16:15-17. By this, He meant that they were to receive the same anointing that He had received for His priestly work, and were to proclaim His name by priesting themselves as living sacrifices in the fellowship of Christ’s offering.

The knowledge of Christ that they learn from Him in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings is the gospel of Christ and Him crucified. Paul referred to this as ‘my gospel’. Rom 2:16. Rom 16:25. It must become our gospel as well. Paul ministered this gospel with the fragrance of the oil that anointed Christ as the Father’s High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Every person who receives the gospel of God, and makes it their gospel, receives the same anointing.

All who receive the gospel are born again as sons of God and are made members of the body of Christ. They are then joined, as ministers, to the fellowship of Christ’s offering. The sufferings that they experience as they proclaim the gospel of sonship is the aroma of Christ’s offering that is being diffused to their hearers. Their ministry is the aroma of life or death to those who hear them. 2Co 2:16. Whether it is an aroma of life or an aroma of death depends on how their message is received by their hearers.

Christ’s messengers proclaim the privilege of participating in Christ’s offering as the means by which the sons of men are able to be born and mature as sons of God. Importantly, the fragrance of this glorious message is not diffused simply because a messenger has the anointing upon them. It is diffused because the name of Christ is being poured forth by those who have the sentence of death in themselves in fellowship with Christ. As Christ did, they are progressively obtaining their name as a son of God - a name that is more excellent than the angels. Heb 1:4.

### Point seven – an epistle written on the heart of the messenger

God the Father does not send messengers to proclaim the gospel of sonship indiscriminately. Those to whom they have been sent are written on their hearts as epistles of Christ. 2Co 3:2. Unless this message has been written on their heart, they are unable to minister the word of sonship to others. This was Paul's point when he said to the Corinthians, 'For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.' 1Co 4:15.

The Father writes the gospel of sonship on the hearts of His *aggelos* messengers using His finger as a 'pen'. The use of God's finger as a pen was first demonstrated when the Law Covenant was delivered to Moses. The Scripture recorded, 'And when He [Yahweh] had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God'. Exo 31:18. We note that what Yahweh had *spoken* to Moses was *written* on the tablets of stone with the finger of God.

In the New Covenant, the Father writes the gospel of sonship in the hearts of His *aggelos* messengers by the Spirit of God. Exo 31:18. This letter is not written with ink, but with the Spirit of God. 2Co 3:3. The covenant they are ministering is not external to them in the same way that the tablets of stone were external to Moses as a standard that he and the children of Israel needed to attain in order to receive their sonship. Christ's *aggelos* messengers *embody* the New Covenant! It is written into their hearts. Heb 10:15-16. For this reason, Paul said to the Corinthians, 'I urge you, *imitate me*.' 1Co 4:16.

How does the Father write the epistle of another person's sonship on the hearts of His *aggelos* messengers? He does it through Christ, the Messenger of the covenant, who has ascended to the right hand of the Father, and has given ascension-gift grace to men. Mal 3:1. Eph 1:20-21. Eph 4:10. The knowledge of the glory of God is written in the hearts of *aggelos* presbyters through the exercise of the ascension-gift graces of the apostle, prophet, evangelist and pastor-teacher, who are sent from Christ. Eph 4:11.

The gospel of sonship continues to be written on the hearts of presbyters and, indeed, on the heart of every believer, as they receive and respond with repentance and faith to the word of the Father that is proclaimed in the presbytery through Christ's apostolic administration. When it is

written on a person's heart, they are born of that word. The Lord continues to write 'the already accomplished word' of a believer's salvation, by which they were born from above, upon their heart, giving them illumination and relationship with Himself as His son and priest. As we considered in Chapter 1, this is true illumination. It is the morning star arising in their heart. 2Pe 1:19.

Unless illumination is received this way, a Christian is unable to be an epistle of Christ to others. The apostle John testified of this process at work in the presbytery of which he was a part, writing, 'That which was from the beginning, which we have *heard*, which we have *seen* with our eyes, which we have *looked upon*, and our hands have *handled*, concerning the Word of life ... that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ'. 1Jn 1:1,3.

When this message has become light in a believer's heart, they are able to shine the knowledge of Christ to others. With the Spirit of the Lord as their 'ink', they are able to 'write' the New Covenant upon the heart of their hearers, so that they become a 'letter' that proclaims that they are living epistles because they have come into the New Covenant of Christ. This letter, now written upon their heart, can be read by all men. 2Co 3:2. Every believer in the body of Christ is to become a letter of Christ that is read and known by others. This is what it means to be the light of the world, expressing the glory of Christ in the various contexts of life in which the Father has placed them. We will discuss this further in Point nine.

### Point eight – sufficiency is from God

Paul stressed that the sufficiency of *aggelos* messengers to minister the New Covenant is not in themselves, but is from God. He testified, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.' 2Co 3:5-6.

In the first instance, the sufficiency of Paul and his fellow messengers was that they had been born as sons of God and had joined the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. This was their personal sufficiency. As we considered in Point one, the Father had called and separated them, by the Holy Spirit, to be ministers of the New Covenant in Christ. Their ministry was part of the works of their sonship, which the

Father had prepared for them in Christ. The presbytery and the church bore witness to their call and work. Act 13:1-3.

God the Father made them sufficient for this call by joining them to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, the hearts of Paul and those who ministered with him were being circumcised and sprinkled by the blood of Christ. By this means, their conscience was being cleansed from their own projections and dead works so that they could acceptably serve God the Father. Heb 9:14. Moreover, they were recipients of the comfort of *exanastasis*, which overflowed as comfort and consolation to their hearers. 2Co 1:4-5. The sonship of these people had been written on their hearts, by the Father, as epistles of Christ. 2Co 3:2-3. This was their qualification for the ministry of the gospel of God to their hearers.

If the sufficiency of the *aggelos*, which included Paul and the apostolic administration who served with him, had been other than from God the Father, they would have been *peddlers* of the word of God. 2Co 2:17. A 'peddler' is a person who derives personal gain through the trading of goods. Peddling the word of God happens when a person misappropriates the word of God to verify their own identity through ministry expression in the church. Factors such as theological expertise, ministry success, natural capacity, or one's connection with graced messengers, serve as the sufficiency, or adequacy, for the service of those who peddle the word of God.

### **Point nine – light that shines from the face of Christ**

Summarising the ministry through which a person is born again and is then brought to maturity as a son of God, Paul wrote, 'For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'. 2Co 4:6. To explain this point, Paul drew our attention to the ministry of Moses.

In Point seven, we noted that what the Lord had spoken to Moses as the Law Covenant, He wrote on tablets of stone. This covenant had a glory, meaning that it revealed the conditions of God's covenant through which an Israelite could receive their sonship as an eternal inheritance. After Yahweh had spoken His word to Moses from the fire of Their fellowship, the glory of this covenant shone from Moses' face. Exo 19:18. 2Co 3:7. In Part 2 of *The Steps of Salvation*, we explained that Moses carried in himself all four faces of the Son's administration of grace. God's word

was outraged through the words that Moses spoke as the messenger of Yahweh.

The people of Israel were unable to relate to the glory of the Law that shone from Moses' face. He wore a veil on His face because the children of Israel were afraid to come near him. Exo 34:30,33-35. 2Co 3:13. Only then could he fraternise among them. The veil on his face was the veil upon their heart. Because of this veil, signifying their bondage to fear, the children of Israel were unable to access their sonship. Rom 8:15. Paul explained that this veil remains on the face of the Jews, even today, when the Law is read to them. 2Co 3:14-15. They have no access to the Law Covenant and its glory.

Paul described the New Covenant as 'the ministry of the Spirit'. 2Co 3:8. He said that the glory of the New Covenant far exceeds the glory of the former covenant that shone from the face of Moses. The Father shines the New Covenant into the heart of His *aggelos* messengers through the four ascension-gift graces of Christ. 2Co 4:6. When these presbyters have been born of this light, which is the life of God in Christ, the glory of Christ shines from their face. This glory is the light of life. It is resurrection life, or *exanastasis*. *Exanastasis* shines from the face of the messengers as the ministry of the New Covenant, in the same way that the glory of the Law Covenant shone from the face of Moses. 2Co 3:7.

As we noted in Point eight, Paul understood that he and his fellow *aggelos* messengers were not sufficient in themselves for this ministry. They were made sufficient ministers of the New Covenant by receiving *exanastasis* from the Father, through the sufferings of Christ that abounded in them. Paul established this key point further by explaining that he and his fellow messengers had the *treasure* of *exanastasis* in their mortal bodies, which he likened to earthen vessels. 2Co 4:7. He testified, 'For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the *life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh*. So then death is working in us, but life in you.' 2Co 4:11-12.

By saying that the life was manifested in their mortal flesh, Paul was highlighting the truth that the treasure of the light of life that was in them shone from their faces as the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. 2Co 4:4. They did this through the preaching of the New Covenant, which was in them, or which they embodied. To this end, Paul wrote, 'For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts

to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'. 2Co 4:5-6.

Paul ministered by *speaking in Christ*. 2Co 12:19. That is, he was born of God and was joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. The Son of God was in him and was his life. As he journeyed each day with Christ in the fellowship of His offering, Paul's name and life as a son, which were in the Son of God who dwelt in Paul, were being revealed to Paul from Christ's face. By looking into the face of Christ, Paul was able to see, as in a mirror, the image, expression and testimony of his own sonship.

Through Paul's preaching, the Son of God was revealed to his hearers, by the Holy Spirit, as the express image of who the Father named them to be, and was calling them to become, in Christ. As Paul preached, they were able to see and receive a revelation of their sonship by illumination, as the word of the Father proceeded by command from the face of Christ. Once joined to this same fellowship, Paul's hearers, as members of Christ's body, could also reveal Christ to others as He personally revealed Himself to them in the fellowship of their journey with Him.

### *Light shines into the heart of a hearer*

Let us now consider this process of new birth in more detail. Christ sends messengers to preach the gospel of sonship. Rom 10:14-15. Paul described this message as 'the light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God [the Father]'. 2Co 4:4. Significantly, the light of this word shines from the face of Christ, and into our hearts, as 'the knowledge of the glory of God [the Father]'. 2Co 4:6.

The glory of the Father is the expression of His faith-righteousness. His faith is contained within His word. Rom 10:17. His righteousness is the fulfilment of His word. Isa 46:9-13. The faith-righteousness of the Father is the word, or command, of every person's predestination as a son of God, which was named in Christ, 'before'. This means that the Father's righteousness is revealed when we become the son whom He predestined us to be by receiving Christ and by joining the fellowship of Christ's offering. This happens when we receive the gospel of sonship that shines from Christ's face as the glory of the Father.

As God's messengers proclaim the light of the gospel, which shines from the face of Christ, grace and supplication from the Lord is poured out upon their hearers by the Holy Spirit. Zec 12:10. Grace enables a hearer to

turn to the Lord. When they do this, the veil of their fleshly self-righteous view of life, and of themselves, is drawn back and they are able to look on Jesus whom they have pierced. 2Co 3:16. Zec 12:10. In this moment, they see the Lord and acknowledge the judgement that He has received and suffered because of their self-centredness and sin. Luk 23:41.

They become poor in spirit when they see and accept the ruin of their own way. Mat 5:3. Under the influence of a spirit of supplication, they begin to mourn in repentance for their sin and for the loss of their sonship. They receive forgiveness from the Father on account of Christ's blood that was shed for them. Col 1:14. As they continue to supplicate, their mourning shifts from a sorrow for what has been lost through sin, to a travail to believe and receive the word of their sonship that is being proclaimed to them by Christ's messengers. 2Co 7:10.

This desire to become the son of God whom the Father named them to be reveals that they have received a *spirit of adoption* by the Holy Spirit. This is the faith of the Son of God that they receive by hearing the word of the Father as it is preached by His messengers. Rom 10:16-17. Through His word, the Lord Himself says to them, 'Do not fear; I am your shield of faith, your exceedingly great reward.' Gen 15:1. Therefore, Paul said, 'For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father".' Rom 8:15.

As we have explained in Chapter 3, the faith of the Son was demonstrated when He emptied Himself to reveal the Father and was begotten by the Father's word - 'You are My Son, *today* I have begotten You'. Heb 1:5. When this happened, the name and life of every son and daughter of God was written into Christ, the Father's Seed. The apostle John said that this life from the Father, which was in the Son, was 'the light of men'. Joh 1:4.

Having received a spirit of adoption, which is the same spirit of faith that the Son of God received from the Father, the hearer cries out, 'Abba! Father!' Rom 8:15. 2Co 4:13. This is the cry of obedience that begins to circumvent and overcome their other law. Eph 3:16-19. They desire to reveal the Father, rather than themselves, by being born again by His word that is shining as the light of their sonship from the face Christ through the ministry of the Father's messengers. By the Holy Spirit, the messengers of Christ proclaim the command of the Father, saying, '*Today*, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.' Heb 3:7-8.

In response to the expression of this spirit of faith, the Father begins to strengthen them in the inner man so that the Son of God can dwell in in

their heart by faith. Eph 3:17. The Father does this by the washing of regeneration by His word and the renewing of their spirit by the Holy Spirit. Tit 3:5. John explained that Jesus, the Messenger of the Covenant, prays to the Father, who sends the Holy Spirit to dwell in the heart of a believer. Joh 14:16-17. Through the process of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, the identity - soul and spirit - of the hearer is being restored. As we considered in Chapter 1, the 'eye (spiritual sight) of their body' is being healed so that their whole being - body, soul and spirit - is able to be full of light. Their body is full of light when Christ, the light of life, is received into their heart through the ministry of a lamp messenger. Luk 11:34,36.

The Father then sends forth the Spirit of the Son into their heart, crying out their obedience, which is, 'Abba! Father!' Gal 4:6. This is the cry of Christ, the Capstone, who has been brought forth, and declares, 'Grace, grace to it!' Zec 4:7. That is, the Son declares that the life and name of this son of God is found in the fellowship of His offering. The Son of God is the Seed of the Father. In Him is the name and life of every son whom the Father predestined.

As the Melchizedek High Priest, and by the power of Eternal Spirit, Christ connects a believer to the fellowship of His *mortal body*; that is, to the offering that He made when He lived on the earth. In His mortal body, Christ accomplished their eternal salvation through His offering and death. This is an amazing understanding, which we have addressed further in Chapter 3. The believer's faith response is to be baptised into Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Through baptism, they become a member of His mortal body on earth. They can show forth His death until He comes on the day of resurrection and clothes them with His immortality. 1Co 12:13. 1Co 11:26. 1Co 15:53-54. As a member of Christ's mortal body on earth, they now fellowship with Him in the sufferings that He endured for us. The resurrection life that is resident in His Spirit, and was in His blood, is sprinkled upon their heart, giving life to their spirit, and strength and healing to their mortal body. Rom 8:11.

It is helpful to note that when the Father sends the Spirit of the Son into the heart of a believer, it is Christ the Person who comes to *dwell* within them. This is not the same as Christ being *formed* within them. Christ is formed within a person through a travailing process. Gal 4:19. A believer is joined to this travail when they are baptised. Through baptism, they are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In this

fellowship, His life becomes their life. Gal 2:20. We will discuss this process further in Chapter 5.

Through the ongoing ministry of light to us, we are able to mature and bear fruit as a son of God. As we will further consider in Point ten, this is what it means to abide in the Son and for Him to abide in us. We must continue to receive the light of life as it is shone into our heart by the Holy Spirit through the ministry of Christ's *aggelos*. We fall short of the grace of God, which is Christ's life that is given to us in the fellowship of His offering, when we cease from looking into His face. As Paul exhorted us, 'Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will *see the Lord: looking carefully* lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.' Heb 12:14-15.

### Point ten – assurance of eternal life

The tenth key point that Paul made concerning the New Covenant was that 'if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, *eternal in the heavens*'. 2Co 5:1. Paul made this point to communicate the assurance of eternal life that belongs to a *believer* who abides in Christ and in whom Christ abides.

In conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus said, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever *believes in Him* should not perish but have *everlasting life*.' Joh 3:16. Believing in the Son does not simply mean that we believe that He is God or that He exists. Even the demons believe that! Jas 2:19. To 'believe in the Son' means that we abide in Him and He abides in us, and that we obey the word of the Father concerning our sonship. This was the point that Jesus was making when He explained to His disciples that to have eternal life it was necessary for them to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

During this particular discussion, Jesus reiterated what He had earlier explained to Nicodemus, saying, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me *has everlasting life*.' Joh 6:47. He then said, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood *has eternal life*, and I will raise him up at the last day.' Joh 6:53-54. From these two passages, we see that eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood is fundamental to believing in Him. What, then, does it mean to eat His flesh and drink His blood?

Jesus was not saying that a person literally needs to eat a piece of His body or to take a sip of His blood. He said that the flesh profits a person nothing; that is, His natural flesh and blood do not give a person life. Joh 6:63. Furthermore, at the first communion service, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said, 'Take, eat; *this [bread] is My body*'. Mar 14:22. Likewise, He gave them the cup of wine to drink, saying, '*This [wine] is My blood* of the New Covenant, which is shed for many.' Mar 14:24.

Importantly, Jesus was also not saying that the bread and the wine turned into His flesh and blood when they consumed it. To understand what Christ meant, let us consider His description of the bread. He said, 'My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.' Joh 6:32. He then identified Himself as being the bread from heaven. Specifically, He said, 'I am the *living bread* which came down from heaven.' Joh 6:51. Jesus was saying that *He was bread that was alive!*

Jesus lived, or was alive, in the flesh, because of the Father. The Father had life in Himself and had granted the Son to have life in Himself. Joh 5:26. Jesus said this to emphasise that He lived *as the Son of God* by receiving His life from the Father. As the Son of God, Jesus was the actual manifestation of the Father's life. Joh 14:9. He received this life by the word of the Father. Luk 4:4. In this regard, He explained, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.' Joh 4:34. *This is how He fed on God.* Jesus said that He was able to reveal the Father and to minister His life by abiding in Him.

Jesus then said that if we abide in Him, and He abides in us, we will live by Him. Joh 6:56. This is what He meant when He said, 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood *abides in Me, and I in him.*' Joh 6:56. Eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood means receiving His word and living the way that He lived. As the apostle John said, 'Whoever *keeps His word*, truly the love of God is perfected in him. *By this we know that we are in Him.* He who says he *abides in Him* ought himself also to *walk just as He walked.*' 1Jn 2:5-6. Jesus gives to us true bread from the Father by giving to us the word of life that the Father had given to Him. Joh 17:8. We reject Christ by rejecting His word to us. Joh 12:48. Christ does not abide in those who reject His word; neither do they abide in Him.

We are able to live as sons of God by abiding in Christ and by doing the works that were prepared for us to do by the Father. The word of the Father, given to us by Christ, is the food that gives us the strength to be God's sons. Confirming this point, Jesus said, 'He who *comes to Me* shall

never hunger, and he who *believes in Me* shall never thirst.' Joh 6:35. A person who has come to Jesus has taken His yoke upon them as a son of God. Mat 11:29. They are walking with Him on the pathway of salvation that He pioneered through His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. In this fellowship, they are learning from Him what He learnt through the things that He suffered. Mat 11:29. They are learning the obedience of sonship. Heb 5:8.

### *Living in the fellowship of Christ's offering*

In the book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon wrote, 'Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has already accepted your works. Let your garments always be white, and let your head lack no oil.' Ecc 9:7-8. This passage of Scripture provides a particularly helpful synopsis of life in the New Covenant.

Joy and a merry heart are the demeanour of faith with which God's covenant people are to come together for communion. Having gathered in faith to have fellowship with the Lord and His people at the communion table, we then receive the faith of the Son of God for our participation in His offering and sufferings during the coming week. We receive this faith by hearing and receiving the word of God that is ministered to us as we partake of the bread and wine of communion. Rom 10:16-17.

The evidence that we have received this faith is that, through prayer, we set our minds on the Spirit. This means that, for the joy of becoming the son whom the Father has named us to be, we set our mind on participating in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Heb 12:2. This doesn't mean that all our experiences will be joyful or pleasant. As Paul reminded us, 'Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.' Heb 12:11. It is for the joy of sonship, which is the peaceable fruit of righteousness, that we walk by faith in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

Paul described this as having faith in the blood of Christ. Rom 3:25. Having faith in Christ's blood simply means that we believe that we can receive the life of the Son, and that this life is in His blood. Lev 17:11. The question is, '*How do we receive this life?*' The life in Christ's blood was given to us to become our life when it was shed and sprinkled on His body as He was wounded seven times on His journey from Gethsemane to the cross. We receive this life as we join and continue in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

Paul explained that faith in Christ's blood gives us access into grace, in which we stand. As we considered earlier, grace is the fellowship of *exanastasis* life. As we stand in this grace, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Rom 5:2. That is, we rejoice that we are becoming sons of God. What does this rejoicing look like? The answer is to consider how Jesus, by faith, exulted in His sonship. The expression of Christ's sonship to the Father was, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done.' This was His prayer as a New Covenant Son of God in Gethsemane, when His blood was first shed as an offering for sin.

The Holy Spirit joins us to the fellowship of Christ's prayer. Rom 8:26. As we are joined to this fellowship, the blood that was shed on Christ's body as He prayed by Eternal Spirit is sprinkled upon us. It is given to be our life by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. When this happens, we rejoice as a son of God; and we, also, pray, 'Not my will, but Yours, be done.' This is faith 'speaking'. 2Co 4:13. Importantly, Jesus said that this was how we are meant to pray to the Father in the secret place. Mat 6:6,10. Praying in this manner is the evidence of the Spirit of the Son crying within us, 'Abba! Father!' Gal 4:6. We are rejoicing that the hope of obtaining our sonship is being realised.

Paul then taught that as we continue to stand in grace throughout the course of each day, we glory, or express sonship, in the midst of tribulations. Rom 5:3. These tribulations are a participation in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Php 3:10. We are able to accept, without rancour, the difficulties that beset us, because the Holy Spirit pours the love of God into our hearts, and bears witness within us that we are sons of God. Rom 5:5. Rom 8:16. We are, therefore, those who love God and are called by name as His sons. For this reason, we know and accept that everything that happens in our life is from God, and is given to us for the purpose of bringing us to maturity as a son of God. Rom 8:28. In fact, our participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings produces the virtues of Christ within us, including perseverance, character and hope. Rom 5:3-4. 2Pe 1:5-8. This is the fruit of abiding in Christ.

When we suffer, and when we react poorly to other people or to difficult situations, we have not lost our justification as sons of God. This is because we are neither righteous nor unrighteous on the basis of our works. We are justified by Christ through faith in His blood. Rom 3:24-26. Our righteousness is revealed in the fellowship of Christ's offering, which was a messy and traumatic event.

In these times of difficulty, frustration and poor responses, the Holy Spirit reminds us that it is essential that we have a participation in Christ's sufferings, and that the difficulties that we face are an opportunity for our participation in these sufferings. As we accept this, our participation in Christ's sufferings becomes the means by which the Father removes our fallen and self-centred motivations, and is also the means by which we receive and live by Christ's life. Enduring suffering is a work of faith. Through this work of faith, we join the fellowship of Christ's offering, and are justified. So, works are important, but they must be *the work of faith* that we do according to the will of God in Christ Jesus, as we are led by the Holy Spirit. Joh 16:13.

As we walk by faith in the light of the Father's word that shines from the face of Christ, we are fulfilling the works of sonship that were prepared by the Father for us to do, in Christ. By this means, we are revealing the faith-righteousness of the Father, 'from faith to faith'. Rom 1:17. In the fellowship of Christ's offering, which we join by faith, we are fulfilling the works of sonship that the Father prepared for us to do before the heavens and earth were created. 2Co 4:13. These are the works that God has already accepted! Ecc 9:7.

We have previously noted that, in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, we avail ourselves of His blood. This blood cleanses our conscience so that the motivations of our life are not sourced from our own perspective of what is good and evil. Heb 9:14. Rom 7:23. Instead, we are able to live by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Rom 8:1-2. In the midst of the good and evil that defines how people live in this present world, we are able to serve God acceptably. Heb 9:14. Our mandate to serve in this way is symbolised in the Scriptures as 'priestly garments'. We are able to keep our garments white as they are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Ecc 9:8. Rev 7:14. They are being cleansed from the filthiness of our self-righteousness.

### *You have an anointing*

Importantly, the apostle John taught that 'you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things'. 1Jn 2:20. He then explained further, 'But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.' 1Jn 2:27.

This anointing, which is true, is the Holy Spirit. We know this because Jesus called the Holy Spirit, 'the Spirit of truth'. Joh 15:26. Furthermore, He said that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth. Joh 16:13. 'All truth' is the word of the Father. As Jesus said, 'He who *sent Me is true*; and I speak to the world those things which I *heard from Him*.' Joh 8:26. The Father's word defines the truth of our sonship name and works that He prepared for us in Christ before the creation of the heavens and the earth.

The anointing of the Spirit leads us each day in the way that we should walk as a son of God who is joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering. This is what it means for the anointing to teach us all things. The Holy Spirit is not just teaching us theology! On this point, we are reminded of the words of Paul, who wrote, 'Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge ... but have not love, I am nothing'. 1Co 13:2. To 'know all things' is to 'comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God'. Eph 3:18-19. The love of God is the fellowship of His offering. Those who are born of God and abide in Christ have been rooted and grounded in love, and are being filled up with the fullness of God.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit motivates us towards the works of our obedience. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, we are able to know what we are supposed to be doing each day, and also what we should not be doing. Rom 7:18-20. Sometimes, we don't want to do the things that we know we should be doing. However, the Holy Spirit helps us. He pours the love of God into our heart so that the faith that we received by hearing the word at communion is able to work. Gal 5:6. Our faith is exercised as we present ourselves to walk in the way that the Spirit is leading us, and to do the works that have been set before us by the Father. Although the path on which He is leading us may be difficult, and the works that we are to do are challenging, we know the peace and rest of God in the midst of these things.

At the same time, the Holy Spirit frustrates the endeavours of our own way, which are motivated by the desires of our flesh. To this end, Paul said, 'For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.' Rom 8:6-7. In these situations, sustained frustration, agitation, anxiety, anger, depression, etc, are obvious indicators that we are endeavouring to live according to our own way. The Holy Spirit resists us and urges us to

turn, and to look again into the face of Christ. The life and works that belong to our sonship shine from Christ's face by the Spirit. This is what Jesus meant when He said that the Spirit of truth 'will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.' Joh 16:13-14.

We can be confident each day in our work, because the Holy Spirit is leading us. In this regard, we do not need anyone to script our life for us. This is what John meant when he said, 'You do not need that anyone teach you.' 1Jn 2:27. Paul was making the same point when he said not to desire someone to 'ascend into heaven' on your behalf and define the way in which you should walk each day; nor desire someone to 'descend into the abyss' and deliver you from the curse of suffering. Rom 10:6-7. A person who lives according to this way has rejected the anointing of the Spirit and is at risk of severing themselves from Christ.

When Solomon said, 'Let your head lack no oil', he was implying that it is possible to forego the anointing. As we considered in Point four, we do this when we reject the order of headship through which the oil of the Spirit of grace is ministered to every Christian. This happens when we preference the veil of our own perspective over the light of the knowledge of the glory of God that shines from the face of Christ. Not only do we walk in the darkness of our own way but, also, we disconnect ourselves from the life of Christ, who is the Vine, and to whom we belong as branches.

Jesus said, 'I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.' Joh 15:5. The fruit that we bear is our sonship life. This is the life of the Son of God that becomes our life as we live by faith in Him. Gal 2:20. Christ's life is *exanastasis*, which we obtain in increasing measure through our daily fellowship in His offering and sufferings. The glory of our spiritual body in the new heavens and earth will be proportionate to our attainment of *exanastasis* in our mortal life. Php 3:10-16. Joh 4:36. Rom 6:22. However, Jesus warned that if we do not abide in Him, we will be cast out and become a withered and unfruitful branch that is then thrown into the fire and burned. Joh 15:6.

Significantly, the anointing of the Spirit teaches us to abide in the Son, which we do as we continue to receive and live by the word of the Father that He ministers to us. Those who abide in the Son have this testimony – God has given them eternal life, and this life is in the Son. 1Jn 5:11. The

apostle John wrote these words in his first epistle so that those who believe in the Son would know that they have eternal life, and would continue to believe in the fellowship of His name. 1Jn 5:12-13. When a person believes in the Son, they abide in Him and He abides in them. 1Jn 4:15-16. The faith that they have received, which enables them to believe, is the gift of God that ministers to them the assurance that they have eternal life.

## Chapter 3

# The first Adam and the last Adam

### The Everlasting Covenant

Before the creation of the heavens and the earth, there was only Yahweh Father, Yahweh Son and Yahweh Holy Spirit. They were active and fully satisfied in Their fellowship. There was no 'emptiness' or 'nothingness' beyond Yahweh, because Yahweh fills everything. Eph 1:23. The dynamic and fully satisfied fellowship of Yahweh, before, is called in the Scriptures, 'My Covenant'. It describes Their fellowship prior to the conception of Their Everlasting Covenant.

The prophet Jeremiah called this fellowship 'the council of Yahweh', writing, 'Who has stood in the council of [Yahweh], that he should see and hear *His word*?' Jer 23:18. Jeremiah was referring to the word of the Everlasting Covenant that was initiated and declared from Their covenant fellowship. The Scriptures describe the word of the Everlasting Covenant as 'the counsel of the Lord', 'the whole counsel of God', and 'the counsel of His will'. Psa 33:11. Act 20:27. Eph 1:11.

In this fellowship, before, *Elohim* – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – counselled together to create and bring to glory a multitude of sons of God. They declared, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.’ Gen 1:26. This statement, or word, marked the beginning of God’s Everlasting Covenant. Their shared initiative to give Their life to a multitude of sons by offering, was an expression of love. It was pure giving, because Their initiative was not motivated by a need, or a lack, in Their fellowship. Yahweh Himself testifies, ‘I have loved you with an *everlasting love*; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness [mercy and grace].’ Jer 31:3.

In order to bring forth Their covenant initiative, each Person in *Elohim* was sanctified to make offering according to Their unique name. That is, the Son and Holy Spirit bore witness to the name of the Father as the expression of all fatherhood in Yahweh. The Father and Holy Spirit bore witness to the name of the Son as the expression of sonship in Yahweh. And the Father and Son bore witness to the name of the Holy Spirit as the sanctifier of all expression in the fellowship of Yahweh.

### The offering of Yahweh, by faith

The word of the Everlasting Covenant, which was motivated by the fervent love of God, was spoken from the fellowship of Yahweh, by faith. This word established the one faith of Yahweh for the Everlasting Covenant. Eph 4:5. By this faith, each Person, according to Their name, laid down His life to reveal the other Two. Consequently, Their life, in all of its diversity, was multiplied to be expressed *as* ‘Eternal Spirit’. As we noted in the Preface, Eternal Spirit is the capacity of Yahweh to fulfil the Everlasting Covenant, and it is the expression of the Everlasting Covenant in all of its *diversity*. Eternal Spirit is the wisdom and power of God. Eph 3:10. 1Co 1:24. By faith, and with the capacity of Eternal Spirit, each Person of the Godhead laid down Their life to bring to pass Their Everlasting Covenant purpose.

The entire covenant purpose of God was finished in the counsel of Yahweh before the beginning of the creation. It burst forth and was finished in the very moment that Their shared initiative was declared. We learn from the Scriptures that *Elohim* – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – declared ‘*the end from the beginning*, and from ancient times things that are not yet done.’ Isa 46:9-10. This is why Paul said that ‘His works were finished from the foundation of the world’. Heb 4:3.

To understand this point, we must first recognise that there was no hierarchy of initiative within Yahweh to bring forth new creation. The first initiative did not belong to the Father, as though to suggest that He pre-emptively commanded Yahweh the Son to become His Son and Seed and, thereby, manifest the goal, or *end*, of Their covenant desire for many sons. This is because the offering of the Father was in response to the offering of the Son. Concerning His own initiative toward Their covenant purpose, Jesus said that the Father loved Him 'because I lay down My life that I may take it again'. Joh 10:17. Jesus was saying that laying His life down to reveal the Father preceded the Father's initiative to birth Him as His Son by command. However, this does not mean that the offering of Yahweh Son to become the *beginning* of the new creation, was the first initiative in the offering of Yahweh.

There is no hierarchy of initiative in Yahweh because the end and the beginning are one and the same in Yahweh. To bring to pass Their covenant purpose, the *first initiative* in the offering of Yahweh was the offering of the Holy Spirit. He offered Himself, by Eternal Spirit, to reveal the Father and the Son by empowering and sanctifying Their unique offerings. Through His offering, the Father and Son were enabled to offer Themselves by the capacity of Eternal Spirit. He sanctified Their offerings by separating the end (the Father's initiative) from the beginning (the Son's initiative), which happened at the same time. He separated the end from the beginning by establishing time and space as the context in which *Elohim's* covenant would come to pass through an immutable, or ordered, process. This was the expression of the *Holy Spirit's faith*.

The *faith-righteousness of the Father* is the expression, or manifestation, of who He is. As the Father, He has the capacity to be the source and multiplier of sonship identities. Jas 1:17. Yet, Yahweh the Son is the full substance and expression of all sonship. Therefore, to reveal the faith-righteousness of the Father, Yahweh the Son initiated, by Eternal Spirit, to become the Father's Son, so that the Father's faith-righteousness would be made known and expressed through many sons.

Yahweh the Son expressed faith when, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, He laid down His glory, as the substance and expression of all sonship, to the Father. The apostle Paul was making this point when he wrote, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation [lit: emptied Himself]'. Php 2:5-7. Through this

action, space was made within the covenant fellowship of Yahweh for a new creation.

When Yahweh the Son laid down His own intrinsic capacity as the full expression of all sonship, the endpoint of His offering was in the hand of the Father. In response, the Father, by Eternal Spirit, laid down His life to birth Yahweh Son as His own Son, making Him the Son of God. The Father did this by the command of His word. The word of the Father is the foundation of His house. It is expressed as headship. He declared, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You' and 'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son'. Heb 1:5. In the word of this command, the Son received the faith of God the Father to be born as the Father's Son. He then proceeded, by faith-obedience, to be born of God the Father as His Son, and to become the Seed and source of new creation. Reiterating the point, the faith of the Son of God was the faith that He received from the Father and demonstrated by being begotten by the word of the Father.

Through this command of the Father - 'Today I have begotten You' - the fullness of Yahweh Son was now the Son of the Father. He was substantively the Father's Son. The Father's statement, 'You are *My Son*', now encompassed all that the Son is - His capacities, prerogatives and identity - even though Yahweh Son, in identity, had emptied Himself completely and had humbled Himself to become the Son of God and the Son of Man. Although He had been begotten of the Father by this word, the Father was not the origin of the Son's identity. Furthermore, the endpoint of the Father's offering was in the hand of the Son as the One who would reveal the Father, by the Spirit.

### **Creation brought forth by the word of the Father**

Significantly, through this birthing initiative of the Father, the Son became the *Seed* of the Father. The life and names of all of the identities whom the Father would bring forth according to the covenant initiative of Yahweh were in the Son. Moreover, through the Son, the Father would bring into being that which did not previously exist. The Scriptures teach us that the Father is the One who 'gives life to the dead and *calls* [by the command of His word] those things which do not exist as though they did'. Rom 4:17.

The Father, through the Son of God, by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, brought forth the creation. The Father is God 'who created all things through Jesus Christ'. Eph 3:9. Having been begotten by the word

of the Father, the Son of God was able to reveal the Father's word through creation. Joh 1:3-4. As Paul summarised, 'For by Him [the Son of God] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist [because He made room by emptying].' Col 1:16-17.

### **Adam, a living soul**

Man was created from the dust of the earth by the capacity of the Father. As we have already noted, it is the Father who is able to multiply identities. Jas 1:17. 'For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God [the Father] prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.' Eph 2:10. The Scripture recorded that Yahweh *Elohim*, through the order of life established through Their Everlasting Covenant, breathed the breath of life into man's nostrils. Through this action, man became a living soul, or identity. Gen 2:7. This means that Adam, as a living soul, was an eternal spirit, or identity, whose expression was dependent upon biological life. If his biological body expired, his spirit would exist forever, but he would have no life.

The soul of man marks his distinction from the animals, who also have a spirit, and from angels, who are spirits. Ecc 3:21. Psa 104:4. Heb 1:7. This is because man was created in the image and likeness of God, who has a soul. Gen 1:26. Lev 26:11. Mat 12:18. Mat 26:38. Man's soul signifies ownership of his spirit. For this reason, he is able 'know together with himself', and to present himself for fellowship with others. Furthermore, ownership of His identity makes him accountable for who he is and what he does.

The breath of God was the source of all of the identities who had been foreknown and named in Christ by the Father. When the Son of God breathed the breath of life into the body of Adam, he became the first living soul. From him, through the biological process of procreation, the identities of every person would come into being. Like Adam, they would be eternal spirits who would be dependent upon biological life for expression.

The capacity to multiply the named identities of the sons of men, was not possible until God created a helper comparable to Adam. Gen 2:18. Yahweh *Elohim* caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He removed a rib from Adam and, with this rib, made woman to be a helper who was

comparable to him. Gen 2:21-22. We will discuss this process and its implications in Chapter 4. Woman's identity was not by procreation, but was from the substance of Adam. From these two - Adam and Eve - through biological procreation, which is a creative action, all the identities named by the Father, in the Son, come into being. However, they do not come into existence as sons of God. Their identity is from the Father and has its origin in creation, but they are not created as sons of God. Every person must be born again to see and enter the kingdom of God, to become a son of God. Joh 3:5-7.

### **Living souls under the sun**

Before the Fall, Adam's mortality, or biological life, was sustained through his daily communion with Yahweh at the tree of life. It was not sustained by eating food, but through his fellowship with Yahweh.

As a passing point, we note that food does not sustain our mortal body. Even though we eat food to nourish our body, the body continues to perish. 2Co 4:16. We can hasten the decay of our body through poor nutrition; however, obsessing over our diet and exercise will not add one more hour to our life. Luk 12:25. Our mindset should be, 'Give us this day, our daily bread'. Mat 6:11. The food that we eat is the Father's provision for the nourishment of our physical body so that we can do the works of sonship that He has prepared for us in the fellowship of Christ's offering. In this way, we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Luk 4:4. The word of His will for our life is the spiritual food that we eat, which endures to eternal life.

When Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in order to become the source of his own works and destiny, he was disconnected from the fellowship of Yahweh. His mortality was no longer sustained in the fellowship of Yahweh by His word. Adam's body was now corrupting, and the life of his identity was expiring. Gen 2:17.

As a consequence of the Fall, 'another law' was established within the heart of Adam. Rom 7:23. This law was other than the law of love, which defined the way of life that Adam had known in fellowship with Yahweh. Living by this other law brought Adam into bondage to sin. Rom 7:23. He was separated from the life of God, and death was at work within him. The other law became the principle of Adam's existence because it had become part of his identity. For this reason, it has been passed on to all of the sons and daughters who have come from him through the process

of procreation. This is how death spread to all men through one man's sin. Rom 5:12.

As a consequence of the Fall, mankind was subjected to the curse of vanity and futility. In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon described this condition as 'under the sun'. He wrote, 'Vanity of vanities, *all is vanity*. What profit has a man from all his labour in which he toils *under the sun*? One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides forever.' Ecc 1:2-4.

'Under the sun', the works of a person, as well as their inward thoughts, are neither new nor enduring. They are sourced in, and constrained by, the limits of human capacity and expression in Adam. For this reason, a person's works have already been expressed by others before them, and then pass away with them when they die. This is the futility of life for those who live according to the principles of the flesh. Making this point, Solomon declared, 'That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and *there is nothing new under the sun*. Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come by those who will come after.' Ecc 1:9-11.

Solomon's explanation of the implications of life 'under the sun' reveals that every identity in Adam has *a natural name*. To this end, Solomon explained, 'Whatever one is, *he has been named already* [in Adam], for it is known [who he is]; and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.' Ecc 6:10. Solomon was not referring to a person's sonship name, which was predestined in Christ. Rather, he was describing the expression, or glory, of a human being's identity 'under the sun'.

Within this context for life, a person's works reveal the glory of their natural name. At its very best, this glory is likened, in the Scriptures, to the flower of the field. Drawing from the Psalms, the apostle Peter highlighted this point, writing, 'All flesh is as grass, and *all the glory of man as the flower of the grass*. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.' 1Pe 1:24-25.

In pursuit of enduring significance, or remembrance, a fallen human identity will strive to create or produce something that is new or unique. The citizens of Babel exemplified this motivation when they determined to build a tower whose top reached into heaven. They said, 'Let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad [lit: dashed to pieces]

over the face of the whole earth.' Gen 11:4. The inability of mankind to generate something new, and to produce something enduring, reveals the wearisome and hopeless condition of fallen humanity.

Living life according to one's natural name only engenders confusion, and exposes the physical and spiritual frailty of mankind. People's endeavours to know and promote themselves through the exercise of their natural abilities are motivated by either inferiority or insecurity. These identity complexities are often accompanied by psychological and emotional distress, including disenchantment, anxiety, depression, frustration, agitation, anger, and so on. These presenting frailties mark the degeneration of a person's identity because of sin. As we stated in Part 3 of *The Steps of Salvation*, these resulted from the fall of man and belong to what the Scriptures call 'the hidden things of shame'. 2Co 4:2. They are the reason why Solomon noted that man is unable to contend with God who is mightier than he. Ecc 6:10.

### All things new in Christ

We noted earlier that the apostle Peter contrasted the glory of the flower of the field with the word of the Lord which endures forever. 1Pe 1:24-25. This is the word through which a person is born of incorruptible, or imperishable, seed. 1Pe 1:23. Luk 8:11. The seed is Christ, in whom the name of every son of God is written. We receive our name, which was foreknown by God and endures forever, when we receive Christ and come into Christ.

Whereas the perishable seed of our natural identity and name is unable to bring forth anything new, in Christ *all things are made new*. Rev 21:5. As Paul declared, 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.' 2Co 5:17. In Christ, we are able to bring forth fruit unto eternal life. Rom 6:22-23. Moreover, we find that the mercies of the Lord, by which we are able to present ourselves for participation in the offering of Yahweh, are new to us each morning. Lam 3:22-23. For this reason, we are able to testify with Jeremiah, ' "The Lord [rather than my own name] is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope *in Him!*" ' Lam 3:24.

Our name and life in Christ is our eternal inheritance as sons of God. Because our sonship name is from everlasting, and has a new expression each day in the fellowship of Christ, true creativity and expression in this age and in the new heavens and earth to come can never be exhausted. No-one will ever be bored in the age to come! In the fellowship of

Yahweh, we are not revealing the glory of our own name. Rather, we are revealing the righteousness of God, in Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

### **Children in the womb**

Solomon observed, 'If a man begets a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or indeed he has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better than he – *for it [the stillborn child] comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness.* Though it has not seen the sun or known anything, this has more rest than that man, even if he lives a thousand years twice — but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one place?' Eccl 6:3-6. Solomon was referring to the deaths of two people conceived under the sun – one person was born and lived a long life under the sun, and the other person was a stillborn baby.

In the first instance, Solomon's observation applied to the lives of two people who were conceived under the *Old Covenant*. The man who fathered a hundred children and lived for many years, died with depression, having found no satisfaction in life. His death without a burial implies that he died without honour, perhaps even by suicide. Solomon noted that he was worse off than a stillborn child. This is because the child died in the darkness of its mother's womb, not having any awareness or experience of vanity under the sun.

When Christ was lifted up on the cross, the *New Covenant* was proclaimed. Through His offering, Jesus drew all men to Himself. Joh 12:32. As we considered in Part 6 of *The Steps of Salvation*, this meant that the death that He died on the cross became the death of every person in the world. On account of Christ's death for all, all died. 2Co 5:14. With this in mind, the principle that Solomon described can be applied to death under the conditions of the New Covenant. This includes the death of those who die under condemnation, and the death of those who die in the Lord.

In this regard, we can consider the man who died in old age as being a person who lived by his natural name, rather than by faith and according to the name that God had prepared for him in Christ. Instead of obtaining the enduring satisfaction of God's goodness, which is eternal life, his natural life ended in eternal separation from God. His portion was the painful cognisance of his futile existence, and eternal death for his disobedience to God's predestined will for his life. Describing this torment, Isaiah wrote, 'Their worm does not die, and their fire is not

quenched'. Isa 66:24. This man's name was not remembered, because it was blotted out of the Lamb's book of life. Psa 69:28.

The stillborn child of unbelieving parents is conceived under the conditions of vanity and futility. They do not receive their sonship, and therefore have no place as a son of God in heaven. However, their situation is better than the one who was born and lived a long life under the curse of futility. This is because their name is covered with darkness and they do not see the sun or know their name. Solomon was saying that they have no awareness of their condition. They have no works under the sun and therefore have no cognisance of futility and vanity. Although their name is blotted out of the Lamb's book of life, and they remain separated from God, they will be no more aware of their condition than they were in the darkness of their mother's womb. They will not experience the same torment as those who have lived under the sun and have engaged in the works that reveal the natural name of their fallen identity. In this way, every person's judgement will be commensurate with their culpability for their works. 2Co 5:10.

In contrast, stillborn children of believing parents are recipients of the divine nature and are joined to Christ in the womb. Jesus said that their angels always see the face of the Father in heaven. Mat 18:10. This means that they are remembered before Him. On the day of resurrection, they will be fully raised as sons of God, with works prepared for them to do in the new heavens and earth.

### Jesus, a life-giving Spirit

We noted earlier that, from the first Adam, the sons and daughters of men are brought into being as living souls through procreation. An eternal spirit, or identity, is created through this biological process. As living souls, the life of our spirit is from our biological body. We do not have life in ourselves. Unless we are born again from above, when our body dies, we exist, but have no life.

Jesus Christ did not receive His identity from God the Father when He was begotten by the word of the Father; nor did He receive His identity from Adam through the process of procreation. Christ's identity preceded His birth as the Son of God and then His conception as the Son of Man. This is a most significant point. The Son of Man's conception and birth occurred through an *entirely different process*. It was through incarnation, by the word of God the Father. Through this process, the life of God was in the flesh of the Son of Man. As the last Adam, Jesus, the

Son of Man, was the beginning of a new creation who had come as a life-giving Spirit. 1Co 15:45.

The word 'incarnation' does not adequately describe the conception and birth of Jesus Christ. God the Son was not only clothed with mortal, human flesh by command of the Father; He who was the express image of the word of the Father as the Son of God *became* flesh and dwelt among us. Php 2:7. Joh 1:14. The *zoe*-life that was in His Spirit came into His flesh, becoming a part of His mortal body. Because of this, Christ was able to present His body as a living sacrifice to atone for our sins. Christ, when born of Mary, was more than an incarnation; *He was a new creation*. He was the Father's pattern Son as the Firstborn Son of God.

In contrast to Adam, the life of Christ's identity was not sourced from His biological body. His life was the divine nature from the Father. To this end, Jesus testified, 'For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgement also, because He is the Son of Man [by incarnation].' Joh 5:26-27. This was the reality of Christ's life, and what He had come into the world to give to the sons and daughters of men. He declared, 'I am the resurrection and the life [in a mortal body]. He who believes in Me, though he may [mortally] die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me [by receiving the word that I speak] shall never die.' Joh 11:25-26. Similarly, He proclaimed, 'I have come that they may have [God's *zoe*] life, and that they may have it more abundantly.' Joh 10:10.

Through new creation, the resurrection and the life of God *became flesh*. He had not just come into a mortal body. This is why Jesus said, '*I am* the resurrection and the life.' His mortal body had been prepared for Him by the Father so that He could fulfil the Father's will. Heb 10:5-7. While on earth, Jesus participated in biological life. His mortal body was nourished by food and by 'the principle of the belly'. 1Co 6:13. However, His testimony was, 'Man shall not live by bread *alone*, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' Mat 4:4. Jesus ate physical bread to sustain His mortal body, but His *life* was from the word of the Father. This is why He said to His disciples, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know ... My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.' Joh 4:32,34.

Christ's declaration that He is the resurrection and the life revealed that He lived by the principle of *exanastasis*. As we considered in Chapters 1 and 2, *exanastasis* is *anastasis* - meaning 'resurrection' - in a mortal body. Jesus was able to minister *exanastasis* to others in their mortality.

Christ demonstrated this in full measure when He raised Lazarus from the dead, to mortality, after Lazarus had been in the grave for four days. Jesus said that this ministry revealed the glory of the Father, and glorified the Son. Joh 11:4,40. In other words, the resurrection life that Christ demonstrated was from the Father, and was the life by which He lived.

Through His death, burial and resurrection, Jesus brought an end to 'the belly' as being the principle of life for mankind. 1Co 6:13. His physical body was raised to immortality. It is now a spiritual body that is sustained by a different principle; He now lives only by the power of an endless life. Heb 7:16. This reveals *anastasis* in an immortal body. He can still eat and drink natural food; however, His life is no longer sustained by the principle of biological life. Luk 24:41-43.

### The reproach of incarnation

Disbelief and cynicism regarding Christ's incarnation were fundamental features of the reproach that He experienced in the course of His offering journey. We note, for example, that Jesus was beaten in the house of Caiaphas for declaring that He was the Christ. Mat 26:63-67. Furthermore, as He hung on the cross, the people and the rulers sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' Luk 23:35.

Disbelief regarding the incarnation of Christ was also the reproach that Mary endured, until Christ gave her to be John's mother just prior to the conclusion of His offering on the cross. Joh 19:26-27. Simeon had prophesied that, as Christ's mother, the sword of reproach would pierce her heart. Luk 2:34-35. To this end, throughout Christ's life, Mary suffered scorn, as His conception prior to her marriage was vilified. Joh 8:41.

The incarnation of Christ continues to be a point of reproach for Christ's messengers. Explaining the reason for this reproach, Paul wrote, 'For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block [or scandal] and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God'. 1Co 1:22-24. Preaching the gospel of sonship, which declares the marvellous truth that the Son of God is coming in our flesh and His life is becoming our life, incites derision and persecution from those who have no spiritual understanding.

### *Blindness through theology*

Many theologians do not believe in Christ's incarnation. While they may accept that God came in the flesh, they do not recognise that Christ's identity as Yahweh the Son existed before His birth as the Son of God and the Son of Man. They believe that Christ's identity is sourced from God the Father. We note, for example, this heretical view in the Westminster Confession - 'The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son'.

A fundamental implication of the Westminster Confession is that the Son's existence depends on, and is sourced from, the Father; and the Holy Spirit's existence depends on the Father and the Son. This perceived hierarchy in the Godhead is viewed as an unassailable implication of the inherent distinctions between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It demonstrates a fleshly blindness to the fellowship of offering that is fundamental to Yahweh *Elohim*.

This statement, and others like it, including the Nicene Creed, are theological propositions that do not reveal who God is, or how He lives. They are the product of intellectual application and argument, rather than illumination, which is found only in the fellowship of offering. However, this does not mean that these doctrines are benign. They have a significant influence on the ministry of God's word, and on a person's ability to receive illumination as it is ministered by messengers who are being restored to a fellowship of light in the hand of Christ.

For example, the theorised hierarchy of the Godhead is replicated in the administrative structures of churches, whose teachings and practices are drawn from the Nicene Creed and the Westminster Confession. Their structures of delegated authority, which are ordered on the basis of the natural capacities and qualifications of church leaders, are in contrast to the fellowship of *first love*, to which Christ is calling His churches to be restored. Rev 2:4-7.

Jesus described these collegial and hierarchical administrations as 'Nicolaitan'. Rev 2:6,15. As we considered in Part 5 of *The Steps of Salvation*, 'Nicolaitan' means 'ruler of the people'. Evidently, Jesus was referring to a group who presumed to 'lord it over' the people in the church on the basis of their capacities and gifts. Congregants in the church become loyal to these leaders because they want someone to

‘ascend into heaven’ to invoke a blessing upon them, and to ‘descend into the abyss’ to deliver them from the curse of suffering. Rom 10:6-7.

The point we must note is that these doctrines have an effect on our ability to receive and understand the word of truth from the Father, which calls us to sonship in Christ. They are the worthless idols. The apostle John exhorted believers of every generation, to keep themselves from these doctrines of the flesh that are unable to minister life to those who hear them. 1Jn 5:21. Jer 10:8.

### ***Exanastasis is the life of God***

The New Testament writers used the Greek word ‘*zoe*’ to denote the life of God. For example, recounting the words of Jesus, John wrote, ‘For as the Father has life [*zoe*] in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life [*zoe*] in Himself’. Joh 5:26. In the Scriptures, this life is distinguished from the life, or soul, of an individual, for which the Greek word ‘*psuche*’ is used. We note Christ’s use of this word in the Gospel of Luke - ‘Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life [*psuche*], what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life [*psuche*] is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.’ Luk 12:22-23.

*Zoe* is the one life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Their Everlasting Covenant initiative was to create and to bring to glory a multitude of sons who were born of Their *zoe*-life. As we considered at the beginning of this chapter, this happened through the offering of Yahweh. By offering, the Son and the Holy Spirit sanctified the Father to be the source of all *zoe*. Yahweh Son, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, laid His life down to an endpoint, or death. He was then begotten as the Son of God, from this death, by the word of life (*zoe*) from the Father.

The *zoe*-life that the Son of God now had in Himself was resurrection life, because He had been begotten by this life from the death of emptying Himself. The Greek word for resurrection is ‘*anastasis*’. It is *zoe*-life out of death. We see that the Son of God was the resurrection and the life, even before He became flesh! Joh 11:25. When Jesus was born of Mary, the resurrection life from the Father had become flesh. We noted in Chapter 1 that the apostle Paul coined the Greek term ‘*exanastasis*’ to highlight the reality that a son of God receives and lives by *anastasis* in their mortal body. It is not just resurrection life that they will receive after they physically die.

The incarnation of Christ is the first dimension of *exanastasis*. In this regard, *exanastasis* is the miracle of the divine nature becoming flesh. As the apostle John declared, 'The Word *became* flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace [or *exanastasis*] and truth.' Joh 1:14. We note that the word *became* flesh; the word did not come *into* the flesh. This is a key point for us to understand.

The body and blood of Christ's mortality came through the motherhood of Mary. The apostle Peter described women of faith as 'the weaker vessel'. 1Pe 3:7. He was not identifying women as being naturally, or physically, inferior to men. Rather, he was drawing attention to the principle of multiplication. Jesus Himself declared to Paul that His strength was made perfect in weakness. 2Co 12:9. Paul understood that Jesus was referring to the principle of *exanastasis*. Paul, therefore, boasted in his infirmities, because the *power of Christ* rested upon him when he was weak through suffering. 2Co 12:10. By this means, life was multiplied in him, and through him to others. 2Co 4:7-12.

The angel Gabriel said to Mary, '*Do not be afraid*, Mary, for you have found favour with God.' Luk 1:30. This was the same word that Yahweh Son ministered to Abraham when He said that He would be Abraham's shield of faith. Gen 15:1. In the faith that Mary received from the word of the Lord's messenger, she confessed, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! *Let it be to me according to Your word.*' Luk 1:38. The incarnation of the Son happened according to this word; it did not happen by the process of procreation that had been established in Adam. Mary, in weakness, brought forth incarnate life. The life of God became flesh in her womb according to the command of the Father. That is, Yahweh the Son, in identity, who was the Son of God the Father, was clothed with the flesh and blood of Abraham in her womb.

### Life given and multiplied through offering

Through incarnation, the blood of Christ's mortality contained resurrection life from the Father. Christ's blood was shed as He offered Himself to God by Eternal Spirit. Heb 9:14. Through His offering as the Son of Man, the life in Christ's blood was multiplied, and was given to become the life of the sons of God.

Christ's offering was a twenty-one hour journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, which He made, by Eternal Spirit, in a mortal body. His journey involved seven wounding events through which His biological blood was

shed and sprinkled on His body. His blood contained His life. Lev 17:11. The shedding of His blood was the means by which atonement was made for our sins, and His life was multiplied and given to become our life.

Paul described Christ's twenty-one hour offering as 'once for all'. Heb 7:27. Heb 10:10. It was efficacious for the sanctification of every son of God for eternity. Heb 10:10. This means that the offering that Jesus made in His mortality, which involved the shedding of His biological blood, was effective to deal with the sin and uncleanness of every person. It also means that, through this offering, Christ's life was multiplied, and overflowed as a fountain of life that would become the life and expression of the identity of every son of God.

The prophet Zechariah described the outcome of Christ's finished offering as a fountain that was opened for sin and uncleanness. Zec 13:1. John identified this fountain as blood and water that flowed from the pierced heart of Christ's mortal body. Joh 19:34-37. According to Zechariah, access to this fountain, in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, would deliver a person from their idolatrous projections and would establish them in the truth of their name as a son of God. Zec 13:2-6. In the book of Revelation, following the account of the perfection of the sons of God, and the revelation of the new heavens and earth, John described this fountain as a river of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Rev 22:1. This life was the overflow of Christ's finished offering. It would be for the life and expression of the sons of God, forever.

The efficacy of Christ's offering, which He made in the flesh, is ministered to us through His Melchizedek priesthood. In this regard, we note that, as Christ offered Himself by Eternal Spirit, the Father made Him a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Heb 5:6. It was Eternal Spirit that activated Christ's Melchizedek priesthood. Christ's Melchizedek priesthood operates by the power of an endless life. This is why the efficacy of Christ's offering in His mortality is effective toward us now, and forever.

Christ was perfected through suffering, and became the author of eternal salvation to all who *obey His word*. Heb 5:9. Having been called by God as the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, He now ministers His word to us as the bread and wine of communion. Heb 5:10. Joh 6:53-56. Joh 6:63. Luk 22:19-20. The bread is His flesh, which we eat in faith for participation in His body. 1Co 10:16-17. The wine is His blood, which we drink in faith for participation in His offering. 1Co 10:16.

Even though Christ's atoning work is finished, and His blood has been shed, the mortal blood of Christ that contained His life still belongs to the twenty-one hours of His offering event. It is efficacious in our lives now and for eternity. Through His Melchizedek priesthood, Christ feeds this offering to us for eternity.

## **Receiving the faith of the Son**

Jesus, the Son of God, is the Messenger of the covenant. Mal 3:1. He said that those who receive His messengers receive Him, and receive the Father who sent Him. Joh 13:20. Christ's message is the light of the gospel of the glory of God the Father. Through the preaching of His messengers, this light shines from His face into the hearts of their hearers. Joh 13:20. 2Co 4:6. This light is the gospel of their sonship. Having finished His offering, and having received the glory that He had before, Jesus is, therefore, able to proclaim His message from His ascended position at the right hand of the Father. Heb 1:3. Heb 10:12. Joh 17:5.

At the beginning of this chapter, we noted that the faith of Yahweh Son was demonstrated by His fervent desire to reveal the Father by being begotten as the Son of God by the word of the Father. The faith of the Son is essential to being born again from above as a son of God. Paul described this faith, when received by a person who hears the word of God, as 'a spirit of adoption'. Rom 10:17. Rom 8:15. It is ministered to a person by the Holy Spirit when Christ's messengers preach the gospel of sonship to them. This faith is a prerequisite to receiving the Spirit of the Son, whereby we are able to truly partake of and receive the divine nature. What do we mean by this?

By the Holy Spirit, sent down from heaven, Christ's messengers, who have been called by the Father, are proclaiming Christ and Him crucified. With this word, by the Holy Spirit, comes the faith of the Son. Rom 10:17. This is the spirit of faith that Yahweh Son demonstrated when He laid down His life to be begotten by the word of the Father. When a person does not resist the grace and supplication that is poured out with the ministry of the gospel, they are able to find repentance and to receive the faith of the Son to believe and cry out for the sonship that the word is proclaiming to them. This faith is a spirit of adoption by which they cry out 'Abba! Father!' Rom 8:15.

The spirit of adoption is the cry of faith obedience. It reveals that a person has begun to see and hear what natural eye and natural ear

cannot comprehend. 1Co 2:9. By a spirit of adoption, they are urged to join the fellowship of Christ's offering.

In response to the cry of a person who is motivated by the spirit of adoption, the Father brings a person to birth as His child by sending forth the Spirit of the Son into their heart. Gal 4:6. Their name as a son of God is in Christ, the Father's Son. And the life of their sonship, from the Father, is multiplied to them to become their life in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. This is the meaning of Paul's testimony, when he wrote, 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me'. Gal 2:20.

It is most important to receive the faith of the Son of God by hearing and receiving the word that is preached by Christ's messengers. Rom 10:17. Without the Son's faith for sonship, our Christian life and experience will be limited by our interpretation of God's word from the basis of good and evil. This is because our own faith originates in our soul, which has been corrupted with another law. The expression of our own faith depends on what we believe and perceive with our mind, and how we feel, emotionally. The mind and emotions are faculties of a person's soul.

A common characteristic of a person who maintains their own faith is that, as they age, their assurance of eternal life diminishes. This is because the faculties of their soul, through which their faith is maintained, are diminishing. As the sufferings associated with aging impose upon their life, they become increasingly anxious about their death. Their anxiety is only heightened when the Lord does not intervene in their life in the manner in which they believe He should. Their faith dies as they die.

This only serves to reveal their spiritual blindness as they continue to trust in their own understanding, rather than receiving illumination by hearing God's word and walking in the light with those who minister this word. Pro 3:5. 1Jn 1:1-3. They do not see that Christ wants to give them His faith so that they can receive their sufferings as a participation in His offering. In the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, they are able to obtain an inheritance that was prepared for them by the Father, in Christ. Php 3:10-11. This inheritance is their eternal sonship. We can only participate in the offering and sufferings of Christ, and receive eternal life, when we live by the faith of the Son God. Gal 2:20. With this faith, we are able to 'draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having

our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water'. Heb 10:22.

Every person is given the right to choose whether or not they will accept the call to become the son of God they were predestined to be in Christ. Sonship is not the outcome of coercion by, or obligation to, God; it is the response of faith to the word of the Father that proclaimed their sonship in Christ, when He said, 'You are My Son, *today* I have begotten You.' Heb 1:5. It is for this reason that the Holy Spirit says, '*Today*, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me ... so I swore in My wrath, "they shall not enter My rest".' Heb 3:7-11.

In contrast, the apostle John declared that 'as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God'. Joh 1:12. This is the implication of receiving the ministry of Christ, the life-giving Spirit.



## Chapter 4

# The immutable purpose of God

### The principle of seed-life

God's Everlasting Covenant initiative to create and bring to glory a great multitude of sons of God is fulfilled, in time, by the process of offering. The principle of seed-life reveals the process of offering through which God's immutable covenant purpose is accomplished. Through this offering, which manifests the love of God, Yahweh, in freedom, was able to embrace and resolve every issue that could, or would, arise in the course of God's covenant plan, including the fall of mankind.

The word 'immutable' means 'unchanging over time, or unable to be changed'. Seed-life has this characteristic. In the natural creation, a seed follows a defined and invariable process to come to fruitful maturity. It begins with a figurative death as the seed falls into the ground and is buried. It then germinates, sprouts and grows. The fruit that it bears is in the likeness of the seed that was planted, revealing that the life of the seed has been multiplied. Jesus used this natural and immutable process to describe the kingdom of God. He said, 'The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not

know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: *first* the blade, *then* the head, *after that* the full grain in the head.' Mar 4:26-28.

In relation to the immutability of His purpose, God has appointed, as a sanctifying action, a time for every purpose under heaven. Drawing attention to this principle, King Solomon wrote, 'To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what it is planted.' Ecc 3:1-2. As we noted in Chapter 3, the sanctification of time in order for God's purpose to come to pass is the unique work of the Holy Spirit.

The blessing of life being multiplied through the sanctified process that belongs to seed-life was the foundation upon which the nations would be brought forth from Adam. Through the principle of seed-life, they would be brought into being as the sons and daughters of men. We note, in this regard, that the Scriptures commonly refer to the descendants of a person as their 'seed'. They were then to be born again as sons of God by receiving Christ, the Seed of the Father, and by joining the fellowship of His offering. Jesus spoke of this goal when He declared, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.' Joh 12:24.

We know, of course, that a mature fruiting tree does not immediately spring from a seed that is sown in the ground. The process of a plant's maturation, from the sowing of seed through to the reaping of a harvest, *takes time*. Likewise, time was, and is, fundamental to the fulfilment of the Lord God's immutable plan for every person. The sonship life of which we are born is proven, or fully established, within us as we live each day by the faith of the Son of God. Rom 12:1-3. Gal 2:20. We receive His faith by hearing and receiving His word at communion. Rom 10:17. By faith, we are able to participate in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, the life of Christ, who is in us, is being multiplied to us to become our life. Gal 2:20. Through our daily participation in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, the God of all grace is perfecting, establishing, strengthening and settling us. 1Pe 5:10. We are being rooted and grounded in love, having been born of incorruptible seed and having been joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering. Eph 3:17-19. 1Pe 1:23.

With the principle of seed-life as their focus, many Scriptures exhort the sons of God to have patience and endurance in order to obtain the eternal inheritance that God has predestined for them. For example, James said, 'My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials

[as part of the fellowship of Christ's offering], knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.' Jas 1:2-4. Paul similarly wrote, 'You have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise'. Heb 10:36.

Like time, *freedom* is a fundamental principle of seed-life to which mankind was appointed by God. As we noted earlier, it was in freedom that Yahweh made offering to establish and accomplish His Everlasting Covenant. Likewise, as those who have been given possession of their identity, we have the freedom and accountability to present ourselves for participation in the fellowship of Their offering. Faith, which is tested through our ongoing fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, gives us the right and freedom to choose the life and destiny that God has chosen for us.

In relation to this right and freedom, we note the words of John, who explained, 'But as many as received Him [the Seed], to them He gave the *right* to become children of God, to those who believe [by faith] in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' Joh 1:12-13. Moreover, Paul wrote, 'It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm [or be planted] and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery [by living according to the other law]'. Gal 5:1.

## **Creation, the context for God's covenant plan**

The outworking of God's Everlasting Covenant plan commenced with the creation of the heavens and the earth. Gen 1:1. After creating the heavenly realm and the angels, and then the natural realm and mankind, Yahweh *Elohim* planted a garden in the region of Eden. He established this garden as the headquarters of His administration. Furthermore, the garden of Eden was the source of life for the whole of the earth. For example, the river that watered the garden of Eden was a type of 'the river of life' coming from the throne of God. From Eden, it split into four rivers that watered the four corners of the known earth. Gen 2:10-14.

The Lord placed the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in the garden of Eden. Gen 2:9. These trees were the food to sustain the two orders of God's administration. The tree of life was the food that belonged to man, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the food that belonged to the angels.

### *The creation of angels*

Angels are ministering spirits who were created to uphold and perform the word of the Lord within creation, as servants to the heirs of salvation. Psa 103:20-21. Heb 1:14. The angels were perfect, or fully complete, from the day that they were created. Eze 28:15. The Lord gave each angel the wisdom that was necessary for them to fulfil their mandate. For example, before Lucifer fell, he was 'full of wisdom and perfect in beauty'. Eze 28:12.

The knowledge of good and evil belongs to the angelic order of creation. The fruit of this tree was to sustain them in their work of maintaining and upholding the laws of the natural creation. Lucifer was one of the chief angels of this order. Describing Lucifer before iniquity was found in him, the Lord said, 'You were the seal of perfection, *full of wisdom* and perfect in beauty. *You were in Eden, the garden of God.*' Eze 28:12-13. We also note that when Eve heeded Satan's proposition, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil appeared 'desirable to *make one wise*'. Gen 3:6.

### *The creation of mankind*

We read in the book of Genesis that 'God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them'. Gen 1:27. This happened on the sixth day of creation. Gen 1:31. The Lord formed the male body of Adam from the dust of the earth. He then formed the spirit of man within him when He breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives. The body of Adam was formed in a fully mature state. However, he was not yet complete, in terms of his predestination, because he had not yet been born from above as a son of God.

In contrast to this, the woman was not created from the dust of the ground, and nor did the Lord breathe into her nostrils. The spirit and body of the woman was formed by the Lord from a rib that He took from the side of the man. Gen 2:21-22. In this creative action, the Lord formed the spirit of the woman from the man. This was a new creation. The woman's spirit was 'one spirit' with the man's spirit because she was formed from him, and was created for him. 1Co 11:9.

When the Lord brought the woman to Adam, he said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.' Gen 2:23. He then continued by stating that this same operation is the order for all marriages within the covenant of God.

On this point, Moses wrote, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'.  
Gen 2:24.

Adam and Eve's creation as *living souls* was the first stage of God's plan for mankind. In contrast with the angels, Adam and Eve were not full of wisdom in the day of their creation. As they communed each day with Yahweh at the tree of life, Adam and Eve's mortality was sustained. Furthermore, they received direction and wisdom for the works that Yahweh had prepared for them in the garden of Eden. Adam was to cultivate and maintain the garden; the woman was to help Adam in his work.

As we considered in Part 3 of *The Steps of Salvation*, cultivating the garden of Eden involved much more than pruning and fertilising plants. The prophetic Scriptures reveal to us that the trees that God caused to grow in the paradise of God were symbolic of the destinies of nations and of individuals. For example, the Lord described the nation of Assyria as being a mighty cedar tree. He said, 'No tree in God's garden could compare with it in its beauty. I made it beautiful with the multitude of its branches, and all the trees of Eden, which were in the garden of God, were jealous of it.' Eze 31:8-9. By referring to the nations as trees that He had planted in the garden of Eden, Yahweh was indicating that He was the origin and source of their destinies. Adam's service required him to perceive, understand and cultivate these destinies, by attending to the plants in the garden.

According to His immutable plan, God had predestined Adam to become a son of God. It would happen 'at the right time'. Rom 5:6. Adam was warned by God that the order of seed-life to which he had been appointed could be reduced from blessing to cursing if he turned aside to the knowledge of good and evil. The fruit of this tree was *angels' food*. Gen 2:17. 1Co 10:21. It was not for him to eat, because it was not the provision for his life and destiny. To think that it could serve such a purpose would be a delusion. Yahweh said that it would not bring him life. Instead, it would result in death. Gen 2:16-17.

### **Food for God's creation**

We noted earlier that to sustain and nourish the creation, 'the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' Gen 2:9. The fruit of the tree of life was food

for mankind, and the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was food for the angels. Let us now consider what this food was, and how Yahweh *Elohim* made it available to sustain men and angels.

The principle of offering, demonstrating seed-life, was first seen when Yahweh the Son emptied Himself, by Eternal Spirit, to reveal the Father. He emptied Himself to an endpoint, or death, and then was brought forth by the command of the Father as the Son and Seed of God. Php 2:5-7. Heb 1:5. This offering revealed the life of Yahweh. He lives by this principle of offering, and it is the means by which His life is multiplied. It is *His food*. We note, in this regard, that Yahweh described the continual burnt offering as, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me'. Num 28:2.

The offering fellowship of Yahweh is an enfolding fire that reveals the love of God. Eze 1:4. Son 8:6-7. Love is God's Law. Mar 12:29-31. It is symbolised by the enfolding fire that motivates the administrations of God. In this regard, His Royal Law is common to the administrations of both men and angels. Mankind was predestined to live by offering in the fire of Yahweh's fellowship. The Holy Spirit, who is likened to a fire, writes the Law of God into the hearts of the sons of God by pouring the love of God into their hearts. Act 2:3-4. Heb 10:15-16. Rom 5:5. The angels were created to uphold and serve the Law of God. We note that Satan coveted the destiny that belonged to man. In presumption, he endeavoured to move from being a servant to the Law of love, to having the life of God in himself.

The Spirit of life in Christ, which is manifest by this offering of love, has four dimensions that are revealed by the four faces of His administration - a lion (kingship), an ox (prophetic priesthood), a man (teaching), and an eagle (fatherhood).

When God created man in His image and likeness, He predestined us to live by this same offering life. A person receives the Spirit of the Son when they are born of incorruptible seed through the word of God which lives and abides forever, and then come into Christ through baptism. 1Pe 1:23. Gal 4:6. Col 2:6,11-12. Christ abides in them, and they abide in Him. By this means, His life has become their life. Gal 2:20. Jesus explained that this is the implication of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Joh 6:53-54. Joh 6:56. Christ is the tree of life. The fruit of the tree of life is the Spirit of Christ, which is our food as we eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood.

In the image and likeness of God, having received the Spirit of life, and having been joined to the fellowship of Yahweh's offering, the sons of God have a participation in the fellowship of the four dimensions of life that belong to the Son. In this regard, the law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus enables us to be a son of God with a unique name and expression (the face of the lion), a brother-priest (the face of the ox), a friend-disciple (the face of the man), and a husband-father or wife-mother (the face of the eagle), who lives in one Spirit with the Lord and with their brethren as part of the body of Christ.

Angels are unable to eat the food that belongs to the sons of God; they cannot eat the fruit of the tree of life. This is because they were not created in the image and likeness of God. As we considered earlier, angels, who are mighty in power, were created to serve the heirs of salvation. Heb 1:14. That is, they are servants of the Spirit of Christ in its four dimensions. This is particularly demonstrated in the cherubim, who are the chief angels of the angelic administration.

Ezekiel described the cherubim as having the likeness of four living creatures and the appearance of men. Each cherub had four faces - the face of the lion, the face of the ox, the face of an eagle, and the face of a man. The four faces reveal the four aspects of the Spirit of Christ. Ezekiel said that each living creature went straight forward; they went where the Spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went. Eze 1:12. That is, they live by the knowledge of good and evil.

The four living creatures reveal the motivation of the Spirit of Christ and obediently fulfil the mandate that they have received from Him. The capacity to do this is from the Spirit of Christ. In this regard, we note that the Spirit of Christ is the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. His Spirit is the food that provides the angels with the capacity to fulfil their function as servants of the Spirit of Christ and of the heirs of salvation.

## **A Lamb for the Father's house**

The feasts of Israel signified the immutable times and seasons of God's Everlasting Covenant plan. The first and primary feast of the Israelite year was Passover. The Feast of Passover was celebrated in the month of Nisan, which the Lord established as 'the *beginning* of months'. Exo 12:2. The Passover was Yahweh *Elohim's* provision to deliver the children of Israel from their captivity in Egypt and to bring them to Himself as His firstborn nation. Exo 4:22-23. They were to serve Him as a whole kingdom

of priests. Exo 19:6. The lamb for the Passover was taken on the tenth day of Nisan, and was then sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the month.

We noted earlier that the fulfilment of God's immutable covenant purpose began with the creation of the heavens and the earth. Establishing this point, Moses wrote, 'In the *beginning* God created the heavens and the earth'. Gen 1:1. Adam was created on the sixth day, and woman was formed from man at the conclusion of this day. Accepting that one day with the Lord is a thousand years, Adam was created six thousand years following the beginning of creation. Psa 90:4. 2Pe 3:8. This also means that Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden for approximately three thousand years before the next phase of God's plan was initiated. During this time, they were to faithfully persevere in the work that God has set for them. This was a time in which the will of God for their lives was being proven, or established. Rom 5:4.

The tenth day of God's covenant plan was the time when the Father would set forth His Son as the Lamb for His house. Through the offering of this Lamb, mankind would be able to multiply and fill the earth, and become a kingdom of priests who were born of God's life. However, only a short time before the Lamb was taken, Satan deceived the woman and incited Adam to rebellion. Instead of patiently enduring, as those who had entrusted their souls to a faithful Creator, they gave heed to Satan's lie that proposed another way to life and fruitfulness.

### **The deception of Satan**

Before Adam was created, Lucifer had rebelled against God, leaving his estate, and corrupting his wisdom through the pursuit of his own glory. Eze 28:17. Joh 7:18. He began to speak from his own wisdom, rather than to serve the expression of Yahweh as one of the cherubs who covers the ark of the covenant. Jesus described this enterprise as a lie. Joh 8:44. Satan's lie was a self-sourced projection. It was not who the Lord had created Lucifer to be. By speaking from himself, he turned his wisdom, which was to facilitate life, into cursing that produced death. He endeavoured to make himself an alternative fatherhood to God. In this regard, we note the words of Jesus, who said, '[Satan] speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.' Joh 8:44.

Satan became the father of delusion in mankind by the use of illusion and the projections of fantasy. By this, we mean that he misrepresented the sanctifying elements of God's immutable purpose for mankind, and presented angels' food as a favourable means of transcending these

limits. The sanctifying elements, or confines, of God's immutable purpose for mankind, with which Satan endeavoured to trade, included *time*, *freedom* and the necessity to *live by every word that proceeded* to them in fellowship with Yahweh at the tree of life. Satan proposed that these confines were limits that God had placed upon Adam and Eve. He attacked God's motives, implying that God was keeping something from Adam and Eve that was, otherwise, within their reach. He proposed that they were not free at all, and that true freedom was the exercise of their own will. He presented the illusion that multiplication and freedom within creation could be obtained by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

It is important to note that Adam and the woman were fully satisfied in the garden of Eden as they walked together in fellowship with Yahweh at the tree of life. They were not created by the Lord with *another law* in their heart. They did not have any inclination or motivation to create an alternative image for themselves. It was the word of Satan that fathered an alternative image for the man and the woman. His word was a lie and this alternative image was an illusion. It was not real. It was only as Adam and Eve heeded the word of Satan by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that this illusion was given substance. The food gave energy to the illusion so that it became a delusion within them.

Satan pressed the woman, with a spirit of deception, to be *God-like*. He said to her, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' Gen 3:4-5. Satan's lie, by the use of illusion, motivated desire in Eve. This desire was covetousness. Jas 4:2-3. She coveted wisdom and knowledge that did not belong to her. By heeding Satan's lie, the woman saw herself as the one who, like God, had the *capacity to multiply the identities of mankind* and to nurture them with the wisdom that she had received from the knowledge of good and evil. Eve directed this covetous desire towards Adam, expecting that he would also become God-like and would facilitate the romantic image of God-likeness to which she aspired. The desire for God-likeness became the expression of another law within the woman.

Significantly, Satan was able to breach the 'one spirit' relationship between the man and the woman. Although she had been formed by God from a rib that had been removed from Adam, the woman rejected the reality that she was created to be the glory of man. 1Co 11:7. Instead, in the pursuit of God-likeness, the woman aspired to be the glory of God. By

partaking of the knowledge and wisdom that belonged to the angels, in an endeavour to be like God, Eve subverted the headship of her husband, Adam. Paul described this as uncovering her head through the pursuit of life and expression outside of the order established by God. 1Co 11:5. This brought her and her family under the angels and made them susceptible to demonic oppression. With this understanding, we note the significance of Paul's instruction, 'The woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels'. 1Co 11:10.

Paul highlighted the fact that Adam was not deceived by the serpent. Rather, Satan incited the man to pride, through the woman, which caused him to rebel against Christ as his Head. While Eve wanted to be God-like, Adam desired to be like the angels who are greater than men in might and power. 2Pe 2:11. When Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he disconnected himself from the headship of Christ. Having subverted Christ's headship by endeavouring to live in a way other than by every word that proceeds from God, Adam now lived in a way whereby the knowledge of good and evil became a lust within him. He coveted rulership over the creation, which he believed he could exercise with this knowledge. This desire became another law within him by which he now lived. It was an alternative to the Law of love in Christ. He then directed this new law toward Eve to rule over her.

Through Eve, Adam had received an invitation from Satan to intrude into a realm that belongs to the angels - that is, the knowledge of good and evil. Col 2:18. He had been vainly puffed up by the word of Satan, believing that, with this knowledge, he could strive for supremacy in creation. By eating the food of angels, Adam gave worth to Satan's lie and, therefore, took delight in the worship of angels. Col 2:18. However, because of his pride and wilful disobedience, Adam was cheated of the reward of sonship that God had prepared for him in Christ. This is because he had not held fast to Christ, his Head, 'from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, *grows with the increase that is from God*'. Col 2:19. Pride was the source of Satan's fall, and became the cause of Adam's fall. Eze 28:17. Pro 29:23.

### The implications of the fall of mankind

The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil did not 'father' anything in Adam and Eve. Rather, the word of Satan created the illusion of another image for themselves. Satan proposed that they could eat *angels' food* to sustain this image, which he had fathered as an illusion.

When they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the image became substantial as *another law* in their hearts. Rom 7:23. They were now deluded because the other law was part of their identity and affected the way in which they perceived and understood themselves. Having become part of their identity, this delusion was passed on to all their children – the whole human race.

By heeding Satan's lie and pursuing a provision that was outside the order of seed-life to which they had been appointed by God, blessing was turned to cursing for Adam and Eve, and for the whole of mankind. Death spread to all men, because all sinned. Rom 5:12. Where the principle of the seed should have brought forth life for the sons and daughters of Adam, it brought forth a curse. This is the point that James was making when he wrote, 'But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death'. Jas 1:14-15. Using the language that we would typically associate with seed-life, James was highlighting the reality that those who are of the flesh bring forth death rather than life.

The other law in Eve was the desire for God-likeness. Speaking of the curse that resulted from the expression of this desire, the Lord said, 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.' Gen 3:16. Motivated by the other law within her, the woman would impose this desire upon her husband and family. However, her husband would never be able to fulfil her desire, because he either would endeavour to rule over her or would acquiesce to her desire by divesting himself of any initiative. In doing so, he would fall short of the romantic God-likeness to which she aspired for herself, for them as a couple, and for their family. The drive and failure of her desire would multiply anxiety within her, which would only be exacerbated by the expression of her husband's other law.

The other law in Adam was the desire for dominance and rulership through his own wisdom and power. With this knowledge, he would strive to rule over his family – his wife and the human race who would come from them – and indeed over the whole creation. The Lord God said to Adam that the context in which he endeavoured to exercise rulership and dominance would be *cursed*. Gen 3:17. This meant that he would eat through the toil of his hands and the sweat of his brow. The ground, or context, of his labours, would bring forth thorns and thistles.

Gen 3:17-18. In other words, his dominance over creation would be frustrated.

The other law in Adam and Eve became the source of enmity in their marriage. It is the source of enmity in every marriage. The will of both the man and the woman, motivated by the other law, is not passive. It causes the woman to impose her desire for *God-likeness* upon her husband. It causes the man to impose his desire for dominion and rulership upon his wife. There is no resolution for this enmity outside of the fellowship of Christ's offering. It is only through the cross that the enmity within the family can be addressed and removed.

### *Time and chance*

Prior to his fall, and while he remained aligned with God's plan and provision for him, Adam lived from day to day under the preserving grace of the Holy Spirit. This is because it was the Holy Spirit who sanctified each day to its purpose so that the labour of Adam was blessed. Once disconnected from the headship of Christ, Adam received no grace from Christ. For this reason, he had no capacity to subdue and supervise creation. Gen 1:28. The natural order fell into confusion. Each species was now competing for survival by struggling for supremacy.

By giving heed to Satan's lie, mankind had chosen to pursue a way of life other than seed-life. Consequently, his life was no longer sanctified, or ordered, in relation to the immutability of God's plan. He was ensnared in disorder. As a consequence of the curse that resulted from Adam's disobedience, time was cut loose from the sanctifying supervision of the Holy Spirit. The order of life was disrupted. Instead of life being sanctified by the Holy Spirit and, by this means, brought to maturity, time was subjected to chance.

Mankind's carefulness, or attempts to minimise chance, cannot preserve them from the evil day when the vagaries of time and chance overtake them. In this regard, their plight, as they fight for survival, is no different from that of the animals. As Solomon noted, 'The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill; but *time and chance happen to them all*. For man also does not know his time: like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them'. Ecc 9:11-12.

Further to this, mankind was cut off from the life of God that preserved him in his mortality. The aging processes came upon him. He suffered as his physical body failed him and, beset with suffering, he finally succumbed to death. This fulfilled the word of God concerning the implications of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Lord had said to Adam, 'In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' Gen 2:17.

### *Conflict*

Having been severed from Christ, mankind is driven by the desire of the other law to survive by the exercise of supremacy through the knowledge of good and evil. That is, he now attempts to enforce this supremacy upon creation and his fellow man. Warfare, driven by covetousness, has become part of the psyche of mankind. James identified this propensity, writing, 'Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.' Jas 4:1-3.

Notably, if a man perceives that he is the victim of the curse upon the ground, he will vacate his mandate and look to follow someone who leads in the mode of Satan. Following such a leader will make him feel as though he is recovering dominion. It may cause a man to metaphorically 'go to war' for various self-righteous causes. The fruit of the knowledge of good and evil in a man is often self-righteous anger. We observe this principle in Cain, who killed Abel in a jealous rage. Cain was angry because the Lord had accepted Abel's offering but had not accepted the offering that he had brought from the fruit of his labours. Gen 4:4-8. This self-righteous anger was fully manifest in Lamech who said, 'I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me.' Gen 4:23.

In summary, the curse of competition and dying frustrate the ideals of the other law that were fathered in mankind by Satan. Women are unable to attain the God-likeness to which they aspire for themselves and their families; men are unable to rule over the creation or to remain in control of their lives. The result of the curse is frustration, cursing and grief. This is exacerbated within families who remain in bondage to this fallen, fleshly, mode of living. The Scriptures describe the suffering and death that has overtaken mankind and creation as 'the body of death'. Rom 7:24.

## The provision of a lamb

Death was the outcome of Adam and Eve's disobedience to God's word and direction for their lives. They were dying because they had separated themselves from the life that belonged to them in the fellowship of Yahweh. They had exchanged the reality of their creation in the image and likeness of God for the lie that they could become the source of their own image. Because of this sin, they had come under the judgement of the law of God. God's law is *love*. The Scriptures liken the love of God to a vehement flame that waters are unable to quench. Son 8:6. The fire of Yahweh's fellowship will not abide any corruption. Adam and Eve were now condemned to eternal death.

However, the Lamb for the Father's house was taken on the tenth day. The Lamb of God was the provision for the fulfilment of Yahweh *Elohim's* covenant will. Gen 22:8. As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, Yahweh's offering, which was made in freedom, was able to embrace and resolve every issue that could arise in the outworking of Their immutable covenant plan.

The first expression of this offering toward Adam and Eve was the *word* of Yahweh *Elohim*. God's word is a light that shines in the darkness. Psa 119:105. Joh 1:1-5. It is, in fact, the light that shines from the Lamb of God. Rev 21:23. Because of shame, Adam and Eve hid themselves. Gen 3:8. Yet, in mercy and grace, the Lord God took an initiative, by His word, to find them so that He could restore them to relationship with Himself. As the Scripture recorded, 'Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" ' Gen 3:9. The light of the word had come to Adam and Eve who were in darkness because they had hidden themselves.

The Lord spoke to them about the implications of their sin and the means by which they could be recovered to His plan for their lives. He said to Adam, 'Cursed is the ground *for your sake*.' Gen 3:17. God cursed the ground, making it the context for the sons of men to participate, *by faith*, in the sufferings of Christ. Php 3:10. We know that fellowship in the sufferings of Christ was implied in the Old Covenant and stated as a fundamental principle in the New Covenant. Paul said that Moses chose 'to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward'. Heb 11:25-26.

By faith, a believer was able to accept the cursed conditions in which they lived as being a participation in the offering of Christ, which was once and for all time. In the fellowship of these sufferings, the other law, which motivates man to rule over the natural creation, can be circumcised from his heart. The Lord also greatly increased the woman's sorrow in childbearing as the context for her to join the sufferings of Christ so that the other law, which motivated her desire to be *God-like*, could be circumcised from her heart.

The curse upon the ground should cause a man who lives by faith to cease from striving for dominion and, instead, to submit himself to the headship of Christ. As he receives the word of the Lord, he is able to learn how to bring forth the good fruit of sonship, and to lead his family. Similarly, the sorrow of childbearing should cause a woman of faith to cease from striving to be *God-like* and, rather, to submit herself to the headship of her husband. As she receives the word of the Lord, she is able to learn how to nurture the life of God in her children. When a husband and wife embrace their unique participation in the sufferings of Christ, they become co-heirs of the grace of life in the order of headship that God established in the beginning of the creation. 1Pe 3:1-7.

In Christ, even conflict within a marriage becomes part of the sufferings through which the other law is circumcised from both the husband and the wife. The woman's desire for *God-likeness* is a source of pain for her husband. Likewise, the husband's desire for dominion is a source of pain for his wife. This pain must be embraced as part of a circumcising work in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. When a husband and wife embrace this process in faith, their relationship can be realigned so that grace is received through proper fellowship in headship order. The communication of faith is the necessary ingredient. This faith comes from Christ, and is received at the communion table by hearing the word of God. Rom 10:17.

We note that Adam received grace from the offering of the Lamb to call his wife 'Eve'. Gen 3:20. As the woman received this word from her husband, the Lord did a work in her physical body that enabled her to reveal the glory of mankind as the mother of all living. The diversity of all the nations of the world were resident within Eve.

It is evident that animals were sacrificed by the Lord God on behalf of Adam and Eve, because He made tunics from the skins of animals to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve's shame. Gen 3:21. Although lambs are not directly referenced in this account as the animals that were

sacrificed for Adam and Eve, there is little doubt that lambs were offered. We note, for example, that Yahweh described the offering of lambs for a continual burnt offering in Israel as, 'My offering, My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me'. Num 28:2-3.

The blood of these offerings was shed for the atonement of Adam and Eve. Lev 17:11. By this means, they received the forgiveness of sins, and were recovered to fellowship with the Lord. The sin offering and burnt offering became their point of ongoing fellowship with Yahweh. They were to make offering at the gate of the garden of Eden. Their offerings were to be made in faith as their connection to the offering of the Lamb of God on the cross. Christ's offering was foreshadowed in the prophetic Scriptures to take place at the evening of the fourteenth day after creation. This was fourteen thousand years from the beginning of creation. The Scriptures described those who made offering in this manner as the sons of God who called on the name of the Lord. Gen 4:26.

Through participation in the sin offering, a person was recovered to the order of seed-life to which they had been appointed by God. As they received faith, by hearing and receiving God's word, they were assured of their inheritance as a son of God. This is because, by faith, they understood that this inheritance was *in Christ*. In this regard, Paul wrote, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth'. Heb 11:13. Their point of assurance was the sin offering that God established to recover every individual to His plan and purpose for their life. Speaking of Christ who became the sin offering for the whole world, the prophet Isaiah declared, 'When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.' Isa 53:10.

### Satan's food

Satan fell because he coveted the predestination that belonged to man. Following the fall of mankind, God cursed Satan, saying, 'On your belly you shall go, and *you shall eat dust* all the days of your life.' Gen 3:14. Satan had no capacity to eat from the tree of life, and now he was unable to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When the Lord said that Satan would eat dust all the days of His life, He was referring to the dust from which man had been created. The only way that Satan

would then sustain and empower himself would be to consume and devour *mankind*.

Satan can feed upon the flesh of mankind because fallen man has been deceived by him and is willing to trade with him everything that he has for the sake of saving his own life. As Satan himself said, 'Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.' Job 2:4. Satan is the ruler of this world because he has deceived mankind and holds the whole world in bondage to the fear of death. Heb 2:14-15. The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. 1Jn 5:19. However, the rulership of Satan in the world is *nothing more than dust in his mouth*. It does not have any capacity to sustain him.

The only way by which Satan is energised, or empowered, is when he feeds upon those who are themselves feeding upon the offering of Yahweh. For this reason, we could suggest that he is selective in relation to his food. For example, at the first communion service, Jesus warned Peter that Satan had targeted him. He said to Peter, 'Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.' Luk 22:31. What did He mean by this?

Under the Old Covenant, sifted wheat, beaten into flour, was the meal offering portion of the offering of the morning and evening lamb. As we noted earlier, Yahweh described this continual burnt offering as His 'offering' and His 'food'. Num 28:2-3. Jesus gave the bread (meal) and wine of communion to His disciples as a participation in His offering as the Lamb of God. Because Peter had eaten this food, Satan desired to feed on him. Peter was vulnerable to Satan because of his self-righteous zeal, which was motivated by his other law. Having been the target of Satan's appetite, Peter himself warned us to 'be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour'. 1Pe 5:8.

We can identify progressive stages of Satan's empowerment by misappropriation that are commensurate with the provision that God has given to His people. Satan was empowered by the misappropriation of the Law of God when the Lord made a covenant with the flesh of the nation of Israel in the wilderness. The Law became the most powerful weapon in his hands. However, it was not until the priests were given access to heavenly places, following the exile in Babylon, that Satan regained his access to heavenly places. Zec 3:6-7. Job 1:6-7. He regained this access, by misappropriation, because of the corruption of offering among the priests and the Jewish remnant at that time. Mal 1:10. Dan 8:9-14.

## The temptation of Jesus

Following His baptism, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit, where He was tempted by the devil for forty days. During this time, Satan confronted Jesus with the same illusions with which he had tempted Eve and Adam. This was the temptation to sever Himself from the word of the Father by exercising His own prerogative over the natural creation, the kingdoms of the world, and the angelic host of heaven.

### *The temptation to turn stones to bread*

Having eaten nothing for forty days, Jesus suffered hunger. Luk 4:1-2. Satan came to Jesus in the midst of His suffering and tempted Him to misdirect His supernatural powers for the sake of His natural survival. He refused this temptation and, in faith-obedience, He stated His commitment to live only by the proceeding word of the Father. Luk 4:3-4.

Christ did only the works that the Father had given Him to do, by command. In this regard, He confessed, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.' Joh 4:34. Likewise, as those who are filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, we also are to live only by the proceeding word of God. This is to be the sustenance and expression of our life. To compensate for our suffering in some other way is a corruption of the way in which we are called to live. This is because the Father, only, is the source of life. This life is multiplied to us in the fellowship of Christ's offering.

As practising Christians, we will be tempted to turn the stones of human philosophy and worldly ideology into bread that we can live by. This wisdom is the wisdom that is from beneath, which James described as being earthly, sensual and demonic. Jas 3:15. A person who presumes to do this will view the word of the cross as weak and foolish. 1Co 1:23. Believing in their own understanding, they are unable to recognise that what they consider to be 'enlightenment' is, in reality, darkness. Jesus said that when a person calls their darkness, 'the light', their darkness is very great indeed. Mat 6:23.

Every temptation that we face is common to man, and we are constantly pressed to live in the world in conformity to the wisdom that is from beneath. 1Co 10:13. In his epistle, James, the Lord's brother, quoted the Proverb, 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'. Jas 4:6. Pro 3:34. He then said that we, through grace, should humbly submit ourselves to God and we will receive power to resist the devil when he

comes to tempt us to live by the wisdom that is from beneath. If we resist the devil by the power of God's grace, he will flee from us.

### *The temptation of idolatry*

Satan's next temptation was to offer Jesus authority over the nations of the earth in return for worshipping him. Luk 4:5-7. To worship Satan would be to value and adopt the way by which he functions. Satan fell because of the multitude of his trading. Eze 28:16. Trading is the antithesis of offering. Offering involves laying down one's life, by Eternal Spirit, to reveal another. In contrast, Satan endeavours to *reveal himself* by speaking from his own resources. Joh 8:44. Revealing oneself is the pursuit of a *projection*; it is not the truth of who the person is. This is why Jesus said that Satan is a *liar*. Joh 8:44.

Regarding this mode of expression, Jesus also explained that 'he who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him'. Joh 7:18. Satan's mode was to speak from his own wisdom rather than to reveal the glory of another. This is why iniquity was found in him.

In effect, Satan was tempting Jesus to pursue ministry success through idolatry. By speaking from His own resources, Jesus would obtain power over the nations, recover all people to Himself, and accomplish His ministry objectives. This, of course, was not the way that Jesus conducted Himself. Instead, He said, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve".' Luk 4:8.

Christ's ministry was to reveal the Father. He did not pursue power over the nations for selfish identity verification. Rather, in obedience to the Father, and by Eternal Spirit, He laid down His life for our sakes. Through the weakness of the cross, He conquered sin and death, and took captivity captive. 1Co 15:55-57. Eph 4:8.

### *The temptation for angelic intervention*

For the third temptation of Christ, Satan brought Jesus to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you," and, "In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone".' Luk 4:9-11. Satan was quoting from Psalm 91. Psa 91:11-12. The opening verses of this psalm describe the safety that a son of God finds under the wings of the Almighty. Psa 91:1,4.

Jesus answered Satan, saying, 'It has been said, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God".' Luk 4:12. Jesus was quoting from the book of Deuteronomy, where Moses had reminded the children of Israel of the Lord's provision for them in Massah. Deu 6:16. On this occasion, the people had set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the *commandment* of the Lord. However, there was no water for them to drink. Exo 17:1. The Israelites tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' Exo 17:7. Their belief in the command, or word, of the Father depended on whether their needs were met.

Jesus could have called the angels to minister to Him in the midst of His suffering. However, if He had done so, it would have been outside the parameters of His obedience to the word of the Father. In Gethsemane, at the commencement of His offering journey, He exemplified this point, saying, 'Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures [communicating the will of the Father] be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?' Mat 26:53-54.

Significantly, after the temptation of Jesus was finished, the angels came and ministered to Him. Mat 4:11. We note that, similarly, the Angel of the Lord ministered food and drink to Elijah to sustain him for the journey that he was to make according to the word of the Lord. 1Ki 19:5-7. The Scriptures record that Elijah 'arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God'. 1Ki 19:8.

### **The offering of the Lamb**

Having been appointed as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, Christ offered Himself as a lamb without spot to God. 1Pe 1:19. His declaration, 'Not My will, but Yours, be done', defined the nature of His offering. Luk 22:42. His offering was according to the will of the Father and for the purpose of bringing everyone who had been lost to God through the disobedience of Adam, back from the death of sin.

Christ suffered as He offered Himself by Eternal Spirit. His sufferings were at the hands of wicked men. Act 2:23. They were the sufferings that He experienced because of the abuse of our sin. This abuse, if not atoned for, qualified every person for eternal death. Christ made this abuse His own sufferings. He received them as a just punishment and judgement for our sin, bearing our reproach as it was laid on Him by the Father. Psa 69:9. Rom 15:3.

Concerning this offering, the apostle Peter wrote, 'For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God'. 1Pe 3:18. Peter was not saying that Christ suffered for us, vicariously, for the sole purpose of satisfying the justice of God. Peter was saying that Christ received the abuse of our sin as a just punishment and judgement so *that He might bring us to God!* How did He do this?

Jesus, through offering, received upon Himself the whole body of death – the suffering and death that had overtaken all of mankind and creation. To be clear, Christ was not simply suffering the specific sentence metered out for the sin of each individual. If this were so, He could have suffered this judgement and dismissed it in an instant. Rather, Christ's sufferings were *for our sake*. Christ made our suffering to be His. Then, through offering, He drew these sufferings into a process that made them necessary for the fulfilment of God's covenant purpose. Our suffering in the fellowship of His offering became necessary for our deliverance from sin. It became the context and provision for our birth as sons of God, and a feature of the pathway upon which we are able to mature to fruitful perfection.

As we noted above, Jesus could have resolved the issues of our judgement and punishment because of our sin, in an instant. However, the journey of His offering established time as a feature of our fellowship in His offering as the Seed of God. Christ appointed to each of our days its quotient of offering, and personally suffered what was necessary for our lives. He enabled us, through Eternal Spirit, to be joined to Him in our sufferings. Through His offering, He brought grace, or *exanastasis*, into the realm of time and chance, and brought us again under the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' Heb 9:14.

Consider, for example, the experience of the disciple Peter. He was a self-righteous, religious zealot who believed in his own integrity and sight over and against the word of the Lord. Mat 26:35. He believed that he was like the Son of God in his readiness to die for a just cause, and endeavoured to triumph over his enemies through the strength of his own hand. Joh 13:37. Joh 18:10. However, the iniquitous condition of his heart was revealed when, in the midst of trauma and under pressure, Peter denied Jesus three times. Mar 14:66-72. At this point, Peter, who

had lusted for God-likeness and dominance over his rivals, was revealed to be an enemy of God and of the cross! Col 1:21. Php 3:18-19.

The Scriptures teach us that Jesus was bruised for our iniquities. Isa 53:5. This happened in the court of Caiaphas, while Peter was denying Jesus. Through His suffering, Jesus certainly received the penalty for Peter's sin. However, this was not the goal of His offering. Rather, Jesus gathered up this punishment as part of His offering for sin.

Jesus suffered as a consequence of Peter's abuse. This suffering caused His blood to be shed. The shedding of Christ's blood was the means by which Peter was reconciled to God, while still an enemy. Rom 5:8,10. Grace and supplication were then poured out upon Peter. Through this ministry of grace and supplication, Peter was able to look into the face of Christ and see the condition of his heart, and to begin to mourn for his sin and its effect on others. Luk 22:61.

From this point, Jesus began to bring Peter to the Father by joining him to the fellowship of His offering journey. The apostle John described this process, writing, 'Jesus said to [Peter], "Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." ' Joh 21:17-19.

The death by which Peter would glorify God was Christ's death. This is the death to which he was being conformed as the Son priested to him a daily participation in the fellowship of His sufferings. Php 3:10. Peter was enabled to walk on the pathway of offering as the Holy Spirit led him each day in the fellowship of Christ's offering. In the fellowship of this offering, Peter was delivered from his sin, and cleansed from his evil conscience that functioned by the knowledge of good and evil. In Christ, he was being connected to the works that the Father had prepared for him as His son. By this means, in the course of time, Peter was progressively changed from glory to glory into the son whom the Father had predestined him to be in Christ. 2Co 3:18. That is, he was maturing as a son of God, and was fulfilling the works that were prepared for him to do before creation.

When Christ was lifted up on the cross, the way to the tree of life was opened to all. His body and blood is the fruit and the seed of the tree of life. Each week, we partake of the bread and wine of communion in faith

for participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. 1Co 10:16. Our faith for this participation belongs to the Son of God. We receive His faith by hearing His word. Gal 2:20. Rom 10:17.

The faith of the Son of God was demonstrated when, in love, He offered Himself for us. When we live by His faith, we are joined to a sanctified process of offering that belongs to the order of seed-life, demonstrated by Christ through His offering on the cross. Joh 12:24. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to persevere on the pathway of our sonship in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Joh 16:13. Heb 10:5-7. Making this wonderful point, Paul wrote, 'But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses.' Rom 8:25-26. In the fellowship of Christ's offering, we live by His life, and are becoming the son whom the Father predestined us to be. Gal 2:20.



## Chapter 5

# Showing forth Christ's death as a culture

### The nature of death

When John the Baptist first saw Jesus, he declared, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, "After me comes *a Man* who is preferred before me, for He was *before me*".' Joh 1:29-30. The next day, John saw Jesus and said to two of his disciples, 'Behold! The Lamb of God!' Joh 1:35-36. As the Lamb of God, Jesus embodied Yahweh's provision for the fulfilment of Their Everlasting Covenant. Abraham prophesied concerning this provision, when he said to Isaac as they ascended Mount Moriah, '[*Elohim*] will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.' Gen 22:8.

Christ offered Himself on the cross as the Lamb of God. This was the manifestation, in time, of Yahweh's offering that was outside of time, or before the beginning of creation. As the Scriptures record, the Lamb was slain 'from [before] the foundation of the world'. Rev 13:8. 1Pe 1:20. By this offering, Yahweh *Elohim's* covenant purpose was both initiated and finished. Heb 4:3. As we noted in Chapter 4, the offering of Yahweh *revealed the love of God*. This was the desire of the Father, Son and Holy

Spirit to create, and bring to glory, a multitude of sons of God. 1Jn 3:1. Yahweh's offering was able to encompass and to provide for every issue that could arise in the outworking of Their covenant plan. This included the fall of mankind.

In this regard, the offering journey of Christ, which Peter said was according to 'the foreknowledge of God', was not a contingency for the expected fall of humanity. Act 2:22-23. Rather, the capacity to atone for a multitude of sins was encompassed by this one offering, which manifested the love of God. Pro 10:12. 1Pe 4:8. Of course, Adam did fall, and mankind was lost to God because of sin. In order for us to be born of God and be joined to the fellowship of Their offering, we needed to be recovered from sin and death.

Christ, by incarnation, became mortal. He came into the world as a life-giving Spirit. His work was to minister resurrection life to our spirits and to our mortal bodies. 1Co 15:45. Rom 8:11. In contrast to the mortal life of the sons and daughters of Adam, Christ had no 'other law' within His Spirit that required circumcision. There was no sin in Christ. He was the full measure of sonship as a mortal man. He did not come short of the glory of God in any way. Heb 12:15.

Paul explained that Christ had been made in the likeness of sinful flesh for the express purpose of condemning sin and putting it to death in the flesh. Rom 8:3. The Father made the Son an offering for sin. Isa 53:10. He did this so that we might become sons of God, in Christ. 2Co 5:21. As a sin offering, the death that Christ died, He died to sin and lived to God. Rom 6:11. *This became a unique expression of sin and death.* Christ's death, which was because of our sin, was not the same death that mankind died in Adam. Our death is because of disobedience; Christ's death as a sin offering was the outcome of His obedience! Php 2:8. To understand the difference between our death and Christ's death, it is helpful to consider five aspects of death.

### *Death caused by separation from Yahweh*

The *first* aspect of death was the death of mankind that resulted from their separation from the fellowship and life of Yahweh. We noted in Chapter 4 that Adam and Eve lived in the garden of Eden for approximately three thousand years before the Fall. Their mortal bodies were sustained through their daily communion with Yahweh at the tree of life. They lived by the word that they received from Yahweh each day as they ate the fruit of the tree of life.

When Adam and Eve heeded Satan's lie, and endeavoured to have life in themselves by eating the food that belonged to the angels, they cut themselves off from the fellowship of Yahweh. Consequently, they no longer had access to the source of all life. Their bodies began to age and deteriorate, and they eventually died. Gen 2:17.

Significantly, the whole of creation fell into disorder when Adam separated himself from Yahweh. The subsidiary laws in nature that govern and harmonise biological life on earth were no longer subject to him. Gen 1:28. Following Adam's rejection of Christ as His Head, every living thing began to compete for survival under the new conditions of time and chance that had been imposed upon them. Adam and Eve, and the nations that sprang from them, also became vulnerable to the natural elements, to sickness, to accidents, and to other living creatures who were competing with them for survival. This, with their failing mortality, became the sufferings of death for Adam and Eve.

### *The condemnation of death*

The *second* aspect of death is the implication of transgressing God's 'Royal Law'. Jas 2:8. Death is the penalty for transgressing the Law. However, this is not only because the Law of God punishes those who contravene His word. It is also because death is an inexorable outcome of transgressing the Royal Law. God's Law *is love*. Mar 12:29-31. It defines who God is and the way that He lives. 1Jn 4:16. The Law defines life. The only alternative to life is death. The Royal Law reveals the life and love of God, and it explains and pronounces the judgement of death upon anyone who does not live by the love of God.

The Scriptures describe the love of God as 'a vehement flame that waters cannot quench'. Son 8:6-7. The jealousy of God is a fundamental characteristic of Their love. It reveals Their unyielding commitment to offering in Spirit and in truth. Joh 4:24. Jealousy is, in fact, an aspect of Yahweh's name. As the Lord Himself declared, 'The Lord, *whose name is Jealous*, is a jealous God.' Exo 34:14.

God's jealousy burns against everything that is not an expression of Their love. Moses highlighted this point by describing the presumption of a person who blesses themselves and says, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart.' Deu 29:19. Moses explained that, in the same way that it is impossible for a drunkard to relate with a sober person, the Lord does not spare the man who lives according to the flesh, 'for then the anger of the Lord and *His jealousy would burn against that*

*man*, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the Lord would blot out his name from under heaven'. Deu 29:20.

'Transgressing God's Law' is living by any means other than by the love of God. The fire of His love jealously burns *in judgement* against everything that is contrary to this law of life. Psa 79:5. For this reason, no-one who is self-centred can abide in the fire of His love. As the prophet Isaiah declared, 'The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"' Isa 33:14. The only way that we are able to dwell in the fire of Yahweh's fellowship is to be born of Their life. Then, as we fellowship in the circumcision of Christ, we will be delivered from living according to our own law. Rom 7:23.

### *Eternal death*

The *third* aspect of death is 'eternal death'. This is the death that every person who does not receive the salvation of God will endure for eternity in the lake of fire. Although they will be conscious, those who are condemned to eternal burnings will have no expression, because their spirit resides in a dead and eternally corrupting physical body. Joh 5:29. They will not be able to even voice the anguish of their torment. Rom 3:19. The fire of God's jealous love burns against them in judgement, forever. Describing the torment of this death, the Lord declared, 'And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.' Isa 66:24.

### *Death by offering*

The *fourth* aspect of death is the death associated with offering. This death involves the laying down of one's life, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, to an *endpoint*. Heb 9:14. Paul drew attention to this death, when he exhorted us to have the same mind as Jesus Christ, 'Who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.' Php 2:5-8.

When the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in offering, lay down Their lives by Eternal Spirit to reveal One Another, Their life is multiplied. This life is

not only *revealed in* the Others, but also *reveals* the Others. Within the Godhead, the end of each Person's offering is not in Themselves. If it were, the endpoint of Their offering would be the revelation and promotion of Themselves. Rather, at the point where the One who is offering *ends*, the other Two are *revealed*. As each Person offers in this way, Their life is multiplied to the Others, and overflows from Their fellowship to become the life of the sons of God. This expression of life through death, by offering, where One lays down Their life to reveal Another, is symbolised in Scripture by the life of a seed. Mar 4:28.

Jesus used the picture of a seed to describe His offering on the cross. He said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.' Joh 12:24. According to God's covenant plan, a great multitude would be born of God and brought to glory as His sons through Christ's offering of Himself as the Seed of the Father. Jesus became the Seed of the Father when, as Yahweh Son, He laid down His life, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, to be born by the word of the Father, thus becoming the Son and Seed of the Father. Php 2:6. Heb 1:5. Having been born of the Father, the Son now had the life of the Father in Himself. This was the *zoe*-life of God. The Son of God emptied Himself again to be born of Mary as the Son of Man. When this happened, the life of the Father, which had become the Son's life, was now in His blood as a man. Joh 5:26-27.

In Gethsemane, the Son of Man offered Himself to God. The endpoint of His offering was not in Himself. It was in the hand of the Father, who made Him an offering for sin. Through His eternal priesthood, the Son then offered Himself as the Lamb of God. He was both a sin offering and a burnt offering. His offering as the Son of Man revealed a new death. It was different from the death of Adam's mortality. Paul called Christ's death, 'the death that He died'. Rom 6:10.

### *The death of Christ's mortality*

The *fifth* aspect of death was the death that Christ died. Rom 6:10. The offering of the Son was the provision for the fulfilment of Yahweh's covenant desire. As the Son offered Himself for this purpose, the Father made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. 2Co 5:21. As a sin offering, Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Rom 8:3. Isa 53:10. By this means, He joined us in our death and separation from God. However, He did not join us by sinning. Rather, by the grace of God, and in obedience to the Father, He made our suffering and death to be part of the offering that He was making in His mortality. Heb 2:9.

The love revealed by His offering extended to the furthest reaches of mankind's death and estrangement from God. Christ gathered our mortality, with all of its suffering, sin, and other law, into Himself. By the grace of God, *He made it His death*. Heb 2:9. Then, by the shedding of His blood, He suffered the *fire of judgement* that proceeded from God to destroy us and to thereby rid His creation of our sin and rebellion. Through His offering on the cross, Christ was able to focus the destructive work of God's judgement upon our other law and sin, and to destroy them within us, releasing us from their corrosive effects upon our life.

Through His eternal priesthood, as Christ offered Himself as a living sacrifice, His blood was shed. Christ's blood contained the seed-life of God. This life was multiplied and then given to be our life when His blood was shed and sprinkled on His body. Lev 17:11. The precious blood of Jesus was shed through the seven wounding events that He experienced as He journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary. The life in Christ's blood is 'resurrection life'. As it was shed and sprinkled upon Him, the life of God in the blood of Jesus was bringing Him back from the death of our sin. Heb 13:20. Importantly, it was bringing us back from the death of sin with Him. We see that we are born of God through the sin offering because of the shedding of Christ's blood. As Isaiah prophesied, 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed [sons], He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.' Isa 53:10.

### The Son of Man filled all things

The apostle Paul testified to King Agrippa concerning the hope of obtaining the blessing of sonship. During this encounter, Paul asked them, 'Why should it be thought *incredible* by you [or by anyone] that God raises the dead?' Act 26:8. Paul asked this question because the claim that Jesus was both Yahweh Son and the Son of the Father, who died the death of sin and was raised again in order to redeem His people and to give to them the blessing of Abraham, was a great scandal for the Jews. *For them, it was beyond credibility*. In fact, the proclamation of this message was the very reason why Paul had been arrested by the Jews and was on trial before Agrippa. Act 26:6.

Like Paul, we can ask the question; if the Son could fill all things, why should it be thought incredible that the cross would be unable to kill

Christ? Jesus declared, 'No-one takes [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' Joh 10:18. Christ offered Himself and went infinitely beyond the cross to the endpoint of Yahweh when He died on the cross *as the Son of Man*. Through His offering, as the Son of Man, the Godhead itself was joined to us, and we were joined to Yahweh. As Christ was wounded and bled, Their life was given to us to be our life.

Christ's death on the cross was to redeem us and to give us a participation in His life. The life of Christ was not taken from Him on the cross. By the power of Eternal Spirit, *He laid down His life*, even beyond the death of the cross. The endpoint of His offering was not in Himself; nor was it the cross. The endpoint of His offering was in the hands of the Father. The reproach that the Father laid upon the Son was the fullness and end of eternal judgement. This fullness went beyond the eternal dimension of the lake of fire. By this means, Christ became the full manifestation of reproach and eternal judgement. When He was lifted up on the cross, Christ carried within Himself the judgement that belongs to all who reject the salvation of God. His torment in the three hours of darkness from 12:00pm to 3:00pm revealed the eternal torment that those who die in their sins will endure forever in the lake of fire. Amazingly, for those who turn to Jesus for eternal salvation, He exhausted eternal judgement by the power of Eternal Spirit, bringing it to an end in less than one day!

The sufferings of the cross were the circumcision of Christ for our sake. In descending beyond the lake of fire, He filled all things so that the potential for sin could be completely removed, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. Eph 4:9-10. He searched out and dealt with sin in the entire creation so that no place could be found again for it. Before Christ said, 'It is finished!', He had accomplished all things that were necessary for the administration of mercy and judgement, forever. He then took His life back up again according to the command that He had received from the Father. Joh 10:18.

The significant point to note is that Jesus did this as the Son of Man who had been made like us in every way, so that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. Heb 2:17. This means that, in the fellowship of Christ's offering, we are being delivered from every sin, and also from the other law within us that brings us into captivity to the law of sin and death. Rom 7:23. Because Christ fills all things, sin will never again be able to conquer those who have become new creation sons of God in Him.

Christ's finished work is symbolised by a rod of iron. In the book of Revelation, the imagery of a rod of iron is used to describe Christ's kingship in the new heavens and earth. Rev 12:5. Rev 19:15.

### Joined to the fellowship of Christ's death

When we received Christ into our heart, we were joined to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings that He experienced in His mortality. Christ made the sufferings that are associated with our fallen condition to be His for the purpose of our redemption. The sufferings that we now experience as sons of God are Christ's sufferings, and they are working together for our good. Paul, speaking of these sufferings, and of all the circumstances of life that now befall us, said, 'All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.' Rom 8:28.

Jesus, through His Melchizedek priesthood, has joined us to the twenty-one hour offering journey that He made in His mortal body. Having been joined to the fellowship of this offering, we are able to bear the dying of the Lord Jesus in our physical body, here on earth. 2Co 4:10. Through His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, Christ accomplished our eternal salvation. As a member of His body, we now fellowship with Him in the sufferings that He endured for us. The resurrection life that is resident in His Spirit, and was in His blood, is sprinkled upon our heart, giving life to our spirit, and strength and healing to our mortal body. The apostle Paul was making this point when he wrote, 'If the Spirit of Him 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 dwells in you'. Rom 8:11.

For all who are in Christ, time and chance, which are the conditions of life that resulted from the fall of mankind, *have been suspended*. However, we still live in this fallen world. Accordingly, all of the things that are common to man still befall us. 1Co 10:13. We have accidents; and there are consequences for our own actions and lifestyle decisions. We experience opposition, discrimination, and persecutions from Satan and men. In the midst of these circumstances, God the Father, through Christ, has measured out for us our predestination as sons of God in this world. He has given us His Spirit to motivate us and direct us in the way that we should walk through this world. Joh 16:13. The Holy Spirit also teaches us how to respond to circumstances when they confront us. Luk 12:12. The Spirit of the Father also instructs us, and prompts us on what we are

to say in answer to civil authorities when we are brought before them for judgement. Mat 10:19-20.

In many things, we sin by continuing in our carnality through ignorance. This happens because we fail to heed the direction that the Holy Spirit is giving to us as He leads us by His anointing in our life. When we sin, the blood of Christ is still available for us as we continue in the fellowship of His sufferings. These sufferings become a discipline and a circumcision that chasten us. In the midst of these trials, we learn how to walk according to the Spirit. Through suffering, our attitudes are refined, and we cease from our sin. 1Pe 4:1. For a son of God, after they have come into Christ, all of the choices that impact upon the direction of their life need to come under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Joh 16:13.

Further to this, the apostle Paul spoke of filling up what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ. He explained that this was foundational to the ministry to which the Father had called and separated him. Rom 1:1. He wrote, 'I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God'. Col 1:24-25.

In Part 6 of *The Steps of Salvation*, we addressed this principle, noting that there is certainly no lack in Christ's one offering; it is efficacious, forever. Heb 10:12,14. It is a work that has been finished and made complete for every person. However, what is lacking is the *manifestation* of Christ's sufferings in the daily lives of Christians. Each day, Christians are to manifest the sufferings of Christ's mortality in their flesh. These sufferings are effective for their salvation, and are also the means by which God's life is ministered to others. As Paul said, 'Death is working in us, but life in you.' 2Co 4:12. They also manifest the sufferings of Christ in their mortal bodies because they are members of Christ's body on earth. Our work as Christians, and members of the body of Christ, is to demonstrate and show forth Christ's death until He comes. 1Co 11:26.

## Deliverance from fear

The sufferings experienced by fallen humanity are the harbinger of their death. For this reason, people endeavour to avoid and alleviate suffering at all cost. As Satan observed, 'All that a man has he will give for his life'. Job 2:4. This innate response to suffering by fallen mankind reveals their *fear of death*. Unless they find deliverance through the cross, they will

remain in bondage to this fear as an instinct for the whole of their lives. Heb 2:15.

In contrast, suffering does not impose itself on God's life; that is, suffering does not diminish the capacity of His life. Each wounding event that Christ experienced as He journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary was, in its severity, capable of killing Him. Under this pressure, His mortal body was sustained by resurrection life, enabling Him to fulfil the word of the Father. Rom 8:11. As the apostle John noted, 'For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken".' Joh 19:36.

The sufferings that Christ endured belonged to fallen mankind. However, on our behalf, He embraced the sufferings caused by our sin as His own. Paul made this point when he said, 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that He, by the grace of God, might *taste death for everyone*.' Heb 2:9. Suffering, when imposed on Christ, became part of a process that neutralised and destroyed the motivations that *cause* us to sin. Fellowship in Christ's sufferings is the means by which we are delivered from our sin. 1Pe 4:1.

The Son of God suffered loss when Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam, Eve, and all of the nations that would spring from them, departed from Him. He was left alone in the garden of Eden, which He had established as the place of fellowship with man. The Lord came looking for Adam in the cool of the evening, calling to him, 'Where are you?' Gen 3:8-9. Adam had hidden himself from God because of fear. Gen 3:10. He was no longer in the light. He was now in the darkness and isolation of sin and death.

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus said to the disciples, 'Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will *leave Me alone*.' Joh 16:32. He was speaking of His offering journey which was about to commence in Gethsemane. Here, He would be made the sin of the whole world and would join mankind in their death and separation from God. He would be alone because the sin and suffering of the whole world would be laid on Him. However, Jesus said, 'And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.' Joh 16:32. The Father was with Christ as He journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary. He was bringing Him back from the death of sin by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. Heb 13:20.

Through this offering journey, Christ was progressively *crowned* with glory and honour as He came back from the death of sin by the shedding of His blood. Heb 2:9. James, the brother of Jesus, explained that a *crown of life* is promised to those who love the Lord. Jas 1:12. Those who love the Lord are believers who have been born of God and who are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. That is, they are participants in the fellowship of offering that reveals the love of God.

In His letters to the seven churches of Asia, recorded by John in the book of Revelation, Jesus addressed the subject of receiving a crown of life. He said that the crown of life belongs to a person who is delivered from the fear of death. To the church of Smyrna, He wrote, '*Do not fear* any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. *Be faithful until death*, and I will give you the *crown of life*.' Rev 2:10. We receive the crown of life that Jesus was crowned with as we are conformed to *His death* and endure in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings by the faith that He supplies to us. Php 3:10.

As we persevere in the fellowship of Christ's suffering, we are delivered from fear, because we are being *perfected in love*. 1Jn 4:18. John said that perfect love casts out all fear. This is because a person who lives by love lays their life down to reveal another. They are not seeking to save their own life. Luk 17:33. Those who live this way are established in the fellowship of offering as son-priests in the kingdom of God. The crown of life qualifies them for their service as son-priests in this age, and in the new heavens and earth which are to come. At the end of his life and ministry, Paul was able to testify, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me *the crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.' 2Ti 4:7-8.

## The application of Christ's blood

The process of receiving *exanastasis* through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, is a spiritual, moral reformation, the effect of which lifts us out from among those who are dead in trespasses and sins, while we still live in a mortal body. This happens as we journey in life with Christ in the fellowship of His offering. Attaining to different levels of *exanastasis* is the process of perfection. This was Paul's point when he testified, 'Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I

press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me ... to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.' Php 3:12,16.

Every wound that Christ received caused His blood to be spattered on those who abused Him. His blood contained the life of Yahweh, which John described as 'the light of men'. Joh 1:4. When the blood touches a person who is abusing Christ by abusing the members of His body, that person receives illumination regarding their sin and its effect on Christ. This is the effect of the blood of Christ that *speaks* to them through the message of the cross. Heb 12:24. As a consequence of this painful, goading experience, they will either humble themselves and begin to mourn and repent under the influence of grace and supplication, or they will stop their ears, and gnash their teeth against Christ and His messengers.

It is most important to recognise that Christ's blood was shed on His body at the point of His wounding. In other words, at the point of pain, Christ's life was being multiplied and given to be the life of the world. When, as Christians, we experience pain, we can either recoil from the circumstances that are causing our pain, and seek to save our lives, or we can accept that suffering is the consequence of our sin, and that Christ has made all our sufferings to be His. He then is giving these sufferings *back to us* as a participation in His offering so that we are able to be made alive from the death of our sin, with Him.

The person who seeks to save their own life at the point of pain because of offering, is drawing back from Christ and from the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. They are blind to the reality that Christ is their Burden-Bearer, and that He is making the grace of God available to them, giving aid to them in the midst of their trial. Because of their unbelief, they are unable to avail themselves of the amazing salvation that He has provided for them. Paul warned that if a person draws back in this way, Christ's soul has no pleasure in them. Heb 10:38. This means that His blood is not cleansing them and making them alive. If they persist in unbelief, their sufferings will become a judgement and the foretaste of eternal death.

We see this response in the unrepentant thief who was crucified with Christ. At the point of pain, his demand was 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' Luk 23:39. This thief's expectation was that if Jesus was the Messiah, He should save him from his suffering and death. Evidently, this thief believed that Christ should be a vicarious King and Saviour,

only. This blinded him to his need to participate with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, so that he could be saved from his sin, and from the other law that controlled his life. Consequently, he was relationally hostile to Jesus and remained an enemy of God. Luk 23:40. Rom 8:7. Php 3:18-19.

As Christians, if we do not resist the Spirit when we suffer, we are able to receive illumination concerning the Lord's initiative toward us. Instead of recoiling from our painful circumstances, we can accept that this pain is the suffering of death associated with our sin. Christ has made these sufferings His own and is giving them back to us as a participation in His offering. Having received this understanding, we are, through patient endurance, able to overcome sin as the other law is being circumcised from our heart. In this process, our heart is being sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our body is being washed with the water of the word. Heb 9:14. The effect of the word and life of God upon our life is the healing of our spiritual sight. We are progressively delivered from viewing our life from the perspective of what is good or evil for us. We are then able to serve God, in obedience to His word, by the capacity of His life which has become our life!

Two thieves were crucified with Christ on the day that He died. As we considered earlier, one thief died as an enemy of God. However, the second thief found repentance and salvation. Initially, because of his crucifixion, this man also railed upon Christ. Mat 27:44. This abuse was part of the sufferings of Christ which caused His blood to be shed. As the thief wounded Christ, Christ's blood began to speak to him. Heb 12:24. Under the influence of grace and supplication, conviction in relation to the thief's sin gave him understanding, and motivated him to repent. He could see that Christ was suffering for him. As he turned to the Lord, Christ began to *sprinkle* this man's heart with His blood, purging his evil conscience.

The thief, who was now a believer, was then able to testify to his fellow thief, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, *for we receive the due reward of our deeds*; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Luk 23:40-41. This man had received illumination, and understood that Christ was the One who was saving him from his sins and their eternal consequences. He then said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' Luk 23:42. The Lord remembers us by giving us a participation in the fellowship of His offering, through which we are recipients of eternal life.

This principle has particular implications for how we relate to one another in the body of Christ. Consider, for example, a person who believes that they have been unjustly treated by a brother in the church. They are aggrieved because they have been mistreated or misunderstood by others, and they feel as though their justice has been taken away from them. This is a point of pain for them. How they respond to this situation will determine whether they trample the blood of Christ and come under condemnation, or whether they submit to having their heart sprinkled with the blood of Christ and, from this sprinkling, obtain the blessing of His life.

### *Trampling the blood of Christ*

Their first option may be to confront the offending brother, to stand up for themselves, and to insist that the wrongs that they have endured are made right. Some people may do this through strong communication that conveys to the offending brother their hurt and the expectation of restitution. Others will respond by withdrawing from relationship with the person whom they believe has caused them pain. They then endeavour to find solace by sharing their hurt with others.

In so doing, they are much like the unforgiving slave who imprisoned his fellow slave over a debt of a hundred denarii. (According to the JFB and Pulpit commentaries, this was a debt of approximately £3.00 and the equivalent of one millionth of the debt that was owed to the master.) Mat 18:23-34. The point to note is that a person who is unwilling to let go of an offence, irrespective of whether the offence is real or perceived, disconnects themselves from the light of fellowship. Their unwillingness to forgive demonstrates that they are walking in darkness, because they are unable to see that they have been forgiven a much greater debt through the shedding of Christ's precious blood.

Their behaviour demonstrates that they are without understanding. They are rejecting the reality that Christ has already suffered the pain that they are experiencing. By the blood that was shed because of those sufferings, Christ came back from the dead. If the aggrieved brother rejects a participation in these sufferings by causing injury to the person whom they feel has mistreated them, they trample the very blood of Christ that was shed for them when Christ was mistreated and His justice was taken away from Him. Isa 53:8. Heb 10:29. Consequently, they come under judgement, even though they may actually have been mistreated. Heb 10:30-31. Mat 5:39.

### *Sprinkled with the blood of Christ*

The second option for the person who believes that they have been mistreated by their brethren is to take some time to pray in the Holy Spirit. Jude wrote, 'But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life'. Jud 20-21. When a person prays in the Spirit, they build themselves up in their most holy faith. This is the faith of the Son of God that is given to them for their participation in Christ's offering and sufferings. Gal 2:20. Their faith works by the love of God that the Holy Spirit pours into their heart. Gal 5:6. Rom 5:5.

The love of God compels them to cease from judging themselves as right, and their brother as wrong. They, instead, make only one judgement - 'If One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again'. 2Co 5:14-15. By making this judgement, they set their mind on the Spirit and accept that the sufferings that they experience are being given to them as a participation in Christ's sufferings. In the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, their propensity to judge themselves, and others, is removed from them, and their heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience so that they can serve others by laying down their life for them. Heb 10:22. They are illuminated concerning their own contribution to the relational discord, and are able to put off the attitudes and behaviours that undermine their capacity for love.

Through prayer in the Spirit, a believer sets their mind on walking according to the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Paul taught that they develop the capacity to think and live this way through use, or practice! Heb 5:13-14. Those who are spiritually mature recognise that the sufferings that they are experiencing as they interact with those who abuse them are a participation in the reproaches of Christ. In this fellowship, the blood of Christ that is sprinkling their heart grants to them the life that they are able to minister to the one who is abusing them. By this means, they are able to minister the Spirit to their hearer, rather than the condemnation that is based in their perception of good and evil. Because of this, the elements of water, blood and the spirit of grace and supplication are being ministered to those to whom they are speaking. This is what it means to 'speak' in Christ as ministers of the New Covenant. 2Co 12:19-21.

## Christ dwells in the heart through faith

The gospel of sonship grants to a believer a *full assurance of faith*. A person with such assurance does not live by their own religious ideals that they call their 'faith'. Rather, by the faith that they receive in the word of God, they draw near to Christ and participate in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. Heb 10:22. To this end, Paul's prayer for his hearers was that Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith. Eph 3:17. When Christ comes into a person's heart through faith, He joins them to His body, and they recognise that their sufferings are now a participation in the sufferings of Christ's mortality. Php 3:10. They are sons of God who no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again by *exanastasis* life. 2Co 5:15.

This was the focus of Christ's prayer on the Mount of Olives, prior to the commencement of His offering journey in Gethsemane. He said, 'The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one.' Joh 17:22-23. Earlier in His ministry, Jesus taught that we are only able to bear fruit, which means to become the sons of God whom the Father predestined us to be, if we abide in Christ and He abides in us. Joh 15:5.

In this fellowship, we cease from living according to our own faith. Our religious projections are removed from us through the circumcision of Christ. The life of Christ, which is given to us through the shedding of His blood, becomes our life. We now live this life by the faith of the Son of God. Gal 2:20.

A person who lives by the faith of the Son of God knows assurance because their hope of becoming the son whom the Father predestined them to be in Christ is being realised. Heb 10:23. Rom 5:2,5. They are, *substantially*, a son of God, and are able to testify, or to prove, that Christ dwells within them and that they are abiding in Him. 2Co 13:5. Speaking of this faith, Paul wrote, 'Now faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a *good testimony*.' Heb 11:1-2.

The substance of our faith is that we are becoming a new creation son in Christ. Like that of the apostle John, our testimony is, 'Now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' 1Jn 3:2. Amen.