



New creation

Made in the image of God

VICTOR HALL
WITH PETER HAY AND DAVID BAKER

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Preface

Come to Me

In this season, the Spirit is calling us to meet Christ eye to eye and face to face so that we can be delivered from the fallen, religious self-image that is an impediment to inheriting eternal salvation. This was the apostle Paul's exhortation when he wrote, 'For consider Him who endured such hostility [contradiction] from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls'. Heb 12:3.

Jesus experienced this contradiction in the court of Caiaphas, when His justice was taken away as He was bruised for our iniquitous self-image. Act 8:33. Isa 53:5. To 'consider Jesus' is to look into His face and to acknowledge that His marred visage is the embodiment of our grotesque religious projections. These projections are the expression of a Christian image that is sourced from within ourselves on the basis of our knowledge of good and evil. It is an alternative image to the new creation image of the Son to which we were predestined by God.

Many Christians do not understand that they can be born from above and, yet, fail to obtain their salvation because they choose to live according to their carnal self-image. This image is fed by former gospels and church traditions and is galvanised by the 'good' works that belong to their own sight and understanding. A person who continues to live in this way will become discouraged when their self-image is compromised or is not being verified by others. Their penitent actions, which they exercise either to fortify or to recover their carnal self-image, cause them to become weary in their Christian pilgrimage. Discouragement and weariness are the evidence that a person is failing to enter 'the rest' that belongs to our salvation in the kingdom of God.

Further describing the indicators of those who are living according to a carnal projection, Paul said, 'For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.' 1Co 11:30. A person in this condition is suffering under the judgement of God because they fail to discern their sanctified, or unleavened,

participation in the *agape* meal as a member of the body of Christ. 1Co 11:29. They cannot discern their participation because their sight is hindered. In this regard, their projections serve as 'a veil' over their eyes, impeding their ability to receive the light of the knowledge of their true name and image. This light shines from the face of Christ through the proclamation of the word by messengers who belong to a presbytery.

To 'walk in the light' is to be joined to the pathway of salvation that Christ pioneered for each one of us through His offering and suffering journey. Heb 5:8-10. With this salvation in view, Jesus said, 'Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden [on account of your carnal self-image], and I will give you rest [cause you to inherit eternal life]. Mat 11:28. We come to Christ to meet Him eye to eye, to be delivered from the drive to be the source of our own name and destiny. Significantly, only those who acknowledge their 'wearied condition' are then able to answer the call to come to Him.

Once our fallen self-image is broken, Jesus Christ says to us, 'Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.' Mat 11:29. As we meet Him eye to eye, we can receive faith to take His yoke upon us. Through faith, we are yoked to Christ by grace. Rom 5:1-2. Heb 4:16. Each day, as we are led by the Spirit, we journey with Christ on the pathway of salvation. He is our 'Wonderful Counsellor' from whom we learn the obedience that He accomplished for us on His offering journey. Isa 9:6. In the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, we are being progressively made a new creation through regeneration and renewing. Tit 3:4-7. That is, we are entering 'the rest' that belongs to those who are obtaining an eternal salvation.

Raining righteousness

The Scriptures liken the word that establishes a hearer on the pathway of obedience, to 'the dew of Hermon' upon the mountains of Zion. Specifically, King David wrote, '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'. Psalms 133:1-3.

The word of the Lord is ministered to us 'line upon line' and 'precept upon precept'. To those who have been delivered from bondage to their carnal projections, it leads to 'rest' as they walk by the Spirit in the light of the word and fulfil the obedience that Christ has learned for them, and then priests to them. Declaring this principle, Isaiah said, 'Whom will *He teach knowledge*? And whom will He make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little. For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, to whom

He said, “This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,” and, “This is the refreshing”.’ Isa 28:9-12.

The word brings rest and refreshing as it rains down upon a hearer because of its cleansing and regenerating effect upon them. The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, likened the ministry of this word to *raining righteousness* on His people, saying, ‘Rain down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, *let them bring forth salvation*, and let righteousness spring up together. I, the Lord, have created it.’ Isa 45:8. We can see that the word of righteousness that rains down upon a hearer *brings forth salvation*. This is the implication of the washing of regeneration by the water of the word as a person walks in obedience to the word of Christ on the pathway of salvation. Heb 5:8-9. Tit 3:4-7. Eph 5:26.

Those who do not have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches, will remain in bondage to their deluded self-image. Instead of embracing the loss of their reputation in the fellowship of Christ’s humiliation as they walk in the light of the word, they will strive to find themselves in some other way. Describing this response to the word, the Lord said: ‘Yet they would not hear. But the word of the Lord was to them, “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little,” that they might go and fall backward, and be broken and snared and caught.’ Isa 28:12-13. They remain in bondage to the law of sin and death. Rom 7:23.

The former and latter rain

The prophet Joel exhorted us to be glad and to rejoice in the Lord on account of the ministry of the word that rains righteousness upon us. He likened this ministry to the ‘former rain’ and the ‘latter rain’, writing, ‘Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He has given you the *former rain* faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you – *the former rain, and the latter rain* in the first month. The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil’. Joe 2:23-24.

What are the former and latter rains? In agricultural Israel, the former rain was the Autumn rains (October-November) which fell at seedtime. This rain was necessary for promoting the germination and growth of the seed that was sown. To this end, it is the water of the word that addresses the ‘stones’ of our heart. The ‘latter rain’ was the Spring rains (March-April) which fell for a short time prior to the harvest. This rain was necessary to bring the crops to maturity in readiness for the harvest.

The righteousness that is being rained upon us in this season through the word of present truth is the ‘*former rain*’. It is ‘the water of the word’ that washes us and regenerates us as we walk in its light. This ministry addresses the ground of our heart so that any impediment to the growth of the seed of the divine nature is removed, and we are able to come to spiritual maturity as a firstfruits people.

It is timely to consider whether this former rain, which is addressing our carnal projections, is causing us to be glad and to rejoice through godly mourning, in the same way that Peter rejoiced when he received, and began to inherit, his name. We recall that he went from his encounter with 'the eyes of the Lord', weeping and singing, 'He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth - "Praise to our God".' Psa 40:2-3. If this is not our testimony, is the former rain causing us further discouragement and weariness? If so, we are at risk of the same condemnation as Judas, for we are spurning the faith of God that has been made available to us in His word, and we are choosing to live according to the image of our own fabrication. This will be evident by our contrary responses to the word, which are provoked by oppressive familiar spirits.

In this regard, we note that the former rains do have a polarising effect upon a hearer, which is evidenced by the fruit that is brought forth from the ground of their heart. Highlighting this polarising effect of the word of righteousness that rains down upon us, the apostle Paul wrote, 'For the earth [the ground of our heart] which drinks in the [former] rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God [that is, they are entering rest]; but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.' Heb 6:7-8.

The thorns and briers that are brought up from the ground of our heart reflect our response to the word. They 'grow up' within us because we have not found deliverance from the stones of our other law that drive the expression of our self-image. These prickly responses are motivated by familiar spirits and cause us to embrace the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life. Mat 13:22. Mar 4:19. Luk 8:14. These are alternative responses to our sanctification, and are compensations for the discontent and discouragement that we feel when our religious projections are not being received or validated.

These pursuits are often confused with *agape* fellowship or offering, affirming that those who take these actions remain deceived by their self-image, and *do not know what spirit that they are of*. Luk 9:55. When people gather together on the basis of their reactions to the word, or even in their blindness, they become a faction in the midst of the church. They are walking in darkness. 1Jn 1:6. In the same way that those who 'walk in the light' have fellowship with one another, those who 'walk in darkness' will tend to find connection with each other in the church. Unless they find repentance and are established on the pathway of light that belongs to salvation, they will be found as sons of disobedience, typified as tares. Their fellowship 'in the dark' will be acknowledged as the Lord directs His *aggelos*, saying, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.' Mat 13:30.

The call to remember

The polarising effect of ‘the water of the word’ upon the ground of our heart highlights the need for us to give attention to *how* we are hearing and responding to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Jesus exhorted us to this consideration, saying, ‘*Therefore take heed how you hear*. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have [as a projection] will be taken from him.’ Luk 8:18.

Peter was delivered from his zealous and religious self-image when the rooster crowed, and he *remembered* the words that Jesus had spoken to him at the last Passover. Concerning this encounter, Luke wrote, ‘And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. *Then* Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So Peter went out and wept bitterly’. Luk 22:61-62. ‘*Remembering*’ was essential for Peter’s conversion from living according to the flesh to walking in a new and living way that led to salvation.

Thankfully, the Father, in the name of the Son, has sent the Holy Spirit as a Helper to teach us, and to bring to our *remembrance* all the things that Christ speaks to us. Joh 14:26. The Spirit brings the words of Christ to our remembrance by opening our ear, morning by morning, to hear our obedience. Those who live by the Spirit testify, ‘He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, *nor did I turn away* [from receiving the illumination from the face of Christ]. I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.’ Isa 50:4-6.

Morning by morning, the Spirit is *the Helper of our faith*. This is the faith that we receive if we do not draw back from the face of Christ. The light of the word proceeds from His face, ministering illumination and causing us to remember the word of our sanctification. We obtain our sanctification as we embrace, by this faith, our fellowship in the seven wounds that belong to the travelling journey of Christ. Each day, this is a place of *mourning* for us as we reckon ourselves dead to sin in the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings, which include, for example, His chastening and His bruising. It is, equally, a place of triumph as we learn and fulfil, by the capacity of His resurrection life, the obedience that belongs to our sanctification. Rom 6:11. 2Co 2:14.

With this daily fellowship in view, the Lord further exhorted us, through the prophet Isaiah, saying, ‘*Listen to Me*, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the Lord: *look to the rock* from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. *Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah* who bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him.’ Isa 51:1-2.

The Hebrew word for ‘listen’ in this passage does not merely mean to ‘physically hear something’. It means ‘to hear intelligently (or, as one who is learned) in order to be obedient’. As we have already considered, the Spirit opens our ear morning

by morning to listen, or to hear, in this manner. Isa 50:4-6. Notably, a person who listens 'with the ear of a disciple' is directed to first look to Christ, 'the Rock', from which they are hewn. We are then to look to, or remember, Abraham and Sarah. In this season, a focus on Sarah is particularly pertinent as the Lord is coming to every church 'in a spirit of judgement and burning', in order to establish them as 'elect ladies'. Isa 4:4. 2Jn 1:1.

Remember Sarah

Sarah is a type of the church. For this reason, as churches, we are called to remember her obedience and to follow her faith in the world. The Scriptures teach us that Sarah obeyed her husband, 'calling him Lord'. 1Pe 3:5-6. This marked her connection, through faith, to the order of headship. In obedience to Abraham's request, Sarah said that she was his sister and was taken into the harems of Pharaoh and Abimelech. Sarah did this to preserve her husband's life and the life of the family. As she obeyed Abraham, without a word, she was protected by the Lord in these two contrary contexts. In fact, Sarah became a judgement upon the nations of Egypt and Philistia, for she was a bride 'who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners'. Son 6:10.

The first great test of faith for Sarah was in Egypt. Egypt is a type of the world. In this context, Sarai (as she was named at this stage) overcame the world by faith because she believed the word of the Lord to Abram - 'I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' Gen 12:2-3. 1Jn 5:4-5. Moreover, she obeyed Abram who prophesied, saying to her, 'Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, "This is his wife"; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.' Gen 12:11-12.

With this statement, Abram was indicating to Sarai that her beauty was a *disadvantage* in this circumstance. If she endeavoured to use her beauty to take control of the situation and bring deliverance through her own enterprise, she would save her own life; however, Abram's life would be lost, and their household would be destroyed. In other words, Sarai would 'pull her house down' through the works of her own hands. Pro 14:1. Abram was not simply seeking to save himself. Rather, he understood that Sarai could only share in the promise that God had made to him if he lived; hence, his assertion 'that it may be well with me *for your sake*'. In other words, if Sarai took an initiative to preserve her house through the exercise of what were her 'assets' with which to trade in the world, she would save her mortal life but forfeit her eternal inheritance which belonged to the household of faith.

In response to this word from her husband, Sarai abandoned her natural, fallen, inclinations to exercise control over her circumstances through the seductive and

manipulative ‘work of her hands’. Such endeavours belong to the spirit of the world, which was the very context in which she found herself. They are motivated by the romantic desire that was established in the heart of a woman as a consequence of the Fall. Gen 3:16. Living by this fallen desire demonstrates that a woman remains in bondage to Satan through the fear of death. Heb 2:15.

Having turned from this fallen, carnal approach to her situation, Sarai obeyed her husband by the faith that she obtained as she received his direction for their household. Her chaste conduct, as she submitted to her husband in this perilous setting, revealed that her fear of death had been replaced with a fear of the Lord through her connection in the order of headship. 1Pe 3:2,5-6. By the faith that belonged to the wisdom that she received through the fellowship of headship, she was able to ‘build her house’ rather than pull it down. Pro 14:1.

The Lord protected Sarai in the harem of Pharaoh. Moreover, He plagued Pharaoh and his house with *great plagues* because of her. Gen 12:17. It is remarkable that the faith-obedience of Sarai, in submission to Abram, not only brought deliverance and prosperity to their household, but it was also the means by which the influence of the world upon them was vanquished.

Sarai’s deliverance from Egypt represented the deliverance of the church from the Old Covenant. It is notable, however, that Sarai left Egypt with Hagar, who became for her, in type, a thorn in her flesh, causing her to ‘limp’. In this regard, we remember that when Hagar conceived Ishmael, Sarai became despised in her eyes. However, this mocking voice prevented her from becoming lifted up in pride on account of her prophetic destiny. Hagar and her child were the influence of carnality in the household of faith, which has also hampered the bride of Christ throughout the church age. Wonderfully, the Lord has prophesied concerning Sarah, the mother of us all, ‘Sing, O barren, you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not laboured with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman.’ Isa 54:1.

Sarah’s second trial of faith was in the harem of Abimelech. He was a Philistine king, who lived in the land that was promised to Abraham. Gen 20:1. He was, therefore, a type of the culture of the world in the church. Abimelech was enamoured by Sarah’s appearance, which had been revitalised by the resurrection life that she received through the word of the Lord proclaiming her impending motherhood. In this regard, like Satan and the world in the church, Abimelech sought personal gain and fulfilment through connection with this woman, who was an heir of the grace of life. He endeavoured to take advantage over this godly couple who had received a remnant of the Spirit and whose work was to bring forth godly seed. Mal 2:15.

As was the case in Egypt, the faith of Sarah was her protection, and the judgements of God were her defence. Abimelech’s house represented a religious and alternative way of life to walking blamelessly in an attitude of circumcision. It was a ‘synagogue of Satan’ steeped in, and empowered by, ‘old gospels’ that

promoted a form of godliness that embraced mixture, but denied that life can only be found through sanctification in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

Through her obedience to Abraham, Sarah was justified and rewarded with 1 000 talents of silver because she had trusted God and counted Him to be a faithful Saviour and Deliverer. Gen 20:16. Silver is the symbol of atonement. It was necessary that these talents of silver be given to Sarah by Abimelech so that his household and kingdom could be redeemed from death by the prayer of Abraham, who was a prophet. By this means, salvation came to the house of Abimelech.

We can liken the salvation of Abimelech's household to the promise that Jesus Christ has made to the church of Philadelphia. As one of the daughters of Zion, the Philadelphian church exemplifies the faith of Sarah. Jesus commended them saying, 'I know your works [of faith]. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.' Rev 3:8.

Like Sarah, those who belong to the church of Philadelphia are joined to the weakness of Christ as they persevere in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. They are obedient to the word of the Lord, which is ministered through the order of headship in the body of Christ, and they keep faith with the name that they have received and belongs to them only, in the fellowship of His name. For this reason, they are blessed with an open door. This 'open door' not only refers to their access to the Father's house in the time of the end; it includes the capacity and opportunity to proclaim the gospel of sonship to other churches and to those who are in the world. Jesus declared that through this ministry, He would make those of the synagogue of Satan, symbolised by the household of Abimelech, come and worship before their feet, and also make them know that He has loved those who demonstrate the faith of Sarah. Rev 3:9.

Remember Lot's wife

Inasmuch as we are directed to remember Sarah, Jesus Himself also directed us to 'Remember Lot's wife'. Luk 17:32. In contrast to Sarah, Lot's wife was unwilling to obey the angels of the Lord or her husband when the word of God called them to forsake the mixture and corruption of Sodom. Clearly, Lot's wife had family members in Sodom. She was unwilling to leave them to their own accountability for choosing and continuing in their rebellion and corruption.

The angels of the Lord even took action to 'pluck' Lot, his wife, and their daughters from the fire of God's judgement. Jud 1:23. They took hold of Lot's hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters to bring them out and set them in a place of safety. Gen 19:16. The word to them, for their deliverance, was 'Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.' Gen 19:17. However, Lot's wife did not hate 'the garment spotted by the flesh'. Jud 1:23. Rather, she looked back

to Sodom with grief and longing for her godless family. Consequently, she became a pillar of salt. Gen 19:26. Her state typified women consumed by bitterness, whose condemnation is the same as those for whom they yearn and embrace. To this end, the judgement of Lot's wife was a sign and wonder. Deu 28:45-46.

In this season, the judgements of God are coming among us because of our persistent carnality and our leavened embrace of alternative cultures in our *agape* fellowship, publicly and from house to house. The Lord, through His messengers, is urging us to recognise this judgement and to forsake the religious mixture and sophisticated engagement with those who have rejected God's word and His messengers and who are, therefore, enemies of God. God has already dedicated this religious sophistication and deceit to destruction in Christ's death. We are to remember this as we partake of the *agape* meal, lest we come under God's judgement for eating and drinking in an unworthy manner. 1Co 11:24-32.

Seek the Lord

What is the response that we can make to the initiative of the Spirit in this season? Instead of proclaiming our own commitment and righteousness, this is a time to wait patiently for the Lord and to seek to meet Him, so that we can be established on the pathway of salvation upon which we can progressively know Him. The Lord Himself directed us to this response, saying, 'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity.' Jer 29:11-14.

This is the response of those who are hearing what the Spirit is saying. It describes a person who is waiting patiently for the salvation of the Lord. Jeremiah testified to this response in the book of Lamentations. This book was the expression that belonged to his fellowship in the godly sorrow, or travail, that Christ finished for each one of us. Accordingly, he confessed, 'The Lord is good to those who *wait for Him*, to the soul *who seeks Him*. It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. [Through this encounter, they are able to receive the yoke of the Lord.] It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.' Lam 3:25-27.

Godly sorrow is the fruit of waiting for the salvation of the Lord by listening to Him and seeking His face. This is not the sorrow of Lot's wife, which is full of regret and leads to death. It is the sorrow of Sarah who walked in obedience to the Lord and to her husband and obtained her sanctification as the mother of a great multitude. The Lord desires for us to be established in this motherhood, where we participate in bringing forth a numberless multitude in the time of the end as part of a chaste bride.

Chapter I

The pathway of salvation

In his second letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul gave thanks to God for all those who had heard and received his message. He said that they had been *chosen* by God for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit, and by belief in the truth. This was the salvation to which they had been *called* through the gospel. The gospel of God was proclaimed to them from a presbytery so that they would obtain the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2Th 2:13-14. That is, they would become sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God.

God has predestined every person to this salvation. By the grace of God that has appeared to all men through the ministry of the cross, we are each given the opportunity to choose our predestination. Tit 2:11. Of course, not every person chooses their calling as a son of God. However, if we do choose what God has chosen for us, we are exhorted by Paul to 'stand fast and hold the traditions' that we are taught from the Scriptures through the preached word. 2Th 2:15.

As believers who belong to 'the church of the Firstborn', our traditions are *not* the theologies and doctrines that have been proposed by historical church figures, whose writings are little more than commentaries on the Scriptures. These theological traditions inform the religious projections that impede a person's ability to receive the light of the gospel of God. The traditions to which we are to hold fast are the steps of salvation that were defined by the writers of the New Testament.

Justification

The justification that Jesus accomplished for us through His offering and suffering journey is the beginning point of our salvation. Referring to this waypoint, Paul explained that Jesus Christ 'was delivered up because of our offences, and was raised because of our justification'. Rom 4:25.

Many Christians are confused on the subject of justification. They presume that their justification is a state of acceptability before God because Jesus bore the

punishment for sin on their behalf. The Scriptures clearly reveal, however, that we were justified *by the knowledge of Jesus* as He journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary. Establishing this point, Isaiah prophesied, '*By His knowledge* My righteous Servant shall *justify many*, for He shall bear their iniquities.' Isa 53:11.

The knowledge by which we are justified is our obedience as sons of God. Jesus '*learned* [our] obedience by the things which He suffered'. Heb 5:8. He did this by fulfilling all of the works that belong to each person's sanctification as a son of God. Acknowledging this aspect of Christ's offering journey, Isaiah wrote, 'Lord, You will establish peace for us, since You have also *performed for us all our works*'. Isa 26:12. Jesus completed these works as I AM by the power of Eternal Spirit and through the capacity of God's resurrection life in His blood. Joh 8:28. Heb 9:14. Heb 13:20.

Jesus recorded the works that belong to each person's unique name as a son of God in the book of life as He fulfilled these works in the course of His offering journey. King David celebrated this wonderful truth, testifying, 'My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skilfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth [on the cross, in the sea of God's forgetfulness]. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.' Psa 139:15-16.

By finishing and recording the works that belong to our name as a son of God, Jesus also prepared, in Himself, a heavenly body, or habitation, for each of us. We know this because, at the last Passover, He said to His disciples, 'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.' Joh 14:1-4.

Jesus justified every person who has ever lived. Their name and works were all completed and recorded, and were carried with Him to the Father. This is the free gift of righteousness that has been made available to those who believe, through His offering on the cross. The implication of this marvellous point is that every person's name is already written in the book of life. This is not on account of anyone's righteousness or their inherent honour, for 'there is none righteous, no, not one'. Rom 3:10. Rather, it is on account of our justification that was achieved by Christ on His offering and suffering journey.

With this understanding in view, we recognise that a person's salvation depends upon their ensuring that their name is not blotted out of the book of life. Psa 9:5. Rev 3:5. A person's name is blotted out of the book of life when they accountably reject the obedience that Christ priests to them through the word of His messengers. This is because a person only obtains salvation through this obedience. Heb 5:9.

A person obtains their justification by receiving the gift of righteousness. This is the invitation to *participate* in the works of obedience that Christ has already worked and finished for them. By faith, they are able to reign in life through Jesus Christ. Rom 5:17. This is what it means to be 'justified by faith'. Rom 5:1.

When Paul said that we are 'justified by faith', he was not pronouncing that a person is acceptable to God simply because they believe in the efficacy of Christ's vicarious offering. Rather, he was explaining that a person who receives faith by the hearing of the word of God is joined to Christ and to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. Rom 10:17. In this fellowship, they are able to do the works that Christ has already accomplished for them. In other words, they are living a *justified life* by abiding in Christ and in His word. Moreover, they are participating, by the Spirit, in the works of righteousness that were finished for them by Christ. This is the righteousness of God being lived by His sons!

Born as a son of God

On the day that Jesus was raised from the dead because of our justification, He appeared to His disciples, declaring to them, '*Peace to you!* As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' Joh 20:21. He then breathed on His disciples, saying to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' Joh 20:22. By this means, the disciples were born from above as sons of God. They became a new creation.

Detailing the process of new birth, the apostle Peter explained that we are 'born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever'. 1Pe 1:23. This is the word of the gospel that is preached by Christ's messengers. 1Pe 1:25. We see that, through the preaching of the gospel of peace, a hearer is born again of the incorruptible seed of the Father. The seed, which is the word of God, is germinated in the heart of a hearer by the Holy Spirit, who is the life of the seed. Luk 8:11. 1Pe 1:23. Joh 6:63. The believer is born of the *zoe* life of God and, by this means, receives the divine nature. 2Pe 1:4.

Inherent in this birthing initiative of the Father is a believer's baptism by one Spirit into one body. Paul identified this aspect of new birth, stating, 'For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.' 1Co 12:13. Paul connected this baptism to new birth, saying, 'There is one body and one Spirit, *just as you were called* in one hope of your calling [as sons of God].' Eph 4:4. Importantly, baptism into the body of Christ is not water baptism. As we will consider later in this chapter, water baptism is the action of a son of God who is choosing to be immersed into the dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this fellowship, they are progressively being saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

The connection between new birth and baptism into the body of Christ highlights that a person has possession of their name as a son of God *only as they remain in Christ*. Jesus highlighted this interdependence using the picture of a vine and branches. Joh 15:1-8. The life of our sonship is from the Father. This life is

in Christ, who is the immortal Head of His corporate body, typified as a vine. Jesus is the Root of the Vine. Our name and works, which Christ has accomplished for us through His offering, are now in Him. When we are born again, the Father places us in Christ, where we begin to grow from Him as a branch of the Vine. The life that belongs to our name, which is found in the Root, is ministered to us by Christ, through the Holy Spirit. By this means, we are enabled, in our mortality, to do the works that belong to our sonship as a branch on the Vine. We manifest the fruit of sonship now, on Earth, as we reveal Christ by these works.

A believer who has received their name and been baptised by one Spirit into the body of Christ has been born of God to *see* the kingdom. Joh 3:3. That is, they have been raised with Christ and are able to seek those things which are above. Receiving this illumination, they are able to set their mind on things above and not on the things of the earth. Col 3:1-2. They have the divine nature because Christ abides in them and they abide in Christ. The *joy* of being able to see the kingdom is the evidence that the divine nature has germinated within their heart. Mat 13:20.

Saved through regeneration

The parable of the seed and the grounds teaches us that unless we are joined to a *process* through which the ground of our heart as a son of man is changed, the seed of the divine nature can die. Although we have been born of God, our sonship can be lost.

In this regard, Jesus highlighted that we are born of God to *see* the kingdom. Joh 3:3. However, to *enter* the kingdom, we need to be born of water and of the Spirit. Joh 3:5. A person who is born of water and of the Spirit is receiving the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. This process is at work in their life because they have been baptised with water into Christ and have become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Tit 3:5-7.

Water baptism is our identification with the dying and the living of Christ through which we are progressively delivered from sin and are established in our sanctification. The apostle Peter identified this implication of immersion into Christ, saying, 'Repent, and let every one of you be *baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*' Act 2:38. Paul was baptised by Ananias into the name of Jesus after the Lord had said to Ananias, 'I will show him how many things *he must suffer for My name's sake.*' Acts 9:16. Explaining this particular 'immersion', Paul himself wrote, 'Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' Rom 6:3-4.

Note that Paul described this baptism as a *way of walking*. Baptism in water is our faith to journey with Christ on the pathway of salvation that He pioneered through the things which He suffered. As we journey each day with Christ, we are

being delivered from sin in the dying of Jesus and are fulfilling the obedience that He accomplished for us, by the power of His resurrection life. This is the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit at work in our life. *Regeneration and renewing*, which continue for the rest of our life, are the means by which we are progressively glorified as a son of God and a son of man. This is the process, or pathway, of salvation that Christ pioneered for us through His suffering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary.

It is important to recognise that we are not saved through new birth alone. Paul taught that we are saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. He wrote, 'But when the kindness and the love of God [the Father] our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He [the Father] *saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life'. Tit 3:4-7.

From this statement, we see that this salvation was the initiative of the Father, which was accomplished through the offering journey of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Evidently, those who choose the process of salvation through regeneration and renewing have *three Saviours* – the Father (God our Saviour), the Son (Jesus Christ our Saviour) and the Holy Spirit (saved through the renewing of the Holy Spirit).

On the workbench, in Christ

Further detailing the process and implications of regeneration, the apostle Paul wrote, 'For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His [the Father's] *workmanship*, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them [by the Spirit]'. Eph 2:8-10.

In this passage, Paul again emphasised that the process of our salvation was not initiated on account of our good works or our inherent acceptability. In the first instance, we were saved by the grace of God, through faith. This was not even *our* faith. Rather, it was the faith by which Jesus Himself was justified as He finished all of the works that belong to our obedience as sons of God. We receive this faith by hearing the word of God that is proclaimed by Christ's messengers. Rom 10:17. Through this faith, we are *born from above* as sons of God and are joined to Christ.

Having been baptised into Christ and into the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, we are being *recreated* to become whom the Father predestined us to be as sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God. We are not working on ourselves in order to make ourselves more 'acceptable' to God. As we will consider in Chapter 3, this is penance, and leads only to death. Rather, in Christ, we are on 'the workbench' of the Father, who is bringing His purpose to

pass in our lives through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

The process of regeneration

We noted earlier that when we have been born as a son of God through the word of God, and baptised into Christ, the Father makes us a member of *the Son of Man, the last Adam*. That is, we are established as a branch of the Vine, being connected to Christ, the Root of the Vine. The Father, through the process of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, tends the branches of the Vine, for He is the Vinedresser. Joh 15:1. He is washing, pruning and purging the branches so that they may bear the fruit of sonship. *He takes away* any branches who do not bear fruit because they are unwilling to abide in Christ and to participate in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. Joh 15:6.

The regeneration of our heart as a son of man is initiated as we are washed by the word that proclaims our name as a son of God. Being washed by the word is necessary for our establishment as a man *in Christ*, the Son of Man and the last Adam. Jesus said, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.' Joh 13:8. Significantly, regeneration and renewing are realised in our life through *exanastasis*. This is the resurrection life of the Father that was in Christ's blood. We receive this life in our mortal body, by the Spirit, as we walk in the light of the proceeding word and embrace our daily fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings. 1Jn 1:7.

The Spirit, by His power, is moulding us *anew*. He does this by ministering to us the *zoe* life that is in Christ's blood, which belongs to our sonship as we abide in Christ and fellowship each day in His offering and sufferings. The Holy Spirit does this work on behalf of Jesus Christ. The work of regeneration and renewing that belongs to this ministry of the Spirit is our protection from the judgement of God upon the world.

Keeping the seed in our heart by abiding in Christ

Although the seed of our sonship, which is planted in the ground of our heart, is sinless, our human spirit, or identity, needs healing and regeneration in order for the *zoe* life that belongs to this seed, to grow. The seed of our sonship, which is hidden with Christ in God, remains joined to our identity as long as we remain joined to the body of Christ and participate in His offering and sufferings.

Regeneration and renewing happen in our life as we remain joined to the fellowship of Christ, and journey with Him each day on the path that He pioneered for us. Through this process, we obtain 'a noble and good heart' in which the seed of our sonship can be *kept*; and by which we are enabled to *bear fruit with patience*. Luk 8:15. However, the seed of our sonship, which is hidden with Christ in heaven, is separated from our identity on Earth when we are disengaged from the body of Christ and from this process. The point to note is that our generation as man is *from Christ*. When we become His, we are connected

to Abraham, our father 'after the flesh'. As the washing of regeneration then takes place in our heart, we are being saved as a son of man, and glorified as a son of God.

By doing the works that belong to our name, our heavenly body is being progressively glorified. This is the fruit that is brought forth as we remain connected to Christ and are obedient to His word. The Father, who is the Vinedresser, *harvests this fruit*, and it is built into our heavenly body as *glory*. In other words, that which Christ has finished for us in the hope of our salvation is being made substantial as a glorified, heavenly body. Heb 11:1-2. On the day of resurrection, when the process of our regeneration and renewing is complete, our immortal and incorruptible body, which is from the substance of Christ's physical body, will be clothed with our glorified, heavenly body. The glory of this spiritual body will correspond to the level of obedience and glory that we have attained in this age. 2Co 5:1-5. Php 3:16.

The impact of regeneration on the ground of our heart

As we have already considered, the parable of the grounds describes the effect of regeneration and renewing upon the heart of a hearer. The first ground that Jesus identified is *wayside ground*. Significantly, the seed of the word is *sown* in the heart of this hearer. Mat 13:19. However, it does not germinate, because the hearer is unwilling to identify themselves with the baptism of Christ through which their sonship was fulfilled. They demonstrate that they do not understand the word and are unable to be connected, through faith, to their justification. Jesus said that the wicked one snatches away what was sown in their heart.

Shallow ground refers to the heart of a person who hears, receives and chooses their sonship that is proclaimed to them through the gospel of peace. They are born from above and receive 'a house' in heaven. That is, they are hidden with Christ in God. We could say that they have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Heb 12:22.

Yet, in coming to Christ, the Chief Cornerstone of the temple of His body, they stumble, being disobedient to the word of their name as a son of God. Mat 13:20-21. 1Pe 2:7-8. Their disobedience is an implication of the attitudes, familiar cultures and personality traits associated with their identity frailties. In order to be glorified as a son of God and made a man in the image and likeness of God, they need to accept the work of regeneration that belongs to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. If they continue to stumble at Christ, maintaining their offence at the word and with the sufferings that they experience because of the word, their sonship and salvation will be lost. Their citizenship will no longer be in heaven.

Growing to maturity

Through the process of regeneration, we mature as sons of God and sons of men, attaining the stages of growth and development that are necessary

for fruitfulness. This fruit is our sanctification. Through sanctification, we are obtaining the eternal life that Jesus multiplied to us and is given to us as a gift. Rom 6:22-23.

As it was with Paul, the confession of a person who understands and embraces the process of regeneration and renewing is, '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'. Php 3:12. We are able to lay hold of that which Christ finished for us as we embrace our fellowship in His offering and sufferings as a member of His body. This is because we are obtaining *exanastasis*, or resurrection, life in our mortal body! Php 3:10-11.

With our mind set on the Spirit, we forget what lies behind, and we reach forward in obedience to fulfil the works of sonship that are proclaimed to us by the word of God. Php 3:13-14. To the degree of regeneration and glorification that we attain by *exanastasis*, we continue to walk, acknowledging that this is a process that requires patient endurance. Php 3:16. 2Co 3:18.

Walking by the Spirit

A son of God who is established in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as a member of His corporate body is being led by the Spirit. Rom 8:14. This is foundational to the New Covenant. 2Co 3:6. A son of God is able to be led by the Holy Spirit because they receive a new heart and a new spirit when *He* writes His laws upon their heart and mind. Jer 31:31,33. Heb 10:15-16. They are able to do the will of God because they can set their mind on the Spirit, and can remain attentive to what He is saying, rather than continuing to pursue their own initiatives, which are 'of the flesh'. Rom 8:5-6.

The Holy Spirit initiates the direction and works that we are to do each day. These are the works that belong to our justification in Christ. They are the works that belong to our sonship in heaven. These works are fulfilled on Earth as we reveal Christ as a member of His body. Because we are born of God, we willingly accept the mind of the Spirit, and we then find *capacity for obedience by the power of the Spirit*. We accountably proceed to overcome the world by doing the works that belong to our predestination in Christ. Note that the *capacity* to follow the Spirit is because we are born of God, not because we are being regenerated and renewed. However, the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit in our identity give to us levels of attainment in our ability to *express the divine nature*. This is the meaning of 'sanctification' and describes the nature of 'a saint'. 1Co 1:2.

For His name's sake

Inasmuch as the kindness and love of God were extended to us 'according to mercy', the salvation accomplished for each of us, through the offering of Yahweh and the priesthood of Christ, was for the sake of the *name* of Yahweh *Elohim*. The Lord Himself declared, 'I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for

My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went ... For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them.' Eze 36:22,24-27.

Regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit is the process through which we are cleansed from our filthiness and our idols; receive a new heart and a new spirit; are delivered from the heart of stone in our flesh; given a heart of flesh; and are caused to walk in the truth by the Spirit. As this amazing work of regeneration and renewing is being fulfilled in our life, the Lord is hallowed in the eyes of the nations. We are being regenerated and renewed by the Spirit, who ministers to us a fellowship in the resurrection life that sustained Christ in His offering journey. This life is *exanastasis*. It is the capacity to fulfil the good works that belong to our sonship. Through this fellowship, the good works of sonship are manifest to the world. 1Jn 3:10. Those in the world who acknowledge these works will glorify God, and His name will be respected by them. Mat 5:15-16.

Overview of the waypoints of salvation

Let us now overview the key waypoints of salvation that a hearer will experience as they are justified by faith, born to see the kingdom, and then enter the kingdom by water and Spirit. We have summarised these experiences into ten waypoints.

1. The gospel of God, which is the kingdom of God, *is proclaimed to the world*. Rom 1:1. This is the message that Jesus, the Messenger of the Covenant, proclaimed. Mal 3:1. Describing this ministry, Mark wrote, 'Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, *preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God*, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel".' Mar 1:14-15. Jesus detailed the content of the gospel of the kingdom when He prayed to the Father on the Mount of Olives. He said, 'I have *declared to them Your name*, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.' Joh 17:26.

From these statements, we understand that the kingdom of God *is the name of the Lord*. His name – Yahweh *Elohim* – reveals the nature of His life and fellowship, which is love. Exo 3:14-15. 1Jn 4:16. This is the expression of life that belongs to those who respond with faith to the gospel of the kingdom and enter the kingdom by water and Spirit. Joh 3:5.

The fellowship of the Lord's name is a 'secret'; it is 'the secret of the Lord'. Psa 25:14. Within this fellowship, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit counselled together regarding the name and predestination of every person. That is, from

the fellowship of Their name, 'the whole family in heaven and earth is named'. Eph 3:14-15. The gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed from the fellowship of Yahweh, making known to a hearer the secret, or mystery, of their name, and their predestination to be made in the image and likeness of God.

Christ sends His messengers to proclaim this mystery. Joh 13:20. These messengers are firstfruits believers who belong to worthy houses. A house that is worthy is committed to living in fellowship with other worthy houses as part of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the bride of Christ. Having been established in the fellowship and order of headship, they share the gospel of God, which is the kingdom of God, *through testimony*. Their word is the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2Co 4:4. It is the true light which gives light to every man *coming into the world*. Joh 1:9.

This message is the *only gospel* through which a person can be saved and can have eternal life. Rom 1:16. It is ministered, as light shining in darkness, to those who are of the world, who have no hope and are without God. Eph 2:12. They are already condemned to eternal death because they walk according to the course of this world and according to the prince of the power of the air, conducting themselves in the lusts of their flesh and in the lusts of their mind. They are, by nature, children of wrath. Eph 2:1-3.

2. When the gospel of God is proclaimed, a hearer is compelled, or provoked, by the conviction of the Spirit, to *make a choice*. Under the conviction of the Spirit, they choose either to receive the word or to resist the Holy Spirit and continue to live and walk according to their own sight and understanding.

They are able to make this choice because of the prevenient grace of God which accompanies the proclamation of the gospel. This grace is given by God as a gift before the hearer asks for it or recognises their need for it, so that they can repent and find salvation. Tit 2:11. Under the influence of the spirit of grace and supplication, a hearer is relieved of the factors that would otherwise affect their capacity to hear and choose the call of sonship that is contained in the gospel. These influences may include, for example, the other law, sin, previous experiences, cultures and traditions, addictions, and even demonic oppression. This reprieve is an extension of God's mercy to the hearer.

3. Those who choose to *receive the word* are given the *right* to become a son of God because they believe for sonship by the faith that comes by hearing the word. Rom 10:17. Emphasising this point, the apostle John wrote, 'But 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 1:12-13.

The *right* to become a son of God is the *adoption*. A person becomes a son of Christ by adoption. Because the hearer belongs to Christ through adoption,

they are one of Abraham's children. The promises of God pertaining to the divine nature, which were made to Abraham, now belong to them. Gal 3:29. This is because these promises were made to Abraham and to his Seed, Christ. Gal 3:16. Paul said that the adopted son is made a *joint heir* with Christ, able to be born of the divine nature and to become an authentic son of God the Father through new creation birth. Rom 8:17.

4. On account of the adoption, a hearer is brought to the Father by Christ. Jesus Himself said, 'No-one comes to the Father except through Me.' Joh 14:6. Summarising this step, Paul wrote, 'And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him [Christ] we both have access by one Spirit [through the Holy Spirit] *to the Father*.' Eph 2:17-18.

The hearer is brought to the Father to be born of God. The Father births them through Jesus, who is the Word, by the Holy Spirit. Revealing this step, Jesus appeared to His disciples on the evening of His resurrection. 'He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'' Joh 20:22. By this means, they were born again, receiving their name as a son of God and the divine nature.

At the same time, through this birthing initiative of the Father, the believer is baptised, by one Spirit, into the body of Christ, where they receive a heavenly body. Paul declared, 'For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.' 1Co 12:13. Reiterating the necessity of baptism by one Spirit into one body, to new birth, we note Paul's statement to the Ephesians, saying, 'There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your *calling* [as sons of God].' Eph 4:4. It is important to recognise that *baptism by one Spirit into one body is not water baptism*. This has been a point of much confusion in our understanding of baptism.

5. At this point, the believer has been born of God to *see* the kingdom. Joh 3:3. That is, they have been raised with Christ and are now able to seek those things which are above. Having been illuminated in this manner, they are able to set their mind on things above and not on the things of the earth. Col 3:1-2. They have the divine nature because Christ abides in them and they abide in Christ. The joy of being able to see the kingdom is the evidence that the divine nature has germinated within their heart. They have laid hold of the hope of the gospel.
6. The parable of the seed and the grounds teaches us that unless we are joined to a *process* through which the ground of our heart as a son of man is changed, the seed of the divine nature can die. Although we have been born of God, our sonship can be lost. Once a believer has been born of God to *see* the kingdom, they must be born of water and the Spirit to *enter* the kingdom. Joh 3:5. This requires them to be baptised into Christ and to be baptised with the Holy Spirit.

7. Water baptism is the action of a son of God who is choosing to be immersed into the dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom 6:3-4. There are two key implications of baptism into the death of Christ. First, it is the new creation who dies with Christ. Second, a son of God is joined to the seven 'dying events' that belong to Christ's offering and suffering journey. As we are united in the likeness of His death, we are raised in the likeness of His resurrection to walk in newness of life. In the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, a son of God is progressively being saved through regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. Tit 3:4-7.
8. Regeneration and renewing, which continue for the rest of our life, are the means by which we are progressively glorified as a son of God and a son of man. 2Co 3:18. This is the process, or pathway, of salvation that Christ pioneered for us through His suffering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. He now priests to us our daily participation in this finished work. A person responds to Christ's initiative toward them by taking up their cross, following Christ, and embracing their participation in the dying and living that belongs to His seven wounding events.
9. To participate in this process, it is necessary for a son of God and member of the body of Christ to be *baptised with the Holy Spirit*. Explaining the significance of baptism in the Holy Spirit, Jesus said to His disciples, 'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.' Act 1:8.

Through baptism in the Holy Spirit, a believer receives power to be Christ's witnesses. That is, they receive the capacity to be joined to, and to participate in, the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as a member of His body. They are able to proclaim the gospel to others as a testimony as they show forth the dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ through their conversation and conduct each day. Testifying in this manner is the basis of their participation in the *agape* meal. 1Co 11:26.

10. Since the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been able to express His lordship and ministry through those who have been baptised with the Holy Spirit. That is, through baptism in the Holy Spirit, they have become a temple of the Holy Spirit. As temples of the Holy Spirit, they have been sealed for the day of redemption. Eph 4:30.

The day of redemption is the culmination of the adoption. On this day, those who belong to Christ receive their resurrected, spiritual body. Paul called this 'the redemption of our bodies', writing, 'Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body'. Rom 8:23.

Chapter 2

Suffering on the pathway of salvation

Sin manifest

The first creation was a context in which sin was manifest. This happened ‘in the beginning’ when God created ‘the heavens’ and then ‘the earth’. Gen 1:1. At the point of Satan’s creation, as part of the angelic host of heaven, he was perfect. Eze 28:15. Yet, because of his beauty and perfection, he became self-absorbed. In pride, he lifted himself up beyond his name and station and presumed a position beside God as one who would be ‘*like God*’. He said in his heart, ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, *I will be like the Most High*.’ Isa 14:13-14.

Satan communicated this aspiration among the angels, many of whom had been given thrones, dominions, principalities and power. Col 1:16. Col 2:15. One third of these angels followed Satan in the way of pride and presumption. Because of their sin, they were cast down from heaven to Earth. They are now bound in time, waiting for the day of judgement. On that day, they will be bound with everlasting chains in the lake of fire where they will be subject forever to eternal fire and torment. Jud 1:6. Mat 25:41.

When Adam was created, he was placed by God in the garden of Eden. Gen 2:8. His work was to keep, supervise, and tend the garden. Gen 2:15. The tree of life was set in the midst of the garden as the context for Adam’s fellowship with God each day. Gen 2:9. Gen 3:8. Next to the tree of life, in the centre of the garden, was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Gen 2:9. The knowledge of righteousness and the knowledge of sin were contained in this tree. This knowledge was the prerogative of Yahweh *Elohim* alone. It accorded the capacity to create and to judge, for it expressed the Law of God.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and its fruit, were not, in themselves, sin. In this regard, it was like the Law, of which the apostle Paul said, 'Is the Law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the Law. For I would not have known *covetousness* unless the Law had said, "You shall not covet".' Rom 7:7. To covet the capacity that the *fruit* of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil could give, was to covet *God-likeness*. We know this because, when man did eat of its fruit, God said, 'Behold, the man has become *like one of Us*, to know good and evil.' Gen 3:22. Man desired the very thing that Satan had coveted.

God advised Adam against the danger of being provoked by temptation to covet what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented. He explained that it would produce in him sin and death. Gen 2:17. Satan came into the garden with the express purpose of deceiving man and tempting him to sin. Of course, when Adam gave heed to Satan's alternative word, he made himself vulnerable to Satan's sorcerous influence. He succumbed to the temptation of Satan and, through his disobedience, 'sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men'. Rom 5:12.

The death of sin

When Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, God had come in the flesh. The fullness of the Godhead now dwelt in a physical body. Then, in Gethsemane, when the Son drank the cup of sin, He was made to be mortal, like us. With this in mind, we might ask the question, 'Did God die when Jesus died on the cross?' This, in fact, is a query that has been entertained by several notable theologians. The answer is quite simple. Christ's death on the cross *did not* mark the death of God; rather, it accomplished *the death of sin*. Rom 6:10.

Jesus was revealed to be *I AM* when He was lifted up on the cross as the Son of Man. Joh 8:28. In this regard, the faith of Yahweh Father, Yahweh Son and Yahweh Holy Spirit was manifested through this offering. By faith, each Person remained connected to the offering through which Their covenant purpose for mankind was brought to pass. This covenant fellowship was the light of life that was not overcome but, rather, triumphed in the hour of 'the power of darkness'. Joh 1:4-5. Luk 22:53.

Having been lifted up as *I AM*, Jesus was revealed to be the way, the truth, and the life of Yahweh! As He testified to His disciples, prior to the commencement of His offering journey, '*I AM* the way, the truth, and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through Me.' Joh 14:6. 'The way of Yahweh' reveals Their culture. 'The truth of Yahweh' refers to Their integrity. 'The life of Yahweh' reveals the capacity for the expression of each Person's unique name.

As the way, the truth, and the life of Yahweh, Jesus emphasised that no-one can come to the *Father* except through Him. He was highlighting that Calvary was a place of 'circumcision' for Him as a Son, thus establishing a process through

which a person could be delivered from sin and brought to the Father, with Him, as a legitimate son of the Covenant. They could be established in the fellowship of Yahweh.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Christ was made to be sin by the Father. 2Co 5:21. Through the seven wounding events of His offering journey, culminating in His crucifixion on Mount Calvary, sin was circumcised and separated from Him. It was taken out into the place of forgetfulness where it became *dead to God*. At the conclusion of His offering journey as the Son of Man, sin was completely dead, but *He* was still physically alive on the cross! *The environment, or context, of His life was now completely without sin*. He had died to sin, and sin was now dead to Him.

Magnifying this glorious truth, Paul declared, 'The death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.' Rom 6:10. The death of Christ, as separation from God, was not the death of God. Rather, as we have noted, it was the death of sin. He fully accomplished our eternal judgement and satisfied eternal justice by the power of Eternal Spirit, thereby *ending our connection to sin*. For this reason, the apostle Paul exhorted every believer, saying, 'Likewise you also, *reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin*, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Rom 6:11. Those who 'die with Christ' as members of His body are dying to sin as He did. However, for those who continue to sin, He ends their connection with Himself and with the members of His corporate body. Their end is the lake of fire, which is the sea of God's forgetfulness, where the body of sin was circumcised from Christ and confined for eternity.

While the crucifixion of Christ was the culmination of His death to sin, it is also when *the Law was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross*. Paul explained that this action belonged to the circumcision of Christ. Writing to the Colossians, he said, 'In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, *by the circumcision of Christ* ... and you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. *And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*' Col 2:11,13-14.

When the Law was nailed to the cross, it was set in an environment, or context, where there was no longer any sin! As we have already established, Jesus had died to sin, and sin was dead to Him while He was still alive on the cross. In the context of sinlessness, the Law is fully satisfied. In the absence of sin, it no longer proclaims, 'Thou shall not ...'. Rather, the Law is now, and forever, fulfilled through the offering of love as we live by the Spirit, in Christ.

All contrary rule and authority have been brought to a complete end, or 'death', through the circumcision of Christ. Life and immortality are all that is left. 2Ti 1:10. Life and immortality have been brought to light as the substance of

reality that comes from God's *exanastasis* life. This is now shining forth out of the darkness of death! The blood of Yahweh was effective as Yahweh Son was reglorified in seven wounding events. The atoning element for mankind's sin, and the life out of death, are in Yahweh Son's blood, because He is the Son of Man.

The knowledge of good and evil taken away

As we have considered, sin, with its bondage to the fear of death, has been destroyed through Christ's atoning work on the cross. Heb 2:14-15. Freedom has been established as the glorious liberty of *choice*, which has been given to the sons of men so that they can become sons of God. Rom 8:21.

In contrast to the first creation, the context of new creation that Christ has established through His finished offering no longer has the knowledge of sin at its centre. It has been abolished forever! Furthermore, the Law, by which the knowledge of good and evil was made known, has now been taken out of the way. Col 2:14. When Paul made this seminal point, he was not merely saying that, through the cross, Christ removed the old Law Covenant which had been given to Israel by Moses. Rather, he was saying that Christ, through the cross, has brought in everlasting righteousness! Sin, and its knowledge, no longer have any place in the context of fellowship with Yahweh. That is, there is no longer any tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the Paradise of God! Rev 2:7.

The Paradise of God is at the heart of the kingdom of heaven. It is the place of fellowship with Yahweh, and with our brethren in Christ. In this fellowship, we are able to walk and live blamelessly because we are being delivered from our sin and are learning the obedience that Christ finished for us in the course of His offering journey. Let us now consider how Jesus accomplished our obedience, and priests this obedience to us each day.

Learning obedience

Offering is 'giving-love'. 'Giving-love' is obedience. Php 2:5-8. Yahweh Son's intrinsic glory is the expression of all sonship. So, what is sonship? What is its first expression? It is *the obedience of a son to his father*. The very nature of Their offering relationship, as Yahweh Son to Yahweh Father, is expressed in the obedience of the Son to the Father. Having been predestined as sons of God, we require this same obedience for our participation in the fellowship of Yahweh, as men who have been made in the image and likeness of God.

For this reason, at the conclusion of His earthly ministry, having finished the work that the Father had given Him to do as the Son of God in the flesh, Jesus prayed, 'And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, *with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*' Joh 17:5. The glory that Jesus had before the creation of 'the heavens and the earth' was His *intrinsic glory* as Yahweh Son. Notably, He was asking the *Father* that He be glorified with this glory through His offering and suffering journey from mortality to immortality as the Son of Man.

In fact, each Person in the Godhead was being glorified, as Christ, the Man, priested Himself as a living sacrifice. That is, Their threefold image and likeness was now being revealed to us through Christ's priesthood.

Significantly, the pathway that Christ pioneered, upon which we could be made in the image and likeness of God, established the process through which we, as sons of men, could *learn the obedience of sonship* that belongs to His *intrinsic glory* as Yahweh Son.

The faith and obedience that belong to Christ's intrinsic glory as *Yahweh Son* were revealed by His prayer in Gethsemane, 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.' Luk 22:42. Through this prayer, Jesus demonstrated the obedience of a perfect Man. Having been made mortal, He then perfected our obedience by fulfilling the works that belong to our sonship. He did this in the course of the seven wounding events that belong to His offering and suffering journey. Php 2:8. This is the obedience that we must learn from Him in order to participate in the fellowship of Yahweh as sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God.

In his explanation of Christ's offering and suffering journey, Paul acknowledged the intrinsic glory of the Son. He wrote, '*Though He was a Son* [intrinsically], yet He learned [our] obedience by the things which He suffered. 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.

Through suffering, Christ had to learn the obedience that we learn through suffering so that we can cease from sin. Establishing this point, Peter declared, 'Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God [that is, as a son who is obedient to the Father].' 1Pe 4:1-2.

Jesus pioneered the chastening that teaches us how to be obedient. We are now healed by Christ's wounds and stripes. Isa 53:5. We, with our disobedience and sin, 'die' with Him. Our 'death' ends our relationship with sin. By His death, Christ demonstrated obedience – which was a manifestation of the *righteousness* of God. As we fellowship in His suffering, we are being healed by His stripes, and are receiving the capacity of His life to do the works of obedience that He has already finished for us. By this means, we are becoming the righteousness of God in Christ. 2Co 5:21.

The sufferings of Christ

For us to understand the pathway of our salvation, it is necessary that we recognise the distinction between our sufferings under the judgement of God because of sin, and the sufferings of Christ where we learn obedience through the capacity of His life granted to us. Of course, Christ experienced the sufferings that

are associated with God's judgement, as well as the sufferings that are necessary to bring us to God. These two dimensions of suffering are symbolised by the two goats that comprised the sin offering that was made on the Day of Atonement under the Old Covenant.

The sufferings of the scapegoat

'The sufferings of death' are the fruit of disobedience. God said to Adam, 'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' Gen 2:17. These sufferings are the judgement of God upon the rebellion of mankind.

When Jesus drank the cup of sin, He was made mortal and, by grace, began to taste the sufferings of death that belong to our fallen, sinful condition. Heb 2:9. As we have already considered, He was tempted at all points as we are, yet He was without sin. Furthermore, He was fully acquainted with the grief and distress resulting from our rejection of God's predestination and the failure of our iniquitous endeavours. As '*the scapegoat*', He experienced all of our sufferings on account of sin. These sufferings are the fruit of all the possible alternatives to God's perfect plan for each of us. As He explored every possible alternative, revealing them to be lies, He suffered their consequences. Through these sufferings, He was taken out, with us, into the sea of forgetfulness, under God's judgement. Sin was destroyed forever through this death.

The sufferings of the Lord's goat

At the same time as He was descending as 'the scapegoat', He was also ascending to the fellowship of Yahweh as '*the Lord's goat*'. The sufferings that He experienced as the Lord's goat were a chastening upon Him through which He learned our obedience, and was brought to God. Heb 12:6. These sufferings caused the shedding of His blood. The resurrection life of the Father that was in His blood, by the Holy Spirit, was bringing Him back from the death of sin and was being multiplied to become the life of every son of God. Our obedience was being perfected as He was accomplishing the regeneration and renewing necessary for sons of men to be saved from the death of sin, and to be made in the image and likeness of God.

Deliverance from our sufferings

Our salvation depends upon our deliverance from the sufferings that belong to the judgement of God upon us because of sin, and requires us to join the sufferings of Christ through which we are being progressively glorified as sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God. The apostle Peter distinguished between these two forms of suffering, writing, 'For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good [the works of sonship] and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this *you were called* [as sons], because Christ

also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps [journey on the pathway of salvation].’ 1Pe 2:20-21.

There are many Christians whose sufferings are the judgement of God because they reject His word for their life as it is ministered to them by His messengers. The anguish that they feel is not the sufferings of Christ through which they would, otherwise, experience regeneration if they ceased from sin and fulfilled the works of obedience that belong to their sonship in Christ. Neither is their suffering the tribulations and persecutions that arise because of the word. Rather, it is *the fruit of their disobedience* as they resist the Holy Spirit when the word of Christ is proclaimed to them by His messengers. They trust in their own understanding and interpretation of the word. Their sufferings are often psychosomatic in nature, being accompanied by psychological distress and the emotions of sin. Their physical and psychological sorrow, as they stray from the faith, is used to excuse their disobedience and their unwillingness to serve others. They are victims of their circumstances.

Those who are suffering in this manner are deluded by the darkness of their own religious understanding and fleshly desires. They are in desperate need of illumination. Life and peace will elude them unless they see their true condition; humble themselves; entreat the elders; and confess their sin and its implications. At this point, the elders may pray for them and anoint them with oil for their participation in the fellowship of Christ’s offering and sufferings. In the fellowship of these sufferings, which are a chastening upon them, they can be saved through regeneration and can fulfil the works of sonship that belong to their obedience. In Chapter 6, we will consider further this fellowship, through which a person can find deliverance from sin.

We see that when we receive the word of Christ and respond in faith to His call upon our life, He does not simply turn our sufferings into a chastening for our good. This is not the implication of His mercy. Rather, *He calls us to repentance* from the dead works that belong to our own way, which are bringing us under the judgement of God. As the scapegoat, He bore the sufferings that belong to this judgement as He took us out into the sea of God’s forgetfulness. This is our end if we refuse Him who speaks from heaven by the Spirit through the messengers whom He sends. However, if we respond to His initiative toward us, He delivers us from our fruitless sufferings, and joins us to His own sufferings. These are a chastening through which we are brought to God because we are being regenerated and renewed by the Spirit, and by which we are learning from Christ the obedience that belongs to our sonship. Heb 12:7-11.

Christ, our faithful and suffering High Priest, ministers to us a participation in His sufferings. These are the sufferings through which He learned and perfected our obedience and, in doing so, He fulfilled the will of God the Father. Heb 5:8-10. Significantly, Jesus called the will of the Father His ‘meat’, or ‘food’, saying, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.’ Joh 4:34.

Our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ is the means by which we are able to learn and fulfil the obedience that *He learned for us*. It is, for us, the implication of eating His flesh and drinking His blood in the *agape* meal. Referring to our participation in this meal, Jesus said, 'Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.' Joh 6:54-57.

The example of the apostle Paul

The conversion of the apostle Paul exemplified deliverance from the suffering that is associated with God's judgement, as well as the embracing of the sufferings of Christ through which believing sons of God obtain an eternal weight of glory and can minister life to others.

Prior to meeting the Lord, Saul, as he was formerly known, was a deeply religious man. He was zealous for the traditions of his fathers, and was committed to the culture defined by the Law Covenant. These practices were 'gain' to him, being a means of identity verification. Php 3:3-7. However, as he resisted the gospel of God and the conviction of the Spirit, he became increasingly tormented and psychologically unstable. In the book of Acts, Luke recorded that Saul was 'breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord'. Act 9:1. Saul's distress, or suffering, was an implication of the fear of death, for the gospel threatened his validity and self-expression.

When Christ confronted Saul on the road to Damascus, it was made clear to him that, through his religious, zealous activities, he was persecuting the Lord. Furthermore, he was injuring himself as he 'kicked against the goads'. Act 9:3-5. Saul was now aware of his condition and of the impact of his sin upon others. Instead of defining his own repentance or the way forward for his life, Saul humbled himself, asking, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Act 9:6.

In Damascus, the Lord sent Ananias, an elder in the church, to pray for Saul. Through this prayer, Saul's blindness was healed, and he was delivered from the torment and suffering that accompanied his opposition to the Lord and His word. Later, he testified, 'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' 2Ti 1:7. Significantly, the Lord had said to Ananias, '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.

Through fellowship with Ananias, Paul was born again and baptised into Christ. He was *joined to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings*. In this fellowship, he was being saved through regeneration, and was now able to fulfil the works of obedience that belonged to his calling as a son of God and as a member of the

body of Christ. As the Lord had revealed to Ananias, this was for the sake of the Lord's name! Eze 36:22-28.

The sufferings of mortality

Having distinguished between suffering on account of rebellion and the chastening that belongs to the sufferings of Christ, it is helpful for us to acknowledge the *sufferings of mortality* that are common to us all. Ecc 9:11. These are the difficulties that afflict the wicked and the just alike, simply because of Adam's transgression. Referring to this outcome of the fall of mankind, Paul wrote, 'Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come'. Rom 5:14.

Paul was highlighting that the implications of mortality arising from the sin of Adam have been passed on to, and experienced by, every generation of mankind, irrespective of whether or not they have sinned in the similitude of Adam. These sufferings include genetic conditions, which can be physical and psychological in nature, as well as communicable illnesses and the degradation of our bodies through exposure to the natural elements. Of course, the sufferings of mortality also include the physical decline that belongs to the process of aging. Paul described the sufferings associated with mortality as 'the outward man perishing'. 2Co 4:16-18.

Those who are in Christ do not lose heart as their outer man is perishing, for they have been delivered from bondage to the fear of death. 2Co 4:16. Heb 2:14-15. Consequently, they are not anxiously driven to counter the unavoidable implications of mortality; nor do they compensate themselves for its limiting effects upon them. Rather, they are motivated by the love of God that is poured into their heart by the Holy Spirit, to do the works of their sonship as a member of the body of Christ.

In this regard, a believer is a recipient of the 'aid' that Christ gives to the children of Abraham. Heb 2:16. This aid is the grace of God that enables them to remain connected to Christ and to the fellowship of His offering and sufferings, as a member of His body, *every day*. Through this grace, irrespective of the way in which their outward man is perishing, they are able, by the capacity of *exanastasis* life, to fulfil the works of obedience that belong to their sonship in Christ. By this same life, their inward man is being regenerated and renewed, *day by day*! 2Co 4:16. Tit 3:5. A person who demonstrates this faith recognises that the day of their death is fixed in Christ. They walk in faith for participation in the life of the body of Christ, settled in the knowledge that they will not die a day before the time set for them by the Father, in Christ.

The weakness of Christ

Embracing the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as the process through which we are delivered from sin and are made heirs of eternal life is not our instinctive response. Our default is to seek for the verification of our own righteousness. This iniquitous and deceived orientation to life leads only to our eternal destruction. In mercy, the Lord comes to meet us and offers us the choice to have life in Him. He does this by joining us to His weakness. This point of conversion from living according to the flesh, to walking by the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, was exemplified by Jacob and Paul in their encounters with the Lord.

Both Jacob and Paul were made lame when they encountered the Lord and were converted. We recall that the Lord touched the socket of Jacob's hip as they wrestled together on the bank of the brook, Jabbok. Gen 32:25. He was blessed by the Lord, as his name was changed from Jacob (meaning, 'Deceiver') to Israel (meaning, 'Prince with God'). Gen 32:28. However, as he crossed over Peniel, he now walked with a limp. Gen 32:31.

Similarly, when Paul, who was previously known as Saul, met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, and acknowledged Him as 'Lord', he was converted and received 'a thorn in the flesh'. Act 9:5,16. He described this 'thorn' as 'a messenger of Satan', who buffeted him in every place where he ministered as a messenger of God. 2Co 12:7. Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' was the equivalent of Jacob's dislocated hip.

Notably, like Jacob, Saul's conversion was marked by a change of name. In response to meeting Christ, he was induced to abandon the kingly name of Saul, and to assume the humble name of Paul, meaning, 'the little one'. Doubtless, he did this in humility, reflecting the view of himself to which he had arrived through his conversion, saying, 'I am the least of the apostles, *who am not worthy* to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.' 1Co 15:9. The names of other New Testament figures were also changed when they met Christ. These included Peter (previously Simon), and also James and John to whom Christ gave the name *Boanerges*, meaning 'Sons of Thunder'. Joh 1:42. Mar 3:17.

Concerning 'lameness', Paul himself wrote, 'Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, *lest that which is lame be turned out of the way*; but let it rather be healed'. Heb 12:12-13. This statement raises a significant question. How are the lame, like Jacob and Paul, not 'turned out of the way'? The answer to this question is that they are *joined to the lameness of Christ*, so that they are not 'turned out of the way' on account of the lameness that is associated with their carnality.

Although not one of His bones was broken in the course of His offering journey, all of Christ's joints were *dislocated* as He hung on the cross. He testified of this 'dislocation' through a Messianic psalm of David, declaring, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words

of My groaning? ... I am poured out like water, and *all My bones are out of joint*; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me.' Psa 22:1,14.

The dislocation of Christ's joints was the sum of His weakness. As the Son of Man hung on the cross, He was unable even to lift Himself up in order to adequately breathe. However, in this condition, where His strength 'dried up like a potsherd', and His tongue clung to His jaw, Christ was strengthened by the Lord. Psa 22:15. He prayed, 'I will lift up my eyes to the hills – from whence comes my help? *My help [strength] comes from the Lord*, who made heaven and earth. *He will not allow your foot to be moved*; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. *The Lord is your keeper*, the Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. *The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul*. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.' Psa 121:1-8

The lameness that Jacob and Paul received through their encounter with Christ, the Lord, was His initiative to join them to *His weakness*, which was fully manifest when He was nailed to the cross. He did this so that they would cease from living and walking according to the other law in the strength of their flesh. This, of course, is sin, and leads only to death. Rom 8:13. In this regard, the *fellowship* of Christ's lameness and weakness removes from us the capacity for sin. As long as we continue to walk after the Spirit, embracing our fellowship in Christ's sufferings, our other law, with its projections, is disempowered. On account of the limitations associated with our impediment, *we are unable to sin*. In addition to this magnificent point, we note that, as they walked with Christ in the fellowship of His weakness, Jacob and Paul were established in the strength of the Lord for the works of obedience that belonged to their sanctification.

Highlighting these implications of fellowship in the weakness, or lameness, of Christ, the apostle Peter wrote, 'Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind [as Christ], for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men [or, according to the other law], but for the will of God [our sanctification]'. 1Pe 4:1-2.

Returning to the example of Jacob, it is clear that he was unable to inherit the blessing of eternal salvation in his fleshly and fallen condition. The Lord Himself resisted Jacob from entering the promised land, which typified his eternal inheritance. As Jacob wrestled with the Lord through the night, it is as though he were incessantly petitioning the Lord in prayer, seeking help to inherit the blessing of eternal life in his carnal condition. However, every move that Jacob made to enter the land was being countered and resisted by the Lord.

When the Lord saw that Jacob was not relenting from his fruitless, religious endeavours, He, mercifully, touched the socket of Jacob's hip. By this means, *the Lord joined Jacob to the weakness which He had suffered for him on the cross*.

At this point, Jacob was no longer able to contend with Christ. He was now holding on to Christ, and was unwilling to let Him go. As Jacob acknowledged the lordship of Christ, he was able to confess his fallen nature and to receive a new name and nature. Jacob began to walk in a new way – that is, in the fellowship of Christ's weakness. To this end, Jacob remained 'a prince with God' as long as he walked with Christ. As he crossed over the ford of Jabbok, his 'limp' indicated that he not only went into the promised land with his staff but, also, that he went in with Christ!

Paul learned this principle through the sufferings that were associated with his 'thorn in the flesh'. He understood that the lameness that he had received from Christ was preventing him from being lifted up in pride. His pride was an expression of his other law that would, otherwise, bring him into bondage to sin. 2Co 12:7-8. By this means, the Lord was 'not allowing his foot to be moved', and was 'preserving his going out and his coming in'! Psa 121:3,8.

The Lord explained to Paul that, as he remained connected to the weakness of Christ's lameness, the same grace that strengthened Christ would be made perfect in him. 2Co 12:9. Having obtained this illumination, Paul confessed, 'Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.' 2Co 12:9-10.

The same principle is true for *us*. Christ, who is now in us, is the hope of our glory as we remain weak in the fellowship of His weakness. It is for this reason that we glory in tribulations, for we know that 'tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.' Rom 5:3-5. As we are joined to the weakness of Christ, our capacity and opportunity for sin are being removed from us; and the power of God is being perfected in us so that we are able to do the works of obedience that He has already finished for us through His offering.

Chapter 3

Forsaking penance

The Lord desires that every person would be recovered to the life and fellowship that He predestined for them. He does not want anyone to perish but, rather, for all to 'come to *repentance*'. 2Pe 3:9. Repentance is essential to salvation. Establishing this foundational point, the apostle Paul explained, 'For godly sorrow produces *repentance leading to salvation*, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.' 2Co 7:10. For most Christians, this point is foundational to their Christian understanding. However, many believers stumble, and even stall, on the pathway of salvation because they confuse repentance with *penance*.

Penance refers to the actions that a person takes in response to the word of God, or because of a personal failure, to affirm their religious self-image and to assure themselves of salvation. Although they may appear sincere and remorseful, this response is motivated by the fear of dying and of losing their salvation, and belongs to the sorrow of the world that leads only to eternal death. A person who responds in this manner is not turning from the way of the flesh at all, and therefore fails to obtain salvation.

True repentance is possible only when we meet Christ face to face and are illuminated to see our fallen and basic desire to be the source of our own image and expression. By the Spirit, we are able to receive and walk in the light of the word that proceeds from His face through the ministry of His messengers. Our repentance involves fulfilling the obedience that Christ accomplished for us, which He now priests to us each day as our participation in His offering and sufferings. Heb 5:8-9. Each day, as we walk with Christ, by the Spirit, we are being regenerated and renewed. 2Co 4:16. We are changing from glory to glory into His image. As we considered in Chapter 1, *this is salvation*. Tit 3:4-7.

The presumption of penance

Drawing attention to the eternal consequences of how we live, the Lord, through the prophet Ezekiel, declared, ‘ “But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, *he shall surely live; he shall not die*. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says the Lord God, “and not that he should turn from his ways and live?” ’ Eze 18:21-23.

Of course, no-one wants their end to be eternal death. We want to be delivered from our sins; to keep the Law; and to obtain eternal life. However, the Lord warned that if a believer turns from the way of righteousness, their end will be the same as that of the wicked. He said, ‘But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits *iniquity*, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done *shall not be remembered*; because of the *unfaithfulness* of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them *he shall die*.’ Eze 18:24.

This statement highlights the reality that our salvation is not dependent on how we commence our pilgrimage but, rather, on how we *finish* it. That said, why would a righteous person turn from their righteousness if they know that its end is the same as that of the wicked? To answer this question, it is helpful to recognise that turning from righteousness to iniquity does not refer only to denying the Christian faith to live as a person who belongs to the world. Of course, this can happen; however, in the primary sense, it refers to a person who *fails to walk in the light of present truth*. 2Pe 1:12. 1Jn 1:7. This is the word that the Spirit proclaims, ‘Today’. Heb 3:7. They continue to walk according to their former gospels and understandings which, in the light of present truth, become ‘chaff’ that is destined for eternal burning. Luk 3:17. Mat 7:21-23. Significantly, this is the same end that God has prepared for the sons of the wicked one, whom Jesus likened to tares. Mat 13:37-42.

The Lord concluded His exhortation, saying, ‘ “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,” says the Lord God. “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord God. “Therefore turn and live!” ’ Eze 18:30-32. Hearing this, most Christians will readily confess their desire to turn and to amend their way. However, to presume that we can reform our own heart is the greatest of all presumptions.

In our religious, carnal presumption, we believe that we are able to do what the Lord commands and will, therefore, live. However, we fail to acknowledge our

inability to cast away our transgressions and to obtain for ourselves a new heart and a new spirit. Our presumptuous endeavours to achieve this end are actually a response of penance, and demonstrate that our spiritual understanding is darkened. The truth is that 'there is none righteous, no, not one'. Rom 3:10. Psa 14:3. Moreover, the Scriptures insist that there are no initiatives or actions that a person can employ to save, or redeem, another person, even on behalf of God. As the sons of Korah attested, 'None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.' Psa 49:7.

In summary, it is impossible for a person to become righteous through any action that they may take, irrespective of their sincerity or piety. Neither can they redeem themselves from their sin through obedience or good works. This is not how a person turns from their sin so that they might live. Moreover, the pastoral directives and sacramental practices that are advanced by a clergy-style figure toward another are equally futile endeavours in the pursuit of righteousness. Deliverance from evil cannot be priested by one person to another.

Thankfully, Jesus Himself has accomplished our regeneration and has fulfilled the works that belong to our obedience as sons of God, achieving our justification. Isa 53:11. Receiving this ministry is the only way by which we can be delivered from our fallen condition and can obtain salvation.

Declaring this great salvation, the Lord, through the prophet Ezekiel, said, 'Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. Then you will *remember* your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will *loathe yourselves* in your own sight, for your *iniquities and your abominations*.' Eze 36:25-31. The Lord God stated that He would not do this for our sake, but for *His holy name's sake*. Eze 36:22.

If Christ has already accomplished our salvation, why do many Christians seek to become righteous through their own religious, or penitent, activities, or through pastoral encounters that are informed by sacramental traditions? To answer this question, it is helpful to consider the nature of man and the genesis of the desire within mankind to live according to an image other than the image and likeness of God, to which they were predestined.

The basis of penance

The Lord God created man with a body, soul and spirit. 1Th 5:23. He fashioned man's body from the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of 'lives'. By this means, the spirit of man was formed within him, and he became a living, or spiritual, soul. Gen 2:7. Zec 12:1. Together, and indivisible, the soul and spirit of a person is called their *inner man*. The *outer man* refers to the physical body of a person. 2Co 4:16. Their *heart* is the point of meeting between their body, soul and spirit. It is the very essence, or centre, of their person and expression.

When man was created, *God set eternity in his heart*. Ecc 3:11. That is, God fixed His Law in the heart of man. This was to inform mankind's physical, relational and spiritual engagement in the creation, because the orders and times of creation derive their definition from the Law. Pro 3:19-20. The apostle Paul explained that it also meant that 'what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.' Rom 1:19-20.

Highlighting this knowledge, which belongs to our natural creation, Paul also wrote, 'For when Gentiles, who do not have the Law, *by nature do the things in the Law*, these, although not having the Law, are a law to themselves, *who show the work of the Law written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them'. Rom 2:14-15. In this passage, Paul identified two faculties of our being – the conscience (which belongs to our spirit) and the mind (which belongs to our soul).

Our spirit is our identity. It is who we are. Our conscience is the faculty of our spirit through which we are able to know ourselves. The apostle Paul was referring to this capacity when he asked, 'For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?' 1Co 2:11.

Who we are, or want to be, is expressed through the faculties of our soul. These faculties include our will, mind and emotions, and they influence how we behave, make decisions, communicate, and interpret our environment in and through our body. Jesus highlighted this relationship when He taught that 'out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness'. Mar 7:21-22.

Prior to the Fall, the conscience was the faculty of man's spirit through which he could know himself in relation to God, who is Spirit. In fellowship with Yahweh, that which man knew about himself, and how he was to live, was *true*. Who Adam was in relationship with Yahweh, and in relation to the covenant purpose of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, was then expressed through the faculties of his soul as he physically performed the works that belonged to his obedience each day.

Man fell when he disobeyed the word of the Lord and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in an endeavour to become the source of his own expression and destiny. Consequently, as a result of disobedience, he was separated from the life and the fellowship of Yahweh, and another law was established as an alternative to communication with God within Their fellowship. This other law was situated in the centre of man's being, at the meeting point between soul and spirit. Rom 7:23.

In their fallen condition, a person is now motivated, by *another law* in their heart, to craft and maintain an image of themselves, which they project to others. They craft this image on the basis of their knowledge of good and evil. Because they do not know God, they can only know themselves, through their conscience, in relation to this self-image. They are deceived, believing that their fallen, self-defined image is true. This self-sourced image is the basis of a person's *reputation*, and is the reference point for their sense of *justice*. We will consider further these implications of self-image in Chapter 4.

Returning to Paul's statement to the Romans, we learn that the conscience bears witness to the Law that is written in the heart of a person. Significantly, it is not their conscience that is accusing or excusing them. Rather, the thoughts that belong to their *mind* accuse or excuse them. It is important to recognise this distinction.

The Law in the heart of a person, to which their conscience bears witness, declares, 'You shall not covet', for covetousness is the fundamental basis of all manner of sinful activities, including adultery (coveting another's spouse), stealing (coveting another's possessions), murder (coveting another's life), and so on. This was Paul's point when he wrote, 'I would not have known covetousness unless the Law [written in my heart] had said, "You shall not covet".' Rom 7:7. This knowledge and its associated expectations are not merely the echo of some ancient religious influence on humanity. They are written in our heart.

Sin motivates us to aspire to *the ideal* of *not* coveting, and to every other ideal that is proclaimed by the Law. In doing so, we are deceived by sin, believing that we can have life by keeping the Law. However, the aspiration to achieve this 'good' is covetous. It springs from the desires that belong to 'another law in our members'. Rom 7:23. These desires include the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, which inform the pursuit of our 'good' self-image. 1Jn 2:16.

Motivated in this way by sin, we delight in the Law of God with our mind. The apostle Paul called this 'the law of my mind'. Rom 7:23. That is, from our rational perspective, we view the Law, and the implications of keeping the Law, *as being ideal for us*. This is a self-righteous mind that uses the Law to inform or to reform our 'good' self-image. However, as we endeavour to keep the Law, we find that what we will to do, we do not practise, but we end up doing that which we hate. This brings us under the condemnation of the Law. Rom 7:15. Jas 2:10.

Feeling condemned by the Law as we fail to attain the good image to which we aspire, our thoughts accuse or excuse us, becoming the basis of our penitent confession and action. Through the rationalisations of our mind, motivated by the fear of death, we take action to remedy our situation. In particular, acts of penance (be they self-defined deeds or determined through a pastoral encounter in the pursuit of absolution) become our self-righteous expression. We do this to avoid the humiliation that belongs to the failure of our self-image.

If we maintain these carnal practices of religion, *we will not be saved*. Eternal life through sanctification will not be our portion nor our experience. Our salvation depends upon becoming *spiritual*. To become spiritual, we must first find repentance. That is, we must be established on the pathway of salvation that belongs to those who obey Christ.

Where are your accusers?

Jesus' encounter with the woman who was taken in adultery provided a poignant illustration of the distinction between penance leading to perdition, and repentance leading to salvation. We recall that, very early one morning, Jesus came to the temple, where He began to teach those who were seeking to hear Him. Joh 8:2. 'Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the Law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" ' Joh 8:3-5. This woman was being accused *with the revealed Law* as she was brought to the only Person who was without sin.

Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear them. Joh 8:6. His inscription may have been, 'God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; you have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; your kingdom has been divided, and given to [others]'. Dan 5:26-28. Indeed, the kingdom under the Law Covenant was coming to an end, and a new covenant was about to be established through Christ's death on the cross.

As the scribes and Pharisees continued to petition Jesus concerning this woman, He 'looked up' and said to them, 'He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.' Joh 8:9. Conveying the scriptural principle, 'For as a man thinks in his heart, so he is', Christ had already stated, 'You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' Mat 5:27-28. Pro 23:7. Accordingly, there was no-one without sin. Anyone who confessed otherwise was, most certainly, deceived, and the truth was not in them. 1Jn 1:8-10.

Significantly, the accusers of this woman were convicted in their heart through this action of Christ. As John recorded, 'Then those who heard it, *being convicted by their conscience*, went out one by one, *beginning with the oldest even to the last*.

And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.' Joh 8:9. It is notable that this form of conviction did not lead to repentance. Rather, it was their conscience bearing witness to the Law written in their heart. It only provoked the *penitent action* of ceasing from their accusation; it did not establish them as disciples of Christ in fellowship with Him. They continued in their darkness and remained under condemnation.

'When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no-one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no-one condemned you?" ' Joh 8:10. This is what God is saying to all of us in this season. The woman responded to Jesus, saying, 'No-one, *Lord*.' Joh 8:11. As she submitted to Christ as her Lord, her sins were forgiven. Christ said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.' Joh 8:11.

Jesus' statement highlighted an important point that we must not overlook. Although we are not condemned by the Lord in relation to our sin, *He does not excuse our sin*. The woman needed to find repentance and to walk in a new way. To accomplish the command, 'Go [walk in a new way] and sin no more', she would have to become a disciple of Christ. This command was the ministry of righteousness, which exceeds the ministry of condemnation that was exemplified by her accusers. To obey this command, she would need to join the travail of Christ and to sorrow in a godly manner. This is sorrow that leads to repentance and to one's establishment as a follower of Christ. 2Co 7:10-11. She would find deliverance from sin as she walked with Christ on the pathway of salvation that He pioneered for her.

Penance is not repentance

Those who choose to remain carnally-minded when they hear the word of God thereby quench the conviction of the Spirit. Instead of receiving illumination regarding their sin and iniquity, turning to the Lord, and beginning to mourn for Him whom they have pierced, they judge themselves; their thoughts accusing or excusing them. Rom 2:15. Through the rationalisations of their mind, they endeavour to determine the course of action that appears necessary to remedy their sinful condition. These actions, whether self-prescribed or defined in a pastoral encounter, *are penance*. They are an attempt by the person to obtain reconciliation with God on their own terms.

Penance is *not* repentance. Penance is self-motivated, and is determined through the machinations of our mind that agree with the Law of God. A person is unable to find cleansing and deliverance from their sin and iniquity through penance. As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, a person is unable to atone for their sin through any action of their own definition or motivation. This even includes endeavours to make restitution for their sin.

Of course, a person who sorrows in a godly manner will walk in the light and find fellowship with their brethren; and, where possible, they will desire to

make restitution. However, their motive will not be their own justification. A case in point is the response of Zacchaeus to Christ's initiative toward his house. Zacchaeus acknowledged his sin, its effect upon others, and the restitution that he wanted to make as part of the works of his repentance. He said to Jesus, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.' Luk 19:8. Jesus said to Zacchaeus, 'Today salvation has come to this house, *because he also is a son of Abraham*; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.' Luk 19:9-10. Those who are lost can be found and can obtain repentance. This is possible because, like Abraham, they are able to receive the faith of the Son that comes by hearing the word. Rom 10:17.

Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham because he had received faith as the word had access to his heart and to his household. To this end, his actions were not the self-righteous exhibition of penance but, rather, were genuine *obedience* that belonged to following Christ. This faith obedience was working by the love of God that was poured into his heart. Gal 5:6. Rom 5:5. In fact, restitution was *not* the first action that Zacchaeus took. Rather, Zacchaeus forsook his riches. These were a 'mountain' that had impeded his capacity to follow Christ, as 'a worthy house'. By 'selling all', this mountain was removed and Zacchaeus was established as a disciple of Christ. In journeying with Christ, Zacchaeus' restitution of what he had stolen was now a work of obedience, motivated by love.

Repentance is a gift that is given to us by Christ. This is what Esau was unable to find, even though he sought it diligently with tears. This is because he was unwilling to forsake his own name and self-defined image and to obey the word of his predestination – that is, 'The older shall serve the younger'. Gen 25:23.

Until a person finds repentance, they have no capacity to deal with their sin. This capacity is given only through a personal encounter with Christ. Faith to receive the capacity and power to overcome sin, and then to join the obedience of Christ to do the works that belong to our name, *comes after repentance*. This happens when the love of God is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit, who has come to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgement, for this is His work. Rom 5:5. Joh 16:8.

Dismissed because of carnality

Deliverance from our carnal self-image is fundamental to our repentance that leads to sanctification on the pathway of salvation. Unless we are connected to the work of our regeneration, which has been wrought for us in Christ, *we cannot be saved*. Tit 3:4-7. Jesus declared this message to the disciples at the last Passover. He told them that they could no longer follow Him as His disciples until the work of regeneration and new creation was given to them after He was raised from the dead. Specifically, He said to them, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.' Joh 13:36.

With this statement, Jesus was *dismissing* the disciples. They could no longer be His followers. Jesus was highlighting that the disciples' ministry approach and righteousness were insufficient to save them. Even though they had received power to preach the gospel of the kingdom, to heal the sick, to cleanse lepers, to raise the dead, and to cast out demons, their present condition was fleshly and would lead only to death. Joh 8:21.

Their iniquity was already apparent through their estimation of themselves, believing that they had 'graduated' beyond their station as disciples. A key indicator of this presumption was their rivalry and collegiality. They had even become puffed up over and against Christ! Mat 16:21-23. Joh 12:5. Their collegiality had reached a climax as they disputed among themselves concerning which one of them should be considered to be the greatest. Luk 22:24. Unless they were delivered from their iniquity and carnal ministry orientation, and were established in their sanctification, *they would die in their sins and their righteousness would be forgotten*. Eze 18:24.

Jesus had earlier warned of this implication of iniquity, or lawlessness, saying, 'Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness [that is, iniquity]!" ' Mat 7:22-23.

Go to your houses

Significantly, while Jesus was pioneering their salvation, the disciples were to go to their houses. Specifically, He said to them, 'All of you will be made to *stumble* because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.' Mat 26:31-32. The disciples were to go to their houses and to wait to be established on the pathway of salvation that He was authoring, *so that they would not be lost*. Joh 18:8-9.

The cross of Christ causes every person to stumble, because it reveals God's judgement upon every image other than the image of the Son. On account of our iniquitous self-image, we are not God's people, and are under condemnation. This is particularly affronting for those who have followed Christ according to their own understanding of the gospel. Unless we are delivered from these old gospels and former church traditions, and are established in the gospel of God, which is the power of God for salvation, we will be lost. Rom 1:16-17.

Relational discord, rebellion, offences and conditional affection in our marriages, households and in the church, are indications that we are stumbling at Christ and are unable to be built upon Him as part of the New Jerusalem. These responses are the fruit of our carnal, religious self-image. Without receiving repentance from Christ, our own endeavours to reform these relationships can only be the actions of *penance* for the purpose of affirming our religious projections.

In this season, we are all being directed by the Lord to *return to our houses*. Here, we are to watch and pray lest we enter into the temptation of reverting to penance when our self-image is confronted and we are found to be stumbling at Christ. The salvation that we find as we are delivered from our fallen self-image, and are established in our sanctification, will be evident in the restoration of our relationships in our households and in the church. Importantly, the capacity for this recovery will be the *exanastasis* life of Yahweh that we are receiving as we embrace our fellowship in Christ's dying and living. It will be the fruit of regeneration and renewing in our life.

Chapter 4

Deliverance from a fallen image through the door of hope

Our iniquitous self-image

Our 'image' is how we know ourselves and are known by others. It is the essence of the name through which our identity has its expression. In this regard, an image is not inherently wicked. Rather, the eternal implications of one's image – whether eternal life or eternal death – depends upon the *source* of that image.

We all were predestined to be made into the image and likeness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Gen 1:26. According to God's immutable plan, this is to happen as we are born to *see* the kingdom of God and are then born of water and of the Spirit to *enter* the kingdom of God. Joh 3:3,5. The kingdom of God is *the fellowship of Yahweh*. Their fellowship is to become both the source and context of our life and expression, forever.

However, this predestination was forsaken through the fall of mankind. Satan deceived Eve with a lie, saying that if she ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil her eyes would be opened and she would become *like God*.

Gen 3:4-5. Adam then disobeyed God, and dishonoured Christ as the Head of his house, when he listened to his wife and ate of this fruit. Gen 3:17. Through their disobedience, Adam and Eve *strayed* from God's predestination for them as they sought to become the source of their own image and expression. The drive to craft their own image was established as *another law* in their hearts and, by implication, in the heart of every son and daughter who would be born after them. Rom 7:23.

Straying from our predestination to be made in the image and likeness of God to, instead, walk in our own way, *is iniquity*. Highlighting this point, the prophet Isaiah declared, 'All we like sheep have gone *astray*; we have turned, every one, to his *own way*; and the Lord has laid on Him the *iniquity* of us all.' Isa 53:6.

Evidently, our iniquity is manifest by living according to a self-sourced image. Unless, through the gospel of God, a person finds deliverance from this fallen orientation to life, they will *only* live according to their iniquitous self-image.

A person's self-image is an alternative to the image to which they were predestined before the foundation of the world. It is a gross *distortion* of their identity expression, and falls terribly short of the glory that God has prepared for them. Rom 3:23. Living according to one's self-image is therefore sin, and yields only the damnable deeds of the flesh, including, 'adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like'. Gal 5:19-21.

A *projection* is the expression of a person's self-image. How our projection is received and acknowledged by others is the basis of our *reputation*. Because of its connection to the verification of our identity, our reputation is very important to us; it is as though our life depends upon it. Consider, for example, Job. The loss of his reputation was even more grievous to him than the loss of his possessions and the deterioration of his health! Having detailed his reputation, and the high esteem in which he was held before his severe trial, Job lamented, 'And now I am their taunting song; yes, I am their byword. They abhor me, they keep far from me; they do not hesitate to spit in my face. Because He has loosed my bowstring and afflicted me.' Job 30:9-11.

The preservation and optimisation of a person's reputation is the reason why many people find it difficult to share openly and honestly with others about their life. It is also the reason why people are unwilling to walk in the light with their brethren in relation to their sin. 1Jn 1:7. Noting this reticence for open-faced fellowship in the light of the word, Jesus said, 'And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practising evil [that is, walking according to their fallen image] hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.' Joh 3:19-21.

A person's self-defined image is also the reference point for their sense of *justice*. With their mind, they appraise themselves and others with reference to their own self-image. Where they fail to attain the presumed 'good' of their self-defined image, they accuse or excuse themselves. Rom 2:15. This then informs the actions that they believe they need to take either to consolidate or to reform their projection. Similarly, with their mind, a carnal person also accuses or excuses the impact of other people's actions upon their self-image. Where their self-image has been assailed by another, they seek justice, either through recompense or through vengeance. They believe that their retaliatory actions are just, even though these dealings may be contrary to the Law that is written in their heart. Gen 4:23-24.

The image of a carnal Christian

A carnal Christian is a person who has been born of God but who lives according to the principles of the flesh. The basis of their Christian expression is a religious self-image that is based on their aspirations, good works, former gospels and historical responses. As we considered in Chapter 3, the image of a carnal Christian is informed by the Law of God. Rom 7:22. While the Law is not evil, the desire to craft a 'good' religious image by drawing from the Law is both covetous and iniquitous. Those who live this way inevitably bring forth the fruit of the flesh. Gal 5:19-21. Their end is no different from the end of those who belong to the world. Rom 8:6.

Significantly, no-one, by default, is joined to the process of salvation through which they are being made into the image and likeness of God. Rather, every believer needs to be *converted* from living according to their 'good' self-image so that they can walk according to the Spirit and can inherit eternal salvation through regeneration and renewing. Tit 3:4-7. This conversion happens only when we meet Christ eye to eye and acknowledge this fallen, deceitful propensity within us. The implications of this encounter are our focus in this chapter.

The energy and intensity that are associated with our penitent drive to maintain our good Christian self-image, and the emotions of sin that are provoked within us when our reputation is put under relational pressure, highlight that this way of living is *leavened*. This is an issue for every believer. If we are not being delivered from the heavens that feed our religious self-image, and that cause us to exceed our sanctification, we are unable to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This means that our participation in the Passover, which is the *agape* meal of the Father's house, is defiled; and we are in danger of being cut off from the kingdom of God.

For this reason, the apostle Paul implored his readers, saying, 'Therefore purge out the old leaven [the old gospels and denominational traditions], that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.' 1Co 5:7-8.

A person who is 'keeping the feast with the unleavened bread of *sincerity and truth*' is able to worship the Father in *Spirit and truth*. Joh 4:24. That is, they are coming to Christ and are being built together with their brethren upon Him as living stones. They are becoming part of a kingdom of sanctified priests who are offering up spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ. 1Pe 2:4-5. To be built upon Christ in this manner, we must be delivered from the iniquitous self-image that causes us to stumble at Him and that brings us under God's judgement. These projections are a lie, meaning that there is no way that we can relate with others sincerely or in the truth. Deliverance from this fallen, deceitful, religious way of living can only happen when we meet Christ eye to eye and face to face.

Before we illustrate the nature of *our connection* to this process through the examples of the apostle Peter and of Jacob, let us consider *the operation of God* to deal with the fallen and iniquitous self-image of mankind.

Bruised for our iniquities

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ was made a sin offering by the Father. He was then taken to the court of Caiaphas, where He was bruised for our iniquities, and was chastised with rods for our peace. Isa 53:5. This was the fulfilment of God's word to King David concerning the Son of God who would come from his body. Yahweh declared to David, 'When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits *iniquity*, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.' 2Sa 7:12-15.

Jesus was the Son of David; however, He did not commit iniquity through disobedience to the Father. Rather, through obedience to the Father, Jesus was made our sin, and all of our iniquitous projections were laid upon Him. Isa 53:6. Our image was already marred by the ravages of sin. Our 'marring' is our distorted self-image, or projections, resulting from our iniquity. They were laid on Christ through the assertions and endeavours of our self-image, and through our reactions against others when they fail to affirm our projections.

As Jesus was buffeted by iniquitous hands, His face was marred more than any man's. Isaiah prophesied concerning this outcome of Christ's bruising for our iniquity, writing, 'Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men'. Isa 52:14. The marring of Christ's face was not merely the worst abuse ever experienced by a person; it was the *sum of the marring* of the corporate 'first man', caused by our disobedience and iniquity.

The law punished disobedience

Through the meekness of wisdom, which is 'wiser than men', Jesus destroyed the iniquity of mankind. 1Co 1:25. He did this under the judgement of God and by removing the Law from the hands of wicked men. He directed the punishment of the Law upon their sin and iniquity, *which He had become*. Let us further consider this amazing point.

We know that Jesus was beaten in the court of Caiaphas, the high priest. This abuse was at the hands of the Jewish council, which comprised the Levitical priesthood, the scribes, the elders and, by association, the Pharisees and Sadducees. Under the Old Covenant, the Levitical priesthood had been granted the mandate to mediate the Law. However, because of their religious presumption,

sin within them undertook to use the Law to assail Christ for the purpose of killing Him.

The misappropriation of the Law, which was energised by Satan, was manifest when Caiaphas used the Law to justify harming Jesus and condemning Him to death. He did this in response to Jesus' confession that He was the Christ, the Son of God. Mat 26:62-64. The high priest tore his clothes saying, 'You have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' Mat 26:65-66. The rest of the council replied, 'He is deserving of death'. Mat 26:66. 'Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?" ' Mat 26:67-68.

When Caiaphas tore his garment, the mandate to mediate the Law was taken out of his hands. It now belonged to Christ, the great High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. As the Jewish council began to beat Christ, their iniquitous projections were being laid upon Him and were manifest in His face. Jesus allowed the Law, through the fury of the Levites, who were motivated by sin, to be directed against Himself. He absorbed this violence by the power of Eternal Spirit. Heb 9:14. Because He had become their sin, and their iniquity was expressed in His face, the Law, which was destroying His visage, was judging and destroying them! They were being taken out to forgetfulness under the punishment of the Law and the judgement of God.

We note in this regard that the Law ends in relation to sin when it exerts its wrath against sin and destroys it. When sin is destroyed, the specific application of the Law to that sin also ends. The wages of sin are fully paid when death ends its activity. Death is non-existent in the place where God exists. In other words, sin and those who continue to live in sin, are relegated to God's forgetfulness. They are dead to God. This does not mean that they cease to exist but, rather, that they are dead to God under eternal judgement. This is the definition of eternal death. As He was beaten in the court of Caiaphas, Jesus established this 'end' for iniquity, and for all those who choose to live according to their own way.

Triumph over principalities and powers

The abuse of Christ's face was a marring action that was energised by principalities and powers under the rulership of Satan. We know this because, as Jesus was being led by the Jewish cohort from the garden of Gethsemane to the court of Caiaphas, He said to them, 'When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. *But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*' Luk 22:53. Notably, it appears that Jesus was beaten by the members of the Jewish council in the court of Caiaphas for about an hour. Luk 22:54-59.

Importantly, inasmuch as iniquity was judged and destroyed through the buffeting of Christ's face, He made a spectacle of all the familiar spirits that energise religious idolatry. He triumphed over them as they were revealed, or made manifest, by the conduct of the priests, the elders, and the scribes, as well

as by the factions of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Detailing this work, Paul said, 'Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.' Col 2:15. Their power was broken, and their eternal condemnation was accomplished as they were taken out into the sea of God's forgetfulness *with Christ*. The lake of fire became the place where they were bound and will be tormented for eternity.

The manifestation of the Redeemer

The destruction of all iniquitous self-image, through the punishment of the Law and the judgement of God, was one aspect of this offering and suffering event. The second element was Christ's fulfilment of the obedience that belongs to each person's *true image*. These two elements of Christ's offering were typified by the two goats offered by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. The scapegoat took the sin, iniquity and transgressions of the people out to forgetfulness, while the Lord's goat, through the shedding of blood, which typified resurrection life, redeemed the people to God. Significantly, these two aspects of Christ's one offering revealed His name as Redeemer!

His justice was taken away

In the book of Acts, Luke quoted a key excerpt of the prophet Isaiah's explanation of Christ's suffering in the court of Caiaphas. This was the passage of Scripture that the Ethiopian official was reading when Philip came alongside his chariot: 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth. *In His humiliation His justice was taken away*, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.' Act 8:32-33.

As we have already considered, Christ's face was marred more than any man's as He was bruised for our iniquitous self-image. Christ's face represented the focal point of His image and reputation. In this regard, His image and reputation, which were the embodiment of our false image and reputation, were being taken away as He was being humiliated and His justice was being taken away. This was His offering as 'the scapegoat'. We all, in our iniquity, were being judged, forsaken and destroyed in the sea of God's forgetfulness, with Him.

If, through the word of the cross, we meet Christ face to face, and we are illuminated to see the impact of our projections upon Him, our default propensity to craft an image for ourselves can be broken in us. We will cease from trying to regain our reputation through good works, or penance, and will cease from demanding justice as our reputation is being dismantled or assailed. Instead of fighting for our life when we are not received in the way we want to be, we are able to 'turn the other cheek', thereby embracing our fellowship in Christ's bruising, for our deliverance from iniquity. Mat 5:39. This is not a religious action but, rather, it is our acceptance that our reputation does need to be taken away in the fellowship of Christ's humiliation.

However, we demonstrate that we are drawing back from looking into Christ's marred face, in unbelief, when we endeavour to excuse ourselves or to find another word or reflection that supports our self-image; or when we spitefully react against the messengers as though they are the ones who are taking our justice from us. When we do this, we are going out to destruction with the very image that was being destroyed as Christ was humiliated and His justice was taken away.

Not a bone of His was broken

Amazingly, at the same time as Christ's visage was being marred so horrendously, not a bone in His face was broken! Prophesying of this miraculous deliverance, King David declared, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; *not one of them is broken.*' Psa 34:19-20. By Eternal Spirit, and through the resurrection life of Yahweh in His blood, Jesus endured the buffeting of wicked hands *as a discipline* upon Him. Consequently, He was progressively brought back from the death of sin. Heb 13:20. This revealed His ministry as 'the Lord's goat' and as the suffering High Priest.

In the context of this suffering, and by the capacity of resurrection life in His blood, Jesus learned and accomplished the obedience that belongs to our true name and image. Heb 5:8. This was the 'knowledge' that achieved our justification. The Lord declared this work through the prophet Isaiah, saying, 'By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.' Isa 53:11.

The knowledge that Jesus learned through the things that He suffered are the works that belong to our obedience as sons of God and members of His body. A person can receive this knowledge when they are delivered from the delusion that belongs to their self-image. This is because they have met their Redeemer! The psalmist Asaph rejoiced in this deliverance, declaring, 'When He slew them [took their self-image out to forgetfulness], *then they sought Him*; and they returned and sought earnestly for God. Then they *remembered* that God was their rock, and the Most High God *their Redeemer.*' Psa 78:34-35.

When we meet our Redeemer, we are able to receive from His face the knowledge of our true name and image. This knowledge shines as 'the light of life' from His face through the proclamation of the gospel of God by His messengers. Each day, as we walk in the light of the word, we are possessing and inheriting our name as we receive instruction from our Redeemer whose name is '*Wonderful Counsellor*'. Isa 9:6. By the capacity of resurrection life, which we obtain through regeneration and renewing on the pathway of salvation, we are bringing forth the fruit of obedience that He already has brought forth for us. This fruit is our eternal life. Rom 6:23.

The conversion of Peter

In Chapter 3, we noted that Jesus dismissed the disciples prior to the commencement of His offering journey. In doing so, He brought an end to their former righteousness and to their carnal approach to ministry. He did this so that they could be established on the pathway of salvation that He was about to author for them. Joh 13:36. They did not understand Christ's instruction and were, instead, offended that they were being made redundant. They all insisted that they were capable of bearing the same sufferings that Jesus was about to endure. Mat 26:35.

Prayer for faith

Peter was particularly emphatic, asking, 'Lord, why can I not follow You now? *I will lay down my life for Your sake.*' Joh 13:37. Jesus answered Peter, saying, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.' Joh 13:38. Significantly, in the context of this discussion, Jesus also said to Peter, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But *I have prayed for you*, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' Luk 22:31-32.

Later, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus invited Peter to join the fellowship of this *same prayer*. He said to Peter, 'Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Mar 14:37-38. The temptation to which Jesus was referring was Peter's forthcoming encounter with the eyes of Christ, in the court of Caiaphas.

It is important to recognise that Jesus was not saying that Peter needed to watch and pray so that he could overcome the temptation to deny Him. Jesus had already made it clear that this *would* occur. In fact, the collapse of Peter's projection through denial was *necessary* for his salvation. The temptation, for which Jesus had prayed for Peter, was to draw back in self-righteous condemnation when he met Jesus eye to eye. Heb 10:38-39. If Peter drew back in unbelief, he would fail to receive faith for his participation in the process of regeneration and renewing that Jesus was establishing for his salvation. He would draw back to destruction. Heb 10:35-39.

We are to pray in this way as well. We do not pray for our self-righteous, religious image to be upheld under pressure. Rather, we are watching and praying so that, when our projections are undone under the sifting of Satan, we will not draw back from Christ's face in unbelief and endeavour to recraft for ourselves another image through penance.

Confused self-image

Peter followed Jesus to the house of Caiaphas because his self-defined image was as a disciple of Christ. Jesus had called Peter to be a disciple, and Peter believed in his adequacy for this call. He said to Jesus, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' Luk 22:33. However, as Jesus was being bruised for Peter's iniquitous self-image, he began to deny that he knew Jesus. Under pressure, Peter renounced his image as a disciple of Christ because he was resisting humiliation. Peter did not want to be humiliated with Christ and, thereby, lose his reputation in the broader Jewish community or church.

Peter's self-image, which was associated with his standing in the community as a Jew in identity and name, *predated his call to be a disciple of Christ*. When Peter was called by Christ to be a disciple, he believed that he was going to be a better version of a Jew; that he was going to be a more successful Jew. In this regard, throughout the season of Christ's earthly ministry, he had been cleaving to the Son of God, the King of the Jews, with deceit. His discipleship was an advancement of his base, carnal image.

When put under pressure by the servant girl, by the servants and officers, and then by a servant of the high priest, Peter became increasingly adamant. He cursed and swore, saying that he did not know Christ; nor was he in any way connected with Him or was anything like Him. Mar 14:71. As he denied Jesus, Peter swore an oath in an endeavour to protect himself, and his self-image, from humiliation in the Jewish community. Mat 26:72. Peter's denial of Christ was motivated by fear as part of his fight for survival. Clearly, loss of reputation is a form of death, and Peter was afraid of 'dying'.

Peter was sifted

After the rooster crowed, and Peter had denied Jesus for a third time, he met Jesus eye to eye. From the eyes of Christ, Peter received *no accusation*; only an eye to eye understanding of his iniquity and incapacity for obedience. He learned, through illumination, what Jesus had earlier spoken to him. That is, Peter was caused to remember that Jesus had said that his own motivations and faith as a zealot would not be able to sustain him as a disciple of Christ when he came under the intense sifting pressure that Satan would exert upon him when Christ began His offering journey. Mat 26:74-75.

This understanding was impressed upon Peter as he denied Christ with increasing intensity, marked by cursing and swearing. Under pressure, the true nature of his heart was exposed, and his angry self-righteousness was witnessed by all who warmed themselves by the fire in the courtyard of Caiaphas. We note that, in this relational setting by the fire, *Satan 'sifted' Peter three times*.

Peter found that he was *incapable of repentance* as he cursed and swore. The whole situation was happening too quickly for him to regain his composure under pressure. The remembrance of Christ's words, prompted by the crowing of

a rooster, reinforced his knowledge of his own bankruptcy. This moved him from self-condemnation to illumination! That is, he experienced condemnation as he was being sifted three times by Satan, but he was delivered to illumination as Christ looked on him and he met the Lord eye to eye. Every believer must experience this crisis of deliverance from condemnation to illumination in order to find repentance that leads to salvation.

Meeting Christ eye to eye is not a mystical or imagined experience. Rather, it means that we meet Him, personally, spirit to Spirit. We know this because the Scriptures teach us that the spirit of a man is 'the lamp of the Lord'. Pro 20:27. Jesus explained that this lamp, which is the spirit of a man, is the eye of their body. This is the eye with which every person must meet Christ. Specifically, Jesus said, 'The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.' Luk 11:34-36.

As Peter met Christ face to face, he obtained the capacity of faith to believe the words of Jesus, which he *remembered*. Matthew recounted Peter's illuminating encounter, writing, 'Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter *remembered* the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.' Mat 26:74-75. This was the faith that Jesus had prayed would 'not fail' as Peter was being sifted by Satan. The faith that was being generated in Peter's heart was the substance of the hope of becoming a son of Abraham as part of a new creation.

Judas' penance

Judas also saw his iniquity being laid on Christ. However, this was not an encounter that led to his salvation, even though it caused him considerable distress. Recording this event, Matthew wrote, 'Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.' Mat 27:3-5.

Judas' grief was because of the failure of his self-image. It was not godly sorrow. We know this because he did not find repentance but, rather, exercised penance in a futile endeavour to reform his shattered projection. The first thing he did was to confess his sins to the chief priests and elders. Then he sought to make restitution by repaying the thirty pieces of silver. Then, in a final, defiant endeavour to be the source of righteousness, he judged himself worthy of death, and killed himself. This was not a redemptive action; it led to his eternal damnation. This is the outcome for every person who chooses penance over repentance.

How do we respond when our self-image is humiliated or fails? Is this the cause of our grief? Do we then try to recover ourselves through penance – perhaps through confidential confession, acts of restitution and apology, or a battery of good works? When we live this way as Christians, we inevitably become discouraged in our souls. We are becoming weak and sick, and are in danger of losing our salvation because we are unable to discern our true participation in the fellowship of the *agape* meal as part of the body of Christ. 1Co 11:29-30.

Our inability to discern our true, or sanctified, participation is the deluding effect of our projections, which act as a veil over our face, impeding our capacity to receive the light of the knowledge of our sonship from the face of Christ through the ministry of His messengers. *We cannot be obedient.* With this in view, the apostle Paul wrote, 'For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls'. Heb 12:3. We must join the fellowship of this wound where our self-crafted reputation is taken from us so that we can receive our name that defines our sanctification.

Mourning and singing

Peter did not draw back from Christ through penance, but found repentance as he began to mourn with godly sorrow. 2Co 7:10. Peter's mourning was not without *hope*. Rather, having met his Redeemer, called Wonderful Counsellor, Peter went to his house with a song planted in his heart. *He went mourning and singing*, 'I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth – "Praise to our God"; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.' Psa 40:1-3. As we will consider in Chapter 5, this is when Peter was secured in his sanctification as he possessed his name, 'rock'. Christ was no longer a stumbling stone and a rock of offence for Peter. He was being built upon the Rock!

At the conclusion of this season of mourning, by the Sea of Galilee, Peter received further faith from Christ for the works of sonship that belonged to his sanctification. This was beside *another fire* in the context of an *agape* fellowship meal, given to him and his fellow disciples by Christ. In this fellowship setting, Peter was not being sifted as wheat by Satan; rather, *he was being sifted by Christ*. Three times, Jesus asked Peter, 'Do you love Me?' This sifting process that occurred by the fire as they participated in an *agape* meal together was part of the Feast of Unleavened bread that Peter and the other apostles were keeping, as the leaven of their zealot years was being purged from their lives. This purging happens as we walk in the light that proceeds from a lamp fellowship. Luk 15:8-10.

The conversion of Jacob

Earlier, we read the words of Asaph, who explained that a person whose self-expression has been brought to nothing, and who obtains faith to seek

the Lord, remembers that God is 'their Rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer'. Psa 78:35. Likewise, the prophet Isaiah declared that 'the Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob'. Isa 59:20. Jacob's transgression was that he was a deceiver. Through actions sourced from his own image, he endeavoured to obtain the blessing that was associated with his calling as a son of Abraham. He found deliverance from this propensity when he wrestled with the Lord at Jabbok and received from the Lord his name, Israel, meaning 'prince with God'. In this regard, Jacob's wrestle was the same experience that Peter had in his encounter with Christ in the court of Caiaphas.

Jacob met the Lord face to face when he wrestled with Him through the night, until the breaking of the day. As we considered in Chapter 2, the Lord was mercifully resisting every carnal initiative, sourced from Jacob's fallen self-image, by which he sought to enter the land of blessing. Importantly, if Jacob had entered the land without this conversion, he would have been killed in the land by Esau. In this regard, Esau typified Satan. In this circumstance, Jacob was being 'sifted by Satan'. 'The land of promise' is where Satan is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 1Pe 5:8. Every person who presumes to participate in the kingdom while maintaining their religious projection makes themselves and their household vulnerable to the oppression of Satan and his principalities and powers. Unless they are converted from living carnally to walking spiritually in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, they will be overtaken by him and will lose their salvation.

The Lord touched Jacob's hip, joining him to the weakness of the cross, when He saw that Jacob was not letting go of his carnal endeavours to enter the land. By touching Jacob's hip, the Lord broke the strength of his fleshly image and expression. Jacob's struggle to obtain the blessing of life through his own endeavours failed, and he drew near to hold on to Christ. In this face to face interaction, Jacob confessed that he was 'Jacob', the deceiver, or projector. The Lord then proclaimed to Jacob his name as a son of God, saying, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel [meaning, 'prince with God']; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.' Gen 32:28.

When the Lord said to Jacob, 'You have struggled and prevailed with God and with men', He was acknowledging that Jacob *had obtained faith*. We know this because the apostle John said, 'For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.' 1Jn 5:4. Jacob received the capacity of faith as he wrestled with the Lord through the night of his trial of faith. He received the *substance* of his hope. Speaking of this outcome of the trial of faith, the apostle Peter wrote, 'In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honour, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love.' 1Pe 1:6-8.

We note that, through this fiery trial, Jacob's faith was being built up as he continued to meet Christ face to face; he did not draw back in unbelief. Mercifully, the Lord continued to wrestle with him through the trial. By dawn, Christ brought Jacob all the way through to the full trial that belongs to salvation, by having him limp for the rest of his life. Jacob now limped as an overcomer. As he journeyed with Christ, he was learning his obedience as 'prince with God', and was changing from glory to glory through regeneration and renewing. Notably, Jacob viewed the potential tribulation that was brought about by the testing of Satan as being his fellowship in Christ's suffering. He embraced this fellowship as the context of his participation in the will of the Father. This was evident as he approached Esau, bowing seven times before him, and testifying, 'I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God.' Gen 33:10.

This new way of walking was the implication of Jacob *calling on the name of the Lord*, which he did when he said to the Lord, '*Tell me Your name, I pray.*' Gen 32:29. We remember that the apostle Paul said, 'Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Rom 10:13. Importantly, 'calling on the name of the Lord' is not the sinner's prayer; nor is it when we are born again to see the kingdom. Paul was clear; we are saved through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit as we journey with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. Obviously, our fellowship in this saving work is possible only as we are joined to the fellowship of the Lord's name.

To 'call on the name of the Lord' is to desire to be established in the fellowship of the name from which our sonship has been declared. This is the fellowship of Yahweh, which becomes our fellowship as citizens of the kingdom of God. Having met Christ personally, we participate in the fellowship of Yahweh by *walking in the light of the word* that is ministered from the presbytery, and by *joining* the fellowship of the presbytery. 1Jn 1:1-3. Having been delivered from the drive to project a good image, our engagement with the presbytery is no longer a penitent action to galvanise our self-image; it is a context of offering and sanctification.

'Calling on the name of the Lord' is the response of a person who is poor in spirit, being illuminated to see that their salvation is found as they *learn their sanctification* by journeying with Christ on the pathway of salvation that He pioneered for them. The knowledge that they are learning, as they journey with Christ, is the knowledge that He learned through the things which He suffered as He fulfilled the works that belong to our obedience. Isa 53:11. As we have been considering, this is the knowledge of Christ, the Redeemer, who is called Wonderful *Counsellor*. Isa 9:6-7.

The place of judgement and the door of hope

The house of Caiaphas is both the place of judgement and the door of hope for every person who is born of God and is receiving the call to come to Christ to be built on Him. This was declared by the Lord through the prophet Hosea, who said,

‘Therefore, behold, I will allure her [the bride of Christ, the church], will bring her into the wilderness [the place of judgement, or forgetfulness], and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, *and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope*; she shall *sing* there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.’ Hos 2:14-15. The Valley of Achor was the place where the nation of Israel, through judgement, found the substance of repentance in relation to sanctification.

We recall that Joshua and the children of Israel had been directed by God to destroy Jericho. As Israel marched around the city for the seventh time, on the seventh day, Joshua said to them, ‘Shout, for the Lord has given you the city! Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction [*cherem*], it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things [*cherem* – the things dedicated to the Lord for destruction], lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.’ Jos 6:16-19.

Following the destruction of Jericho, the children of Israel proceeded to take the next step in entering the kingdom. They sent a small army to conquer the town of Ai, which was few in number. However, they suffered a surprising and heavy defeat at the hands of this modest company. The men of Ai pursued and struck down thirty-six Israelites, causing the hearts of the people to melt and to become like water. Jos 7:2-5. It is interesting that thirty-six is half of seventy-two. We recall that Jesus sent the seventy-two disciples ‘before His face’ into every city and village where He was going. Luk 10:1. Their work was to find sons of peace and to establish worthy houses. Through the defeat at Ai, half of this ministry capacity within the nation of Israel was, symbolically, lost.

In response, Joshua tore his clothes and, with the elders, fell to the earth on his face before the Lord, until evening. The Lord answered Joshua, saying, ‘Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both *stolen* and *deceived* [coveted and projected an image]; and they have also put it among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. Get up, *sanctify the people*, and say, “*Sanctify yourselves* for tomorrow, because thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you’ ”.’ Jos 7:10-13.

It came to light that Achan had seen and coveted among the spoils, a beautiful Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing

fifty shekels. He hid them in the ground in the midst of his tent, or household. The Babylonian garment typified a mandate to exercise priesthood from the basis of a mixed culture, sourced from a fallen self-image. It was supposed to be destroyed. In the unsanctified presumption that accompanies a fallen projection, Achan took what belonged to the treasury of the Lord – the silver and gold. That is, he presumed to minister as part of a kingdom (gold) of priests (silver) from the basis of a projection, helping himself to the provision that belonged to the Lord.

Achan's deception and presumption had brought judgement upon the house of Israel. Joshua and the people took Achan, the detestable items, his sons and daughters, and all that he possessed, and brought them to the Valley of Achor. There they stoned Achan *and burned everything with fire*. Through this action, the congregation was commending Achan and his household to the fellowship of Christ's offering in which everything accursed was being taken out with Christ, in judgement. They did not compensate, in any way, for Achan's corruption.

This account of Achan's deception is a stark illustration of the reality that if one member of the body suffers, or sins, in relation to the fellowship of the *agape* meal, then all of the members suffer. 1Co 12:26. The impact of this corruption is shared by a whole community of believers. With this in view, we acknowledge that the Lord is presently sanctifying through judgement, 'elect ladies' in every city and town, in a very acute manner. We must give heed to this sanctifying initiative and seek the Lord for the salvation that belongs to deliverance from our religious presumption.

The apostle Paul highlighted the wickedness and blindness within a church where leaders and congregations remain leavened by former gospels and carnal expectations of the Christian faith. He wrote, 'It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles – that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, *and have not rather mourned*, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.' 1Co 5:1-2. On account of this leaven among them, they were unable to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread; their *agape* meal was not true participation in the Passover. 1Co 5:6-8.

In the same way that Joshua, the elders, and the people commended Achan to the fiery trial, through which sanctification within the nation could be restored, the presbytery and church in Corinth were to cease from embracing this man under the guise of *agape* love, and were to commend him to the process of sifting, through which he could find salvation. Specifically, Paul directed the Corinthians, saying, '*In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, *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 5:4-5.

'*The day of the Lord Jesus*' is His offering and suffering journey. From the fellowship of the name of Christ, which is the fellowship of the presbytery,

Paul was delivering this man to 'the court of Caiaphas'. In the same way that Peter met Christ in the fiery trial that was associated with the sifting of Satan, this man was being delivered to Satan for the destruction of his religious image that had produced the deeds of the flesh. It needed to be destroyed through fire so that he could build again on Christ. Describing this process, Paul had earlier written, 'Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for *the Day* will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.' 1Co 3:12-15.

Evidently, this man did find salvation, for the apostle directed the Corinthian church to receive him again into the fellowship of their *agape* meal. He said, 'This punishment which was inflicted by the majority *is sufficient for such a man*, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.' 2Co 2:6-8. This restoration is possible when a person has a testimony of deliverance to the pathway of regeneration and renewing, upon which they are obtaining repentance as they participate in the obedience that Christ accomplished for them.

Every Christian community must deal with the matters of corruption that undermine their sanctification, releasing one another to personally meet Christ and to find deliverance from their self-definition, so that they can meet in sincerity and truth. Instead of embracing corruption and mixture in the name of love, or *agape*, they must dignify one another by commending each one to the process of refinement through which they can be delivered to salvation.

Responding in the season of judgement

In this present season, our blindness is being confronted, and we are being forced to make a judgement as to which image we will choose. Do we endeavour to use our religion and Christianity, and all of the resources of God, to establish our *own* image? When we do this, we fail to abide within our limits.

We do not know our own blindness and bankruptcy as Christians *until* we come to 'the house of Caiaphas', *which is for us the Valley of Achor*. It is in this place that the Lord first says to us, 'You are not My people', on account of the idolatry that belongs to living according to our self-image. This self-image is being destroyed in the fire of Christ's offering and death. However, as we acknowledge that we are under the judgement of God, with Christ, He says to us, 'You are sons of the living God!' Hos 1:9-10. This is 'the door of hope' that belongs to the judgements of God that are among us in this season.

Chapter 5

The nature of Christ's shepherding

Meeting and knowing the good Shepherd

Jesus identified Himself as 'the good Shepherd' who 'gives His life for the sheep'. Joh 10:11. Describing His work as a shepherd, He said, 'He who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; *and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.* And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the *sheep follow him, for they know his voice.*' Joh 10:2-4.

In this passage, Jesus explained that the Shepherd first calls His sheep by name. He does this so that they can *meet Him*. He then leads them on the pathway of salvation where they progressively grow in their *knowledge of Him* as they receive and obey His word. Significantly, meeting Christ and knowing Christ are two distinct relational implications of His shepherding initiative. Both are necessary for obtaining salvation as 'the sheep of His pasture'. Psa 100:3.

Meeting Christ is *His initiative* toward us. He is the Son of Man who comes 'to seek and to save that which was lost'. Luk 19:10. He does this as the good Shepherd who knows us by name. Mat 18:11-14. Joh 10:3. The Lord meets us to deliver us from our self-definition and image so that we can receive and lay hold of our true name and sanctification in Him. It is important to recognise that this encounter with the Lord, through which we meet Him, can happen *after* we have received our calling as a son of God. The experiences of Job, Jacob, Moses, the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul attest to this reality.

We know, for example, that Jacob had received his calling as a son of God in the womb of his mother, Rebecca. Gen 25:23. Jacob grew up in a covenant family and, after departing for Laban's house, he had a vision of the house of God and the gate of heaven. Gen 28:17. He then endured twenty years of mistreatment in the house of Laban, which he was enabled to do because the God of his fathers was with him. Gen 31:42. However, Jacob did not meet the Lord eye to eye and face to

face until he wrestled with Him at the brook called Jabbok. Gen 32:24. This wrestle was the Lord's initiative so that Jacob could meet Him.

As Jacob clung to Christ by faith, having mercifully been joined to the weakness of Christ's dislocation as his own hip was put out of joint, he found a new expression of fellowship with God. He was able to acknowledge his iniquity and to be delivered from his deceptive self-image. Significantly, having *possessed* his name, 'Prince with God', Jacob then began to *inherit* his name as he journeyed with Christ in the promised land. Jacob's limp marked his fellowship with Christ as he learned his obedience from Him on the pathway of salvation. Gen 32:31-32. Jacob was learning who he was as he grew in his knowledge of Christ.

The apostle Paul had a very similar experience to Jacob. He testified that, like Jacob, God had separated him from his mother's womb, to reveal the Son in him. Gal 1:15-16. However, Paul did not meet Christ, the Son of Man, until he was knocked to the ground on his way to Damascus. Act 9:3-6. The Lord initiated this encounter, saying, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' Act 9:4. Paul's response, 'Who are You, Lord?', revealed that, although he had now met the Lord, he did not *know* Him. Notably, through this encounter, the blindness associated with Paul's zealous, religious self-image was manifest. Act 9:8,18.

Having met the Lord, Paul later testified that he counted everything that had formerly informed his self-image to be excrement, so that he might gain Christ. Php 3:7-8. Importantly, he desired to *know Christ* and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Christ's death, that he might live by *exanastasis* life. Php 3:10-11.

The point to note is that Paul progressively grew in his knowledge of Christ as he journeyed on the pathway of salvation. This pathway was the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, upon which Paul was fulfilling, by *exanastasis*, the obedience that belonged to the knowledge of Christ. Accordingly, 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.' Php 3:12.

While meeting Christ is *His initiative* toward us, we can *give ourselves to seek Him*. This is particularly pertinent for people who have grown up in the church. The Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, addressed those who wanted to be delivered from bondage to their fallen religious image, saying, 'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity.' Jer 29:11-14.

This is the response of those who are heeding the call of Christ in this season, 'Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you

will find rest for your souls.' Mat 11:28-29. We come to Christ, seeking to meet Him eye to eye in order to be delivered from our fallen self-image. He yokes us, by grace, to Himself on the pathway of salvation, where we learn from Him and thereby grow in our knowledge of Him and of ourselves. This is salvation as we enter the kingdom through regeneration and renewing, and find rest for our souls.

Knowing in the light of fellowship

The experiences of Jacob and Paul demonstrate that, having heard the Lord *call* our name, we cannot *possess* our name until we 'see' the Shepherd struck and His visage marred more than any man's, in the court of Caiaphas. This is because our name and true image are in the face of our Redeemer. As we find deliverance from our self-image, we begin to obtain our name through the ministry of light that shines from His face. That is, we are able to *inherit* our name as we then walk in this light and participate in the fellowship of the presbytery. 1Jn 1:1-3,7.

Practically, we receive the word of our name as the light of the knowledge of the glory of God that proceeds from the face of Christ *through* the ministry of the word that proceeds from the fellowship of the presbytery. This principle was epitomised by the naming of Barnabas. Formerly known as Joses, he was named 'Son of Encouragement' by the apostles in the context of their fellowship. As Luke recorded, 'And Joses, who was also *named Barnabas by the apostles* (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.' Act 4:36-37. Later, along with Paul, Barnabas was set apart by the Holy Spirit, and commended by the presbytery in Antioch, for the work of proclaiming the gospel of God to the Gentiles. Act 13:2.

The example of Barnabas stands in stark contrast to the outcome of Ananias and Sapphira's deceit. This couple conspired together to present the image of a committed, offering, household. The money that they gave was not an expression of love through obedience; rather, it was an investment in *their self-image*. It was a deception. Instead of being established on the pathway of sanctification as they walked in the light of the word proceeding from the presbytery, they were slain by the Lord. Peter said to Sapphira, 'How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.' Act 5:9.

Hearing, possessing and inheriting our name

The progression of hearing one's call, possessing one's name, and then inheriting one's name on the pathway of salvation, was also exemplified by Peter. Peter's experience is particularly helpful to consider, for he met Christ eye to eye as the Shepherd was, literally, struck in the court of Caiaphas. Then, the pathway of sanctification, to which He was commended by Christ in the presence of his fellow disciples, involved fulfilling the work of a shepherd.

Peter first heard his name being called when Jesus commissioned him as a disciple. Recounting this interaction, the apostle John wrote, ‘One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. *You shall be called Cephas [Peter]*” (which is translated, *A Stone*).’ Joh 1:40-42.

It was not until Peter found deliverance from his carnal self-image, as he met Christ eye to eye and face to face in the court of Caiaphas, that he began to *possess* the name ‘Rock’ that was given to him by Christ. This was prophesied to Peter by Christ as the light of the knowledge of his sonship that shone from His face in Caiaphas’ court. Christ was learning this obedience as He suffered for Peter’s iniquity. The prophetic ministry to Peter was the testimony of Jesus! Rev 19:10.

We know that, having received faith through his encounter with the fiery eyes of Christ, Peter went to his house mourning with godly sorrow. Peter’s mourning was not without hope. Rather, he went to his house with a song planted in his heart. He went singing, ‘I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, *and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps*. He has put a new song in my mouth – “Praise to our God”; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.’ Psa 40:1-3. Peter’s song was the confession that he was now possessing the name Rock, which he had been called by the good Shepherd some three and a half years earlier.

When Jesus met Peter on the shore of Lake Galilee, He called him to be a shepherd, saying to Peter, ‘Feed My lambs’, ‘Tend My sheep’, and ‘Feed My sheep’. Joh 21:15,16,17. In order to fulfil this work, Peter would need to walk in the fellowship of Christ’s dying and living. Accordingly, Jesus said to him, ‘When you were younger [living according to your carnal self-image], you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old [spiritual], you will stretch out your hands, and another [the Holy Spirit] will gird you and carry you where you do not wish [that is, in a way that is not sourced from yourself].’ Joh 21:18.

Through the word of Christ at an *agape* meal with his brethren, Peter was joined to the pathway of regeneration and renewing through which he could *inherit* his name as an eternal reward. This pathway is the fellowship of Christ’s death and life; it is a participation in the seven wounding events of His offering journey. Each wounding event is a death to an *endpoint*. In this regard, the seven wounding events are seven endpoints of death. As a person embraces an endpoint, they are brought back with Christ, by regeneration, to life, which has no end. Everlasting life is everlasting regeneration, for all things are made new every day, forever.

Striking the shepherd

As a shepherd of the sheep, Peter would be joined to the great Shepherd who was struck in the face. What happened to Christ would happen to Peter. With this in view, we recall that 'the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?" And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.' Luk 22:63-65.

In the same way, Peter's face would be 'blindfolded' by the deceit of those in the midst of the church who would then 'strike' him through their demands for a word that would define their calling and verify their identity. This is indicative of people who lay their own deceit upon the messenger. Entreating the messenger with an idol in their heart, they demand that the messenger prophesy to them by giving to them a statement about their identity, name and situation. By this means, they put the messenger on trial as their resource in this competitive world.

The prophet Daniel declared that messengers would fall on account of those who clung to them with this deceit. Dan 11:34. Those messengers who receive the accompanying suffering as a chastening *are refined and purified*. Dan 11:34-35. They need to be recovered to the hand of Christ in order to again shine the light of the gospel as a messenger proceeding from a presbytery.

The apostle Peter fell in this manner at Antioch when he ingratiated himself with the Judaisers who had come from James. He was blindfolded as he, with Barnabas, was carried away with the hypocrisy of these Jews from Jerusalem. Gal 2:11-13. Notably, a hypocrite is an actor who wears a mask as they assume a particular character or role. It is a deceiving projection of one's self-crafted image. Peter needed to be recovered to his sanctification through regeneration and renewing as he received and responded to the word of Paul, his fellow presbyter. With this end in view, Paul publicly admonished Peter, saying, 'If I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the Law died to the Law *that I might live to God*.' Gal 2:18-19.

James was also blindfolded and struck when Paul came to Jerusalem. As a shepherd, he was overcome by the myriads of Jews who identified as believers, but who were zealous for the Law and the temple. James was blindfolded and struck as the Christians threatened to riot, having been informed that Paul had taught the Jews who were among the Gentiles 'to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs'. Act 21:20-21. Having succumbed to the pressure of those who held to the gospel traditions of the Old Covenant, James directed Paul to go to the temple with four men who had taken a vow and be purified with them and pay their expenses 'so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Law'. Act 21:23-24.

Paul's sanctification as a shepherd

Paul did not submit himself to this deception, even though he went to the temple at the direction of James. We know this because, earlier, as he made his way to Jerusalem, Paul and his companions came to Caesarea and entered the house of Philip, where he stayed for many days. During this time, a prophet named Agabus took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles".' Act 21:11.

Significantly, Paul would not be bound by the Jews in Jerusalem but, rather, *by his own belt!* With his belt, he was *girding himself with truth*, which sanctified the garment of his priesthood, enabling him to stand in the midst of great hypocrisy, without losing his probity. Eph 6:14. In this way, Paul was able to be taken, by the Spirit, where he did not desire to go, which was to Rome.

Reflecting on Peter's humiliation in Antioch, Paul said that he himself was unwilling to yield submission, for even an hour, to false brethren who sought to bring the church into bondage to former traditions and gospels. He would not receive or engage these ones, in order that the truth of the gospel would continue with his hearers. Gal 2:4-5. Saying it another way, if he had yielded to their deception, the truth of the gospel would not have been proclaimed to, nor been effective in, his hearers.

Similarly, Paul reprimanded the Corinthian leaders for putting up with fools under the guise of a form of wisdom which had not come from the fellowship of the presbytery. Specifically, he said to them, 'For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise! For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. To our shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold - I speak foolishly - I am bold also.' 2Co 11:19-21. Paul emphasised that the leaders in Corinth were subject to this abuse because they were puffed up, revealing that they were leavened. Consequently, they were unable to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Come out from among them

The messengers of Christ who are standing in their sanctification through regeneration and renewing have no part in, nor obligation to, those within a congregation who engage with such deceit. Like the Judaisers who came to Antioch, and who pursued Paul, those who seek to relate in this manner belong to natural Jerusalem. Gal 4:25.

With departure from this city in view, the apostle Paul exhorted us, saying, 'Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate [of natural Jerusalem]. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach [the reproach that belongs to those who

are too weak to embrace the deceit of those who slap them]. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name [which is the fellowship of Yahweh and the presbytery].’ Heb 13:12-15.

Paul not only resisted those who sought to bind his face and to demand that he affirm their projections through his engagement with them but, also, he called every believer who had an ear to hear the word, to separate themselves from this mixed trading dynamic within the church. Specifically, he said to the Corinthians, ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.’ 2Co 6:17-18.

While Paul was unwilling to entertain those who sought to cling to him with deceit, he was able to be a father to those who separated themselves from this alternative fellowship that was based in historical connections and denominational traditions. Those who receive this ministry are able to grow as sons and daughters of God because they are walking in the light of the word and are changing, from glory to glory, into the image of the Son. 2Co 3:18.

The ministry of a shepherd

Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd of the sheep. Heb 13:20. He shepherds the flock by sending to them ‘under-shepherds’. The apostle Peter identified these under-shepherds as ‘elders among the flock, who serve as overseers’. 1Pe 5:1-4. Their work is to gather His people into the fellowship that exists between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the fellowship of the name of God, which is the kingdom of God.

Describing the ministry of the word by the good Shepherd, through His under-shepherds, King Solomon wrote, ‘The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars [masters of assemblies, or overseers in the Father’s house] are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.’ Ecc 12:11. The nails, given by one Shepherd through the ministry of under-shepherds, secure a hearer in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Under-shepherds do not herd the flock in the manner of a sheepdog, cajoling the responses of their hearers by reiterating and restating the word, or by petitioning their hearers, or through inquisition. Neither do they script the response and expression of people to the word. Rather, they call their hearers by name as they preach the word of Christ from the fellowship of the presbytery. Jesus said, ‘My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.’ Joh 10:27-28. Shepherds are able to call a person by name because they have insight into the sonship to which their hearer has been called and named to be by the great Shepherd, Christ. This insight is not inherent in their own capacity

or understanding, but is found in the light of fellowship that belongs to the presbytery.

A shepherd seeks fellowship with the sheep of Christ's pasture. This dialogue is possible because each person has received the same spirit of faith. 2Co 4:13. As we have already noted, fellowship does not involve scripting for, nor assuming the accountability for, another's life and decisions but, rather, involves commending them to the pathway of sanctification that belongs to their name and obedience. In this regard, we recognise that Christ's sheep are 'the temple flock'. That is, they are part of a flock that has been bred and chosen for sacrifice. They are a sacrificial flock!

When Christ the great Shepherd calls His 'sheep' by name, He leads them out to find pasture. He places them in 'the flock' in an order where they follow by name. The flock is a fellowship by name. This flock comprises men and women who are being called by name as they follow the good Shepherd, walking in the order of headship. Note that it is only in the order of headship that a person is able to receive, possess and inherit their name as a son of God.

Each person needs to know Christ, the Shepherd, personally, because He is the One who trains us, or teaches us His name as our Wonderful Counsellor. Isa 9:6. He teaches us who the Father has named us to be, which He fulfilled through His offering journey. Significantly, the Shepherd teaches us this knowledge through the ministry of His under-shepherds in the church.

Chapter 6

Dealing with sin on the pathway of regeneration

Temptation on the pathway of salvation

When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, explaining that the child in Mary's womb was conceived of the Holy Spirit, he said to him, 'And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, *for He will save His people from their sins.*' Mat 1:21. Jesus did not save us from our sins simply by suffering and dying in our stead. Rather, through His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, He *pioneered a pathway* leading to eternal salvation for those who obey Him. Heb 5:9. On this pathway, we are joined to a process of regeneration and renewing through which we can find deliverance from sin, and can become the son of God and son of man whom we are predestined to be.

With this in view, the apostle Peter opened his first epistle by addressing us as pilgrims who are on a journey from Earth to heaven. 1Pe 1:1-2. He explained that we have been born to see our salvation, which is 'a living hope' that is set before us as we walk through life as Christians. 1Pe 1:3-4. Heb 6:18. Although we rejoice in this hope, we are, at times, grieved in our daily sojourn because we are beset by various temptations and trials. These trials test, or prove, our commitment. Through our obedience in the midst of these trials, the genuineness of our faith is demonstrated. When we are put under pressure and we refuse to draw back in unbelief or we refuse to deviate to some other belief system, *our faith is purified.* 1Pe 1:6-7.

In his first epistle, Peter also exhorted us to be sober and vigilant when we are put under this pressure. This pressure comes from the devil, who walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Peter explained that the oppressive pressure that is applied by Satan is a suffering that we all must endure because it belongs to all of our brethren in the world. Satan is successfully resisted and

overcome as we remain *steadfast in faith*, which is demonstrated through our obedience in the midst of pressure and contrary circumstances. 1Pe 5:8-11.

Peter taught that it is commendable, because of our conscience toward God, when we take a stand against sin, and endure grief and suffering wrongfully. 1Pe 2:19. However, under pressure, some people will deviate from the pathway that Christ has authored for their salvation, and they will be *overtaken in a fault*. In fact, from time to time, we are all like sheep who have gone astray and must return to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. 1Pe 2:25. The elders, or presbyters, who are among the ‘sheep’, are to ‘shepherd the flock of God’, and to recover those sheep who are overtaken in a fault. 1Pe 5:1-3. Gal 6:1.

The call to repentance

The first work of shepherding the flock of God is *to proclaim the word of Christ*. This word, ministered from the presbytery through the lordship of the Holy Spirit, comes to every individual. It is proclaimed to both the obedient and the disobedient, urging them towards repentance and the works of faith that belong to their sanctification.

The word that is proclaimed from the presbytery is a ‘mirror’ to a person regarding their personal and relational situations as they journey in life. This mirror can also be extended to a hearer through the admonition and instruction that they receive in dialogue with shepherding elders. We note these two aspects of the ministry of the word in Paul’s instruction to Timothy. He wrote, ‘*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*’. 2Ti 4:2.

The call to repentance is the first word of the gospel that is proclaimed by the elders. On Solomon’s porch, Peter, having illuminated his hearers to their sins, declared, ‘Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things.’ Act 3:19-21. We see that repentance and conversion are essential before a person’s sins are blotted out. This is a condition of obtaining the blessing of eternal life. However, a person can repent only through the conviction of the Spirit in response to His word.

Hearing a word behind

When a believer is going astray, the word of God comes to them as a command, issued from behind them. Explaining this point, the prophet Isaiah said, ‘Your ears shall hear a word *behind you*, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.’ Isa 30:21. The word proclaims to them the obedience that Christ fulfilled for them when He pioneered the pathway of their salvation.

The apostle John experienced this ministry of the word. He testified that, while he was imprisoned on the island named Patmos, he was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's Day'. He heard, *behind him*, a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last', and, 'What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.' Rev 1:11.

It appears that John needed to be reoriented in relation to his work and walk, for he heard the voice of the Lord *behind him*. In response, John turned and was illuminated '*to see the voice*' that spoke with him. This voice was the Spirit speaking. The veil belonging to his present orientation was removed and he saw the Son of Man in the midst of seven lampstands. Rev 1:12-13. He was able to see and meet the Lord Jesus Christ eye to eye and face to face. 2Co 3:16-18. When John saw the Lord, he fell at His feet as though he were dead. Rev 1:17. This is the response of one who declares that they are not worthy of the word. Gen 32:10. Act 10:25. In doing so, they reveal themselves to be 'a house of peace', because they can be joined to the fellowship of offering in which the peace of God was brought forth. Luk 10:5-6. Eph 2:14-18.

The Lord extended His right hand, which contained the seven stars, to John. As He did this, He said to John, '*Do not be afraid*; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. *Write the things* which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.' Rev 1:17-19. Through this initiative from His hand, in which resided the presbyteries of the seven lampstand churches, the Son of Man ministered faith to John, enabling him to stand in his name. He then declared to John the works that belonged to his obedience; that is, John was to write the things which he had 'seen', the things that 'are', and the things that were 'to come'.

The proceeding word that is ministered to a person who is going astray brings conviction, illuminating them to their sin. It calls them to turn to meet the Lord and to obtain repentance by obeying the word of direction that is being given to them. As we have already considered, this direction is summed up by the command, 'This is the way, walk in it'. Isa 30:21.

Making confession

A person begins to mourn as they turn to the lordship of the Spirit and are enlightened by this word. 2Co 3:16-18. The darkness of their delusion and self-righteousness is dispelled, illuminating to them the knowledge of their transgression. Their response, as exemplified by King David when Nathan the prophet exposed his adultery and murder, is, 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin. *For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.*' Psa 51:1-3.

The first statement of a sinner's confession, as they acknowledge their sin and iniquity, is *a statement of their damnation*. In this regard, they are confessing the truth that, on account of their sin, they are not one of the Lord's people. Hos 1:10. To this end, King David's statement concerning his sin demonstrated the beginning point of true confession. He stated, '*Against You, You only, have I sinned*, and done this evil in Your sight – that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.' Psa 51:4. With this initial acknowledgement, the hearer is beginning to demonstrate accountability for their sin.

It is necessary for a person to identify and confess their sin. Jas 5:16. 1Jn 1:9. However, the identification of one's sin is not, in and of itself, *repentance*. Viewing one's statement of sin to be repentance, particularly in the first instance, can be merely an action of penance in their pursuit of absolution for their sin. Often, the statements of confession spoken or written by a person seeking relief from condemnation are a *commentary* on all that they have done. In effect, their detailed self-reflection is an assertion that they *see* their sin. However, because they say that they see, without acknowledging their blindness on account of their uncleanness, *their sin remains*. As Jesus said to the Pharisees, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, "We see." *Therefore your sin remains.*' Joh 9:41.

A person's self-reflection and commentary on their condition is the fruit of *self-righteousness*. These penitent expressions are not a substitute for new birth and training. When one turns to Christ, they need 'the sincere milk of the word' so that they may grow from carnal immaturity to become spiritual. 1Co 3:1-3. Specifically, Peter wrote, 'Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, *that you may grow thereby*, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious'. 1Pe 2:1-3. 'The milk of the word' is *sound doctrine*. This word gives instruction to a hearer regarding the culture of godliness that belongs to the kingdom of heaven.

It is imperative that presbyters do not become caught in the trap of endorsing a person's repentance on the basis of their commentary on their condition. Commentary, or self-reflection, belongs to penance, which a person who is motivated by the fear of death employs to reinforce their religious self-image. It is idolatry. A messenger who receives and supports such a response is exposed to the same judgement as the sinner. Warning against this mode of counsel, the Lord said, 'And if the prophet is *induced* to speak anything, I the Lord have induced that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel. And they shall bear their iniquity; the punishment of the prophet shall be the same as the punishment of the one who inquired.' Eze 14:9-10.

The confession of a person who is sorrowing in a godly manner is an expression of faith that is received through illumination as they walk in the light of God's word. Their confession, which is the communication of faith, *will continue to progress in detail and in their understanding of the impact of their sin on others*. This happens as they receive further illumination in the process of mourning. Highlighting this principle, the prophet Zechariah declared, 'And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his *only son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a *firstborn*.' Zec 12:10-11.

We see in this statement a progression from one's acknowledgement of their sin against the Lord, to mourning for their sin against *the little ones* who belong to '*the church of the firstborn*'. Heb 12:23. In this regard, we note that 'the firstborn' is not only Christ, the Person; it refers also to the corporate body of Christ, the church. A repentant person will mourn for the impact of their sin upon their brethren as they continue to mourn for its wounding effect upon Christ.

The seven steps of mourning

A person who, in response to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, has looked on Christ and begun to acknowledge their sin, will mourn with godly sorrow. This is not a pathetic response of condemnation and self-recrimination. Rather, it is a process that demonstrates the obedience of faith, which a believer progressively obtains through illumination from the proceeding word. This mourning '*produces repentance leading to salvation*'. 2Co 7:10. That is, it leads to the pathway of obedience upon which a person is being saved through regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

Godly sorrow was the focus of Christ's intercessory prayer in Gethsemane. Christ has already mourned and fulfilled the repentance of each of us. The faith that He gives to us through the ministry of His word connects us to this process of mourning, which leads to repentance, demonstrated through obedience. Describing our participation in this process of mourning, Paul wrote, 'For observe this very thing, that you *sorrowed in a godly manner*: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' 2Co 7:11.

A person demonstrates '*diligence*' through their individual application to turn and see the voice of the Spirit. They seek illumination concerning the conviction of the Spirit that has accompanied the word. Exemplifying this response, the psalmist Asaph wrote, 'You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night; I meditate within my heart, *and my spirit makes diligent search*.' Psa 77:4-6. In the fellowship of Christ's travail, this diligence in relation to

the word becomes a person's precious possession. This is because it is a capacity that belongs to the *exanastasis* life of Christ, which a person obtains in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, revealing that they are obtaining salvation through regeneration. Pro 12:27. Php 3:10-11.

The term '*clearing of yourselves*' literally means 'apology' (Greek: *apologia*). No doubt, a repentant sinner will desire to make apology to the one against whom they have sinned. As they do this, it will not be from the basis of justifying themselves or seeking understanding from the people whom they have wounded. However, this is not the primary expression of clearing oneself. The apostle Peter used this same word when he said, 'But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence [*apologia*] to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.' 1Pe 3:15. A person who is clearing themselves has *received faith through their diligent application to the word of the Lord*. By faith, their conversation and conduct are being reformed as they journey with Christ in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. They are confessing that this fellowship is the only context in which they are able to change and can obtain wisdom and grace for relational recovery and restitution.

In the first instance, '*indignation*' is the implication of meeting the *fiery* eyes of Christ. Rev 1:14. This is a confronting experience, as the prophet Nahum attested, writing, 'Who can stand before His *indignation*? And who can endure the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like *fire*, and the rocks are thrown down by Him.' Nah 1:6. A person who acknowledges the indignation of the Lord is able to join His indignation. As they meet Christ's fiery eyes, and do not draw back in unbelief, this very fire is ignited in their spirit! That is, as part of their repentance, they are able to embrace the process that is necessary for their purification. Moreover, they are motivated to stand in obedience and accountability to deal with the cultural matters that require attention within their life and household.

A person obtains '*the fear of the Lord*' through the anointing of the Spirit of God. The fear of the Lord is one of the seven aspects of the Spirit of God. Isa 11:1-2. Christ's *head* was anointed with this oil, which flows to every part of His body. Isa 61:1-7. Psa 133:1-3. A person receives this anointing as they entreat and embrace the fellowship and order of headship in the body of Christ. Jas 5:14. Through the fear of the Lord, a person is delivered from bondage to the fear of death, to join the fellowship of Christ's death. They embrace the implications of their participation in the chastening of the Lord and obtain wisdom regarding their obedience as a son of God. Pro 9:10. This is fundamental to the repentance that Christ learned for them and to which they are being recovered.

'*Vehement desire*' is the evidence of the love of God being poured into the heart of the repentant sinner. Rom 5:5. Describing the love of Yahweh, the Scriptures declare, 'For love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, *a most vehement flame*. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it.' Son 8:6-7. When the love of God is poured into the heart

of a hearer, their focus is on their service of others, and on their participation in the fellowship of offering, rather than on the recovery of their own image and reputation.

This motivation to serve another in love reveals their renewed '*zeal*' for the house of God and for His people. Psa 69:9. Having been unable to fellowship with an open face in the *agape* meal because of their darkness and uncleanness, a person's zeal for their full participation in this meal will now become their motivation. They will speak by testimony and confession, joyfully renouncing the hidden things of shame, which include their loyalties to former church doctrines and traditions from which they have formerly obtained identity verification. 2Co 4:2. They rid themselves and their houses of these worthless and corrupting influences in the same way that Jesus rid His Father's house of the money changers.

'*Vindication*', or acquittal, is the final stage in the seven steps of mourning. A person who has been vindicated has been healed of their lameness, caused by their sin and iniquity. Through regeneration and renewing, they are able to lift up their hands, to strengthen their feeble knees, and to make straight paths for their feet. Heb 12:12-13. That is, they are completely restored to the pathway of salvation that Christ has pioneered for them.

Calling the elders

The apostle James addressed the difficulties that Christians may encounter on the pathway of salvation as they are beset by various temptations and trials. He wrote, 'Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.' Jas 5:13-14. In this passage, James made a distinction between 'suffering' and 'spiritual sickness'.

If we are suffering with Christ, we are to *pray*. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but we pray in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps our weakness by joining us to the prayer meeting of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ searches our heart and makes intercession to the Father for us. Rom 8:26-27. In this fellowship of prayer, we receive the grace that is necessary for us to endure the suffering that we are experiencing, and to do the works of obedience that Christ has already learned and finished for us.

In contrast to this, if we are spiritually sick, James said that we need to call for the elders. When he said, 'If anyone is sick', James was not referring only to general physical ailments. He was referring to a person who is *spiritually sick* because they are not participating in the fellowship of the *agape* meal in a worthy manner. In this regard, we are reminded of the words of Paul, who wrote, 'He who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, not

discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, many are weak and sick and many sleep.' 1Co 11:29-30.

This raises an important question. How can we know the difference between the sufferings that belong to fellowship with Christ on the pathway of salvation, and the sufferings of sickness that belong to the judgement of God?

Helpfully, Jesus drew our attention to the reality that 'every tree is known by its own fruit'. Luk 6:44. If we are suffering with Christ, we will have *a testimony of change and of the power of resurrection life* by which we are able to fulfil the works that belong to our obedience in the midst of our suffering. We will be *growing* in our capacity to participate in *agape* fellowship and to minister life to others. However, if we are weak and sick because the Holy Spirit is resisting us, and we are oppressed by unclean spirits, we will not have a testimony of resurrection life. Rather, our capacity to meet and relate with others will be diminishing. We will not be focused on serving and caring for others, but will become increasingly self-absorbed and focused on our own problems.

When a person is sick on account of their sin, their initiative to call the elders is the beginning of their deliverance. This is because they are recognising the reality of their situation; they are beginning to judge themselves rightly. Likewise, they are beginning to discern the body of Christ rightly because they recognise the need to be properly connected to the headship of Christ. We note that James said that they must call for 'the elders'. 'Calling for the elders' means that the person is calling for appropriate fellowship with the elders concerning the reality of their situation. They do not ask for a counselling session with a specific elder; nor do they seek to make a *confidential* confessional.

The primary response of the elders to a person who is sick because of sin is to pray for them. We know that Jesus prayed *three times* in the garden of Gethsemane. Similarly, we recall that Elijah prayed *three times* for the young boy who died during his stay with the widow in Zarephath. Accordingly, James has identified *three dimensions* to the fellowship and ministry of prayer that the presbytery will need to extend toward a person who is spiritually sick.

The prayer to anoint with oil

The *first dimension* of prayer is for the elders to *anoint with oil* the person who is sick. James said, 'Let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.' Jas 5:14. This verse has been grossly misunderstood and misapplied across the history of the church. We know that James was not describing a sacrament, and nor was he referring simply to medical treatment. The *oil* is the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord.

Significantly, this anointing is 'in the name of the Lord'. Anointing in this manner is not an invocation of the name of the Lord. *The name of the Lord is the fellowship of Yahweh*. The presbyters who come in the name of the Lord are

extending this fellowship to the person in their sin-sick condition. Psa 133:1-3. The person who is sick has asked for this fellowship, but they themselves have no capacity to join it. The anointing of the Spirit of the Lord enables them to join in fellowship with the elders.

Fellowship with the elders, which is fellowship with the Father and the Son, is *in the fear of the Lord*. As we noted earlier, the fear of the Lord belongs to the Spirit of the Lord. Isa 11:2. This anointing is necessary to break the yoke of bondage to the fear of death, which is likely to have been the initial motivation to engage the elders. The anointing of the Spirit ensures that the interaction is no longer driven by this fallen desire, and that the person who is seeking healing can relate to the elders in sincerity and truth. They are able to acknowledge that in their sinful condition they are 'dead with Christ'.

The prayer of faith for deliverance

The *second dimension* of prayer is *the prayer of faith* that saves, or delivers, the sick. James said, 'And the prayer of faith will save [lit: deliver] the sick, and the Lord will *raise him up*. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.' Jas 5:15. The prayer of faith is a ministry of faith to the person. This faith is given to them to enable them to let go of control, and to participate in the obedience of Christ, which is the repentance that He has finished for them.

As the person receives this ministry of faith, they are able to be delivered *from* the bondage of their sin and *from* the oppression of unclean spirits. And they are delivered *to* the accountability of their own obedience to Christ. We note that the elders do not deliver the person from their accountability. That is, the elders are messengers of Christ, but they do not function as intermediaries between the person and Christ. Rather, they deliver the sick person to accountably meet Christ themselves.

James continued, 'And the Lord will raise him up.' This reveals that, through faith, the repentant sinner has indeed reckoned themselves dead to sin, and is now beginning to see and walk in obedience by the capacity of resurrection life. This is the sovereign work of the Lord. This means that the Lord will awaken the sick person out of their spiritual sleep that leads to spiritual death. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, 'Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light".' Eph 5:14.

When a person who is sick first calls for the elders, they are recognising the reality of their situation while, at the same time, they are confessing that they do not have spiritual sight concerning the underlying issues that have caused their condition. The person who is sick must receive light from Christ. This light is *illumination*. The apostle John wrote, 'If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin'. 1Jn 1:7. The blood of Christ is not only a cleansing agent; it also contains *the life of Yahweh*, enabling the repentant hearer to rise from the dead. The work of

regeneration and renewing is happening in their life. It is the capacity for their participation in the obedience that Christ has already finished for them.

The prayer for healing

Once the person who is sick is receiving illumination, they will be able to confess their trespasses to those against whom they have sinned. This brings us to *the third dimension of prayer*, which is *prayer for healing*. James said, 'Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.' Jas 5:16. This healing will restore the person's capacity to relate properly in their home and in the fellowship of the *agape* meal. Importantly, we see that apologies and relational restitutions are truly the responses of *obedience*, enabled by resurrection life in the fellowship of Christ's dying and living. They are not the actions of penance that a person employs to recover their tarnished self-image.

Learning to pray in the anointing

As we have already noted, calling for the elders is not for the sacrament of anointing with physical oil. Jas 5:14. Rather, when we are sick, it is for the purpose of an adjustment that enables us to discern again our place in the body of Christ, and to connect ourselves to our works. This anointing enables us to pray our own prayer of faith as the elders also find, with us, the discernment of the Spirit that teaches us how to pray.

In this fellowship, we are to be anointed with the oil of joy for mourning, and are delivered from the spirit of heaviness as our garments of priesthood are cleansed. This happens as we are restored to the hope of the gospel, with its joy, even though we are grieved by its various trials. Jesus was anointed for this ministry to us. Isa 61:1-3. As we receive this ministry from Him, we are able to minister to one another as part of a kingdom of priests. Rev 1:6.

In the fellowship of Gethsemane, we must continue to watch and pray with Christ, lest we fall into the temptation to revert to the actions that come from unbelief – that is, we draw back in unbelief. Prevenient grace, accompanying the word of the Lord, gives us the capacity to choose our sonship. We now walk in fellowship with Christ each day, yoked to His obedience that He has fulfilled for us. His yoke, which enables our obedience, is easy and light. Mat 11:29-30. We carry out our works each day through our connection to Christ. This is how repentance works. This message is the gospel that will bring thousands into the kingdom of God as we approach the time of the end.

Recovery from sin within a marriage

Let us now focus more specifically on the process of dealing with sin within a marriage. Of course, the principles that we have already outlined apply in these settings. However, it is helpful to consider some of the responses that are particular to the recovery of marriages, and to identify the carnal 'reefs' that a

couple should avoid as they apply themselves to the reformation of their marriage. Unless this process is understood and rightly engaged, a person will be *unable* to walk worthy of their calling, and their house will *remain* unworthy.

The man, as the head of his wife, must respond to the headship of Christ. He does this through his obedience to the word that proceeds from Christ through the presbytery. The word of Christ calls the man to forsake every relational mechanism of manipulation and accommodation that belongs to the romantic agenda of his wife. This agenda, sourced from her knowledge of good and evil, is administered in the home through a mechanism of *mutual approval*. In other words, a balanced and equal relationship within the marriage is sought and promoted. A man's submission to the lordship of Christ depends on his forsaking this fallen relational dynamic, as well as on his receiving his obedience *only* from Christ as it is proclaimed by the Spirit in, and from, the fellowship of the presbytery.

In response to the word of Christ ministered from the presbytery, a wife's repentance and obedience *is brought to her husband, as to Christ*. The apostle Peter highlighted this point, explaining that a sanctified woman who trusts in God is submissive to her husband, as to Christ, calling her husband 'lord'. 1Pe 3:5-6. The wife's submission to, and honour of, her husband is the implication of being *a disciple of Christ*. Unless Christ is the Lord of her life, which she demonstrates through obedience to her husband, He is not her Lord at all. That is, she is not known by Christ and cannot expect to go to heaven.

A wife who remains reticent to submit to her husband, as to Christ, *is already under condemnation*. She is no different from the younger widows who were identified by the apostle Paul in his first letter to Timothy. He wrote, 'But *refuse* the younger [or carnally immature] widows; for when they have *begun to grow wanton against Christ*, they desire to marry [to establish a romantic context over which they have dominion], having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith [expressed through obedience]. And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.' 1Ti 5:11-13.

Uncleanness and dystrophy

In this season, the Lord is addressing every marriage, calling each person to be restored to the fellowship and order of headship. However, when a man and his wife endeavour, over many years, to maintain a false projection of their marriage viability, their identities will inevitably dystrophy. Significantly, their identity is eaten away in the same way that leprosy eats away a person's flesh. This is the fruit of uncleanness in their lives, individually and as a couple.

Their uncleanness is their 'leprosy', and it is demonstrated through their resistance to the word and to walking in the light of fellowship. They are in opposition to the presbytery. The dystrophy that results from their uncleanness

gives advantage to unclean spirits so that they are taken captive by Satan to do his will.

Couples who are in this condition are in need of illumination, leading to repentance and cleansing as they are established in the way of regeneration and renewing. The grace for reformation is found only through repentance, which involves this cleansing. To this end, Paul instructed messengers to address those who maintain their opposition to the Lord, writing, 'And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.' 2Ti 2:24-26. They need cleansing from their sin, as well as healing of their identity. Unless they avail themselves of this cleansing process, they will lose their sonship and their salvation.

Satan gains advantage

Let us note the way in which Satan gains an advantage in a marriage relationship that is not established in the fellowship and order of headship. A woman becomes dominant within a relationship when a husband vacates his headship role to her. This happens when he looks into her face for his identity verification, complying with and supporting the endeavours that belong to her anxiously driven romantic agenda for the household. He secures her affirmation and affection through this compliance. Oriented in this manner, the man forsakes the face of Christ in the fellowship of the presbytery.

Because a man has vacated his headship role through disobedience to the word, Satan gains access to his household. Satan energises the wife, who presumes to give direction to the household, using the authority that belongs to her husband against him. She accuses and abuses him for his failure to stand up in headship and, by this means, he is oppressed by unclean spirits. 1Co 11:10. The woman's spiteful demeanour toward her husband, as she uses his authority against him, causes the dystrophy of his identity. Under this trauma, he increasingly relies on her acceptance for identity verification. This is why he continues to seek her approval even though she mistreats him.

A woman who engages with her husband in this manner has her head 'uncovered', while her husband's head is 'covered'. Paul emphasised that, because of this, a household is vulnerable to oppressive spirits. 1Co 11:7-10. These unclean spirits have unmitigated access to the house, subjecting those who belong to the household, including their children, to oppression.

Where a couple presumes to minister in the church under these conditions, Christ is dishonoured, and alternative gospels flourish. This is particularly the case when the wife presumes to pray or prophesy. Her expression is not of the Spirit of God, but of Satan himself. Jesus identified this particular leavened engagement in the

church as ‘the spirit of Jezebel’. Unless leading couples repent of this ministry presumption and find deliverance from the spirit of Jezebel, Jesus has declared that He will cast them, and those who are loyal to their corrupt expression, into great tribulation, ‘killing their children with death’. Rev 2:20-23.

As we have already considered, the woman’s repentance is through submission to her husband. The apostle Peter said that this would be ‘*without a word*’. 1Pe 3:1. That is, even if her husband has vacated his headship, she, through godly fear, refrains from leading or from presuming to fill the void caused by his disobedience and laziness. Instead, she honours and obeys her husband, demonstrating her submission to Christ and to the lordship of the Spirit. By this means, her chaste conduct is able to guard the household, and to secure the children, even if her husband does not obey the word. 1Pe 3:1-4. 1Co 7:14.

A godly woman respects her husband, and obeys him in all things, *unless* he demands that she forsake her discipleship or coerces her to engage in activities that will compromise her sanctification and her participation in the body of Christ. The apostle Paul was quite clear that, in these circumstances, a woman is not obligated to her husband. He does not have priority over her sonship or discipleship. Specifically, Paul wrote, ‘But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases’. 1Co 7:15.

When a woman turns to the Lord and to her husband, Satan no longer has advantage over her. He is unable to cause the dystrophy of her identity and faith which, otherwise, would prompt her to rise up in pride and to presume, like Eve, to be the source of the word and direction for her husband and family. The meekness of wisdom will be demonstrated by her willingness to receive instruction from her husband. His obedience to the headship of Christ will be to refuse to receive instruction from his wife and, instead, to bring the instruction that he hears from the face of Christ in the presbytery.

Grace for healing and recovery

In summary, a person who is finding true repentance will confess that they are blind, and will seek for healing to see so that they know how to walk in obedience to the word. They will cease from commentating on their own condition, and from defining the pathway for their recovery. We have already noted that these statements are self-righteous, and are made by those who say that they *see*, revealing that their sin remains.

In this regard, a man finds sight as he turns from seeking verification from his wife, and from projecting the acceptability of his marriage. Instead, he submits to, and learns from, the headship of Christ in the fellowship of the presbytery. His wife finds sight as she acknowledges her blindness and accepts her need to be taught the way of obedience from Christ as she submits to, and learns from, her husband.

Unless each person is established in this pathway of discipleship, they will remain deceived and will continue to stumble and be offended. Pastoral counsel is of no benefit in these situations. As Jesus so poignantly explained, 'Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.' Mat 15:14. To 'fall in a ditch' means that a couple is unable to find cultural change, either personally, or together.

Finding our identity verification through the word of Christ, ministered in the fellowship and order of headship, is an *imperative*. In the context of fallen romance, which is the basis of every relationship that has not been established through a remnant of the Spirit, *each person will seek identity verification from the other*. If a couple has married in this manner, they are deceived, believing that they have a Christian covenant. Yet, in reality, they do not have a remnant of the Spirit. Not only is their relationship subject to oppression but, also, they are not *known* by Christ.

Each person needs to repent of this fallen mode of relating, for true identity verification is received only from the Father, through Christ, by the Holy Spirit. This is the verification that belongs to those who have been born again and are being saved through regeneration in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. If a couple continues to live and relate in this fallen manner, they prove that they are wayside ground – religious adherents who are bereft of the divine nature.

As a couple is restored to the fellowship and order of headship, they are able to obtain grace for the healing of their identity, healing in their relationship, and healing in their family. The power of familiar spirits can be exorcised from them individually, and from them as a family, as they maintain their fellowship together under the headship of Christ. Once they are established as heirs together of the grace of life, blessing can flow to their children and extended family. *This is how a household becomes worthy through grace.*

Chapter 7

Sanctification in the fellowship of headship

In this present season, the Lord is restoring the ministry of Elijah to the presbyteries of lampstand churches. However, He is not simply adding the capacity for this ministry to our existing practices. Rather, it is being recovered by those presbyteries and church congregations who, through mourning and repentance, forsake their old gospels and denominational customs, and walk in obedience to what the Spirit is saying 'Today'. Heb 3:7-15.

In particular, the overseers, or 'under-shepherds', among the sheep of the Lord's pasture are being called to renounce the clergy and pseudo-clergy models that have endured in many of our local church settings, so that each local church can be properly founded and supported as a network of 'worthy houses'. These are households who have become 'firstfruits' through sanctification as they are established in the fellowship and order of headship. As we will consider later in this chapter, this network of firstfruits houses is the basis of what the apostle John nominated as an 'elect lady' – a community of worthy houses who are gathered in the name of Jesus. 2Jn 1:1.

With this reformation in view, those whom the Holy Spirit has made overseers in the church, and indeed all of us who belong to lampstand churches, are being exhorted to *take heed to ourselves*. Act 20:28-29. Specifically, this is a season for renewed commitment – as individuals, households and congregations – to the culture of fellowship that belongs to the kingdom of God. Those who are responding to what the Spirit is saying to the churches are committing to:

- *Receive and walk in the light of the word of present truth with the presbytery, submitting in obedience to the oversight of the presbytery in the church.* In this fellowship, we are finding deliverance from our carnal self-image and are being established on the pathway of salvation that belongs to those who obey Christ.

- *Participate in the reformation of our marriages and households, recognising that Christ is the Head of a house.* This requires a renewed understanding of, and connection to, the fellowship and order of headship through which a couple retains a remnant of the Spirit. This grace is necessary for deliverance from familiar spirits, and for the cultivation of godliness in one's household.
- *Become a context for hospitality and fellowship from house to house.* The capacity for hospitality and fellowship is the fruit of love as each individual comes to Christ to be built on Him, and the house is restored to the order of headship. The household is committed to being joined in fellowship with other households, receiving and multiplying the ministry of the word from house to house.
- *Become a base of evangelistic outreach to the world and for care in the church.* The capacity for evangelism and care is dependent upon fellowship with the presbytery, reformation in the marriage and the household, and connection with other worthy houses. In this regard, evangelism is the expression of the light that we are becoming as we walk in the light of the word that we are receiving.

Sanctification is our eternal life

A person does not have eternal life as a citizen of the kingdom of God simply because they believe in Him or identify as a Christian. The Scriptures are patently clear – *our sanctification is our eternal life*. Stressing this point, the apostle Paul declared, 'Pursue peace with all people, and holiness [lit: sanctification], *without which no-one will see the Lord*.' Heb 12:14. Similarly, Paul taught that 'having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness [sanctification], and the end, everlasting life'. Rom 6:22.

Because of the deluding effect of their carnality, many Christians have not understood this point, nor even properly known what it means to obtain their sanctification. In fact, they have not recognised that their carnality is their problem. They tend to view the New Testament statements referring to the flesh to be applicable to those who are in the world. Their own understanding of the gospel, founded upon a misunderstanding of forgiveness, reconciliation and justification, is the basis of their Christian expression. Consequently, confidence in their salvation depends either upon their good works or upon their connection to a pastor or priest who mediates and ministers to them their salvation. Rom 10:6-9.

On account of their presumptuous malaise, the carnal Christian is unable to journey on the pathway of obedience that Christ has pioneered for them, and they are at risk of eternal damnation. Paul warned of this implication of continuing in carnality, or living according to the flesh, saying, 'For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit [that is, in sanctification] you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.' Rom 8:13.

A double portion in three dimensions

A person who lives by the Spirit, in sanctification, has received a double portion of the Spirit. This is the double portion of oil that we must possess if we are to enter the wedding feast that will be hosted by the Father in the time of the end. Jesus likened those with a double portion of oil to 'wise virgins'. Mat 25:1-12. A person is a recipient of this double portion because they are joined, in one Spirit, to *the fellowship of headship*. In relation to this order, we can observe three dimensions of the double portion of the Spirit:

1. The Father *and* the Son
2. Christ *and* the man
3. The man *and* the woman (in a marriage)

These three dimensions of the double portion of the Spirit are *a threefold cord* that is not easily broken. Ecc 4:12. However, when the two portions are compromised in relation to any one of these three dimensions, a person is bereft of grace and becomes vulnerable to Satan. From the account of the Fall, we know that Satan particularly targets marriages that are not established in the order of headship. He has access to the home through the disconnection of the household from the headship of Christ. 1Co 11:8-10.

However, this principle also applies to the relationship between Christ and His bride. For example, Paul warned that the whole church in Corinth was vulnerable to Satan's devices because of carnality in the presbytery and the profusion of alternative gospels within the congregation. He wrote, 'But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it' 2Co 11:3-4.

The Father and the Son

The first dimension of the double portion of the Spirit is 'the Father and the Son'. The secret of Yahweh Son was to reveal the fatherhood of the Father, which is His lordship and headship over all creation, revealing Him to be the source from which everything comes. This is revealed through Christ, who was joined to the headship of the Father when, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit from the Holy Spirit, He emptied Himself and was begotten by the word of the Father, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'. Heb 1:5.

The first dimension of sanctification that we are given comes from 'the lordship of the Father, in Christ'. Because the Son reveals the Father, no-one comes to the Father except through Him. Joh 14:6. Concerning our connection to the Father through the Son, we note that we are *first* baptised into the name of the Father. Mat 28:19. This happens when we are born of the Father and He places us in the

body of Christ where He desires. 1Co 12:18. As we have considered in Chapter 1, this is when a person is baptised by one Spirit *into one body*. 1Co 12:13.

Acknowledging the lordship of the Father, as those who are born of God and baptised into the body of Christ by the Father, we must first hallow His name. This is how Jesus taught us to pray, saying, 'In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, *hallowed be Your name*. Your kingdom [which is the fellowship of Yahweh] come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Mat 6:9-10. *This prayer is our connection to the fellowship of Yahweh*. We need to pray in this manner so that we can be joined to the Father's lordship, for He is the Father from whom we derive our name as a son of God. Jas 1:17-18. Unless we do this, we cannot know our name and, therefore, cannot fulfil our sanctification in Christ, which is eternal life. Rom 6:22-23.

Our name is a mystery that belongs to the secret counsel of God. This is the word of the Lord that endures forever, and through which we are born from above. 1Pe 1:25. It is a word that is ministered to each person, individually. Our name as a son of God, proclaimed to us through the enduring word of God, is the expression *of* our sanctification. Equally, our name is expressed *through* our sanctification.

A man and a woman are able to know, meet and connect to the Father, acknowledging His lordship, through Christ, as they are established in the order of headship. When he is rightly connected to the order of headship, a man is able to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting, which would otherwise cause him to seek an alternative word for his life. Likewise, a godly woman will adorn herself in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation. This is proper for professing godliness through the good works that belong to her sanctification as a daughter of God. 1Ti 2:8-10.

A person who is connected to the order of headship is established in their sanctification. That is, they are conformed to the authority of their name from the Father, in Christ, and they are enabled to express the grace of life given to them from the Father, by Christ, according to their abilities. In His parables, the aspect of authority was typified by Jesus as 'a mina', and the grace of life was typified as 'talents'. Luk 19:11-27. Mat 25:14-30.

The mina and the talent are multiplied through offering, resulting in sanctification. Communicating this principle, Paul wrote, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service [of worship]. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' Rom 12:1-2. We know, of course, that the will of God is our sanctification. 1Th 4:3. 1Th 5:16-18.

Christ and the man

The second dimension of double portion is 'Christ and the man'. The secret of the man is to reveal the lordship of the Son as the Head of the man's house. Note that the man is not the head of his house; *Christ is the head of his house*. Likewise, the woman is not the centre of the house, as if its expression revolves around her. The headship of Christ is expressed toward a house from the fellowship of the presbytery. The word of present truth proclaimed by the Spirit, through messengers who proceed from the presbytery, is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God that shines from the face, or headship, of Jesus. 2Co 4:6.

Through a man's submission to the lordship of Christ, this double portion connects his whole family to the bride city, the New Jerusalem. The man, with his family, then works in the service of the city of God, which is the bride of Christ. The reality of this connection to the bride of Christ is from house to house. Significantly, this is the basis of a local church that is '*an elect lady*'. 2Jn 1:1. That is, an elect lady is a congregation of two or three worthy households who are gathered in the name of Jesus. Jesus Himself said, 'For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.' Mat 18:20.

Although we may acknowledge this principle to be true, this has not been our reality as churches. In most cases, a local church has been identifiable through the ministry of a pastor, or leadership figure, and his wife, often in association with an assistant pastor and his wife, who are empowered through some form of ordination to service a congregation. The Lord is calling us to repent of this approach to ministry and church administration, and to be established as a fellowship of worthy houses who, through sanctification, serve one another in love. Gal 5:13. This is the basis of unfeigned, or open-faced, *agape* fellowship.

In this regard, those who have received grace from Christ to oversee a local church should be working themselves out of the vocation of being a 'pastor'. This job description has been defined by former gospels. That is, instead of promoting the dependency of the congregation upon themselves, true shepherds will maintain first love in the presbytery, from which the word of present truth is proclaimed. They will be 'among the flock', ministering this word through testimony as those who are of like passions with their hearers. Jas 5:17.

Like the seventy-two disciples, whom Jesus 'sent before His face', elders are looking for, and supporting, worthy houses. Luk 10:1-9. These are households who, through obedience to the word of God, are working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Php 2:12-13. That is, they are obtaining their sanctification as they are receiving and believing the word of present truth, and are being established in the fellowship and order of headship. 1Jn 1:1-3.

The man and the woman

The secret, or sanctification, of a woman who is professing godliness, and who is the wife of a godly husband, is to be 'of her husband', serving in the home and

within the will of the Father, becoming the mother of ‘a godly seed’. She is not apart from her husband, for *she has been drawn from him when they received the remnant of the Spirit from Yahweh Elohim*. If this was not the implication of a couple’s marriage covenant, they do not have a double portion of the Spirit. Mal 2:15. We do not have a remnant of the Spirit simply because we are married. The remnant of the Spirit is the double portion of oil that belongs to a couple who are submitted to the lordship of the Father, and who are being built together on Christ, the Chief Cornerstone. What does this ‘look like’ between a husband and a wife?

This remnant of the Spirit was specifically allocated and tailored to their household when they made covenant to be a household within the bride city under the lordship of the Son. The wife then becomes the vessel of multiplication, bringing forth sons of God who are children of the Father, and citizens of the New Jerusalem, and in this way are made part of Christ’s corporate bride.

The man and the woman are to be one flesh; no longer two but one. Gen 2:23-24. For this reason, Paul wrote, ‘Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, *in the Lord*’. 1Co 11:11. As one flesh, they have one glory, but it is a double-portion element. Accordingly, when they are walking in one Spirit as they should be, the woman is the glory of man, and he does not have glory apart from her. 1Co 11:7. She is of the man, and the family is multiplied through her. 1Co 11:12.

If a man’s wife is in rebellion against him, then he must remain connected to the headship of Christ, which is from the presbytery. By this means, he can continue to be the image and glory of the Son, and Satan is unable to gain an advantage in his house. 1Co 11:7. 1Co 7:14. The same is true if the woman’s husband does not obey the word. As we noted in Chapter 6, she is able to maintain her submission to the headship of Christ by obeying her husband ‘without a word’. 1Pe 3:1-2. Through her sanctification, the house, including her children, can be protected from the ravages of Satan.

The Father, through the Son, has access to every child in the home when a Christian couple have a remnant of the Spirit in the fellowship of headship. According to this grace, the children are instructed by their father’s ‘command’ and ‘the law’ of their mother. Pro 6:20. As we noted earlier, the man’s sanctification is found in submission to the lordship of Christ, enabling him to lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting. 1Ti 2:8. The woman’s sanctification is found in submission to her husband, as to Christ. This is the basis of the father’s command and the law of the mother.

Importantly, the law of the mother does not entail a woman telling her husband or her children how to live. Paul directed in this way, saying, ‘Let a woman learn in silence [without anxiety-driven intensity] with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence [lit: quietness, or stillness].’ 1Ti 2:11-12.

Elsewhere, we read that this silence is not an absence of expression but, rather, is the divine quality of a gentle and quiet spirit. This is the adornment of a godly woman. 1Ti 2:9-10. 1Pe 3:3-4. She is 'putting on Christ' and is making no provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts. Rom 13:14. 'A gentle and quiet spirit' looks like a woman who professes godliness *with good works* through her hospitable service in the house. These good works are 'the law of the mother'. For this reason, King Solomon wrote, 'Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates'. Pro 31:31.

Buy oil

In this season, the call of the Spirit has gone out to all the churches, saying, 'Behold, the Bridegroom is coming; go out to meet Him!' Mat 25:6. It is time for us all to awake from the 'slumber' that is associated with carnal Christianity, and to obtain for ourselves a double portion of oil through our restoration to the fellowship and order of headship. The Lord is ministering grace for this restoration, and its accompanying cultural reformation as individuals, families and 'elect ladies' - to those who have an ear to hear His word.

The word by which we obtain grace for restoration to the fellowship of headship is a polarising word. The fruit of receiving this word with godly sorrow, which leads to repentance and faith, is life and peace. Rom 8:6. However, where we draw back in unbelief from the fellowship of the word because of offences, we become increasingly weak and sick, and more entrenched in our religious malaise. In this condition, we remain in bondage to the flesh, and adrift from the pathway of salvation. Heb 10:36-38. 1Co 11:29-30.

Having made this point, the apostle Paul encouraged his readers by saying, 'But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.' Heb 10:39. We demonstrate that we are believers by embracing the process through which we are delivered from our fallen, religious self-image, and are established on the pathway of regeneration and renewing. This is the pathway that belongs to those who are obtaining a double portion of the Spirit and are being saved through sanctification.