THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TRESPASS OFFERING

The reconciling work of Christ

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WITH PETER HAY AND DAVID BAKER

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Preface

Bearing Christ's reproach as watchmen

In this book, we are considering the call to become watchmen whose work is to proclaim the word of the cross. Before a watchman is able to preach the word of the cross, they must be established in this call by forsaking what was formerly gain for them and embracing their fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. Php 3:7-11. These sufferings pertain to the reproaches that were laid on Christ and nailed His suffering body, which was marked with the injuries and blood that belonged to His five earlier wounding events, to the cross.

The apostle Paul testified that he rejoiced in these sufferings, which were for the sake of his hearers in the body of Christ. In this regard, he filled up in his flesh his unique part in the afflictions that belonged to the trespass offering, which Christ became when He was crucified. Col 1:24. Paul further explained that this aspect of his fellowship in Christ's sufferings belonged to his ministry as an overseer, or watchman. Through this ministry, the mystery of God was made known to his hearers. Col 1:25. 1Co 2:7-8.

As Paul embraced his fellowship in Christ's reproaches and taught the word, Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified among his hearers. Gal 3:1. Significantly, '*the riches of the glory of this mystery'*, which is 'Christ in you, the hope of glory', was made known to them. Col 1:27. It was for this reason that Paul preached the word. He warned every person about the condemnation that belonged to living according to the flesh, and taught the culture of

godliness to those who wanted to be disciples. This was the *labour* associated with his fellowship in Christ's trespass offering. Col 1:28-29.

Highlighting that his fellowship in Christ's reproaches was essential to his labour as a watchman, or minister, of the gospel, Paul said, 'For to this end *we both labour and suffer reproach*, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe.' 1Ti 4:10. The 'end' for which Paul laboured and suffered reproach was 'godliness'. In this regard, he wrote, 'Godliness is *profitable* for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.' 1Ti 4:8. Godliness is profitable for all things because it belongs to the riches of the glory of Christ in us. These riches were made available through the blood of Christ's crucifixion.

Becoming watchmen in our houses

We are all called to become watchmen in our houses. Like those who are called to be watchmen in the presbyteries of Christ's lampstand churches, every watchman in a worthy house bears the reproaches of Christ. This belongs to their fellowship in Christ's trespass offering, which was added to His offering for sin when He was crucified.

In order to bear Christ's reproaches, we must acknowledge the impact of our own reproaches against the Father. The most fundamental expression of these reproaches are our default responses to life, which are the fruit of the fall of mankind. A woman's default is *deception*. Gen 3:13. 1Ti 2:14. She believes in the veracity of her perceptions which are drawn from her knowledge of good and evil. Through anxiety, informed by her own deceived perspective, she takes control of her marriage or her circumstances. A man's default is *wrath and doubting* which is manifest as he turns his face from Christ and takes action, either in compliance with, or reaction against, his wife or his circumstances. Gen 3:12,16. 1Ti 2:8.

Every thought and action, that is motivated by these default responses, is sourced from our other law. Rom 7:23. They are a reproach against the Father. These reproaches were laid on Christ when He was nailed to the cross and lifted up as a trespass offering on Mount Calvary. Psa 69:9. Significantly, every person was crucified with Him, for we have all reproached God.

As we receive the word of the cross, we are caused to look on Him whom we have pierced. Zec 12:10. That is, we acknowledge that our default responses to life and others are the reproaches against the Father that nailed Christ to the cross. By illumination, and through the conviction of the Spirit, we cease from making excuses or giving reasons for our responses, and forsake the condemnation and self-recriminations that belong to self-righteous penance. Instead, we acknowledge that we are co-crucified, or co-cursed, with Christ because of our default responses. This is a true confession.

When we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's trespass offering as those who acknowledge that they are crucified with Him, we are recipients of the redemption and reconciliation that Christ accomplished for us on the cross through the shedding of His blood. His blood sprinkles our conscience from the dead works of our fallen default orientation to ourselves, our lives and others. Heb 10:22. We receive grace to serve God and others by love through obedience to the word of God. This is our sanctification as a son of God. In the fellowship of Christ's trespass offering, His life, by which we now live, overflows as grace to others through the renewed conversation and conduct that expresses our testimony.

This fellowship in Christ's trespass offering is, in fact, the implication of eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood as a participation in the *agape* meal of the Father. We know this because the apostle Paul identified these elements of the Father's love feast as a participation in the altar of Christ's sacrifice. Heb 13:10. He identified this altar as the crucifixion, explaining that Christ suffered 'outside the gate', meaning outside of the old city of Jerusalem. Heb 13:12. This is where Jesus was nailed to the cross. As those who participate in the meal that belongs to that altar, we are to 'go forth to Him, outside the camp, *bearing His reproach'*. Heb 13:13.

Having chosen to bear Christ's reproaches as a fellowship in the trespass offering, we are the recipients of the blessing, or riches, that were wrought for us by Christ as a sin offering. In relation to these riches, the Lord says, 'I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.' Isa 45:3.

These are, first, the riches of God's mercy by which we are made alive from the state of being dead in trespasses and sins under the curse of the cross. Eph 2:4-5. Through mercy, we are raised and seated with Christ once we have been born again of the divine nature through the living word that flowed as a fountain of life from Christ's pierced side, and we are established by the Father in the body of Christ. This is the 'profit' of godliness to which Paul was referring as a minister of the cross of Christ. The apostle Peter described this profit as 'exceedingly great and precious promises' through which we are 'partakers of the divine nature'. 2Pe 1:3-4.

Reproach as greater treasure

Moses was a notable example of a man who received and obtained the call to be a watchman. He was forty and still in Pharaoh's house when he *first* received the call of God to minister a redemption to the children of Israel and deliver them from their slavery in Egypt. Establishing this point, Paul wrote, 'By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of

Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.' Heb 11:24-26.

In this 'first time' initiative of the Lord towards Moses, it appears that the eye, or spirit, of his heart was *enlightened* to know both God's calling upon his life and the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints. Eph 1:18. We know this because Stephen proclaimed, 'Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. Now when he was forty years old, *it came into his heart* to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.' Act 7:22-23.

When Moses was illuminated to his calling, he forsook the privileges and riches of Egypt and chose to suffer *affliction* with the people of God. That is, he chose to join the suffering of the people under Pharaoh. Paul specifically identified these sufferings as the *reproach of Christ*. By explaining that Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, Paul was making the point that Moses figurately received the word of his name from the cross and recognised that his calling was a participation in the cross of Christ.

Evidently, when Christ called Moses to be the deliverer of Israel, Christ was already suffering with them. The sufferings of the Israelites had become the reproaches of Christ, for the prophet Isaiah declared, '*In all their affliction He was afflicted*, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old.' Isa 63:9.

It is important to note that Moses did not esteem the reproaches of man's rebellion against the Father as 'great riches'. Rather, he recognised that the people's reproaches against God were the cause of their suffering. He understood that Christ was joined to the sufferings resulting from the sin of our reproaches against the Father so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2Co 5:21. These reproaches, symbolised by the nails that secured Christ to the cross, set Christ forth as a trespass offering to which the Israelite and the Egyptians were joined. In this regard, we could describe the trespass offering as 'a reproach offering'. These 'nails' caused the blood of Christ to be upon the people. This precious blood would be the provision for their redemption, or deliverance from slavery to sin and death (typified by their slavery in Egypt), if they were willing to hear and receive the instruction of Christ's messenger to them. 1Pe 1:17-21. The redeeming blood of Christ would break the curse associated with their bondage.

It is evident that Moses understood this principle, for later, just prior to his account of meeting Yahweh *Elohim*, he wrote, 'So God heard their groaning

[the pain resulting from reproach in Egypt], and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God *acknowledged* them.' Exo 2:24-25. The Hebrew word that is translated 'acknowledged' in this passage is a primitive word meaning 'to know', including 'to experience', 'to be acquainted with', or 'joined to' (as in the intimacy of a couple, resulting in the conception of a child). Significantly, it is the same word that the prophet Isaiah used concerning the travail of Christ on the cross when he wrote, 'He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and *acquainted* with grief.' Isa 53:3.

The reward that Moses looked for was not merely the abundance, or wealth, of the promised land, which may have exceeded the wealth of Egypt. He had been illuminated to see the great riches of redemption from slavery to Egypt. 'Egypt' is a type of the world under the rulership of Satan. Moses recognised that redemption, or deliverance, from Egypt, and reconciliation with God was the first step in becoming God's inheritance as a special people. 1Pe 2:9-10. Highlighting this as 'great riches', he later said to the nation, 'For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, *a special treasure* above all the peoples on the face of the earth.' Deu 7:6. Moses' forefather, Abraham, had seen God's inheritance as a multitude of stars in the third heaven. Gen 15:5.

Understanding that God had called him to minister the word of Israel's redemption from Egypt, Moses defended and avenged an oppressed Israelite man who was suffering wrong at the hands of an Egyptian. Stephen explained that Moses 'supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand'. Act 7:25. The next day, Moses witnessed two Israelites fighting each other. Endeavouring to minister reconciliation and to establish his brethren in 'first love', he said to them, 'Men, *you are brethren*; why do you wrong one another?' Act 7:26. However, the man who was abusing his neighbour pushed Moses away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' Act 7:27-28.

In the book of Hebrews, Paul explained that Moses departed from Egypt *by faith*. He was not afraid of the wrath of Pharaoh. Heb 11:27. However, he fled to Midian having been *rejected by his brethren* in this first time calling. Stephen explained that it was in response to the words of the Israelite man that, 'Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons'. Act 7:29. He endured by faith as an alien resident of Midian for forty years 'as seeing Him who is invisible'. Heb 11:27.

After forty years, an Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Sinai. In this 'second time' initiative towards him, Moses met 'I AM, Yahweh *Elohim'*, and was sent by the Lord to Egypt to bring

the children of Israel out from their captivity and into the land that God had promised to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Stephen noted, 'This Moses whom they rejected, saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge?" is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer [lit: redeemer] by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.' Act 7:35.

Notably, in his account of this deliverance under the leadership of Moses, the apostle Paul explained that, 'By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them'. Heb 11:28. The death of every firstborn, whose house was not marked by the blood of the Passover lamb, was the culminating plague that belonged to God's judgement on the nation of Egypt.

This judgement directly corresponded with the first implication of Christ's death on the cross as a sin offering and a trespass offering – that is, mankind's eternal death on account of the death of God's Firstborn. We know this because, through the proclamation of the gospel, a hearer is caused to look on Christ whom they have pierced with the reproaches that nailed Him to the cross. The effect of this illumination is that a hearer begins to mourn for Christ, 'as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn [the child and the future that they have lost]'. Zec 12:10. Moses noted that on the night of the Passover, 'Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.' Exo 12:30.

Keeping the Passover was essential for a household to obtain the redemption that was accomplished by the death of the Firstborn Son and was ministered to them by His messenger, Moses. Unless a household applied the blood of the lamb to the doorposts and lintels of their house and kept the Feast of Passover in obedience to the direction of Moses, the Lord's watchman, *they would have suffered the same fate as Egypt*. Instead, they obtained mercy and were delivered from Egypt. We note, in this regard, that everyone – both the Israelites and the Egyptians – were co-cursed with Christ. However, the Israelites were redeemed by the Lord when they identified themselves with His death by applying the blood to their houses. We see that it was the blood of the cross, typified in the Passover lamb, that saved the Israelites and caused the death of the Egyptians.

Paul declared that Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 1Co 5:7. For this reason, he exhorted us, saying, 'Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven [the other law, motivating our own religious projections and self-righteousness], nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth [which springs out of receiving the faith of the Son of God by hearing and believing His word that is preached to us].' 1Co 5:8. Keeping the feast in this manner belongs to eating from the altar that connects

us to the fellowship of Christ's cross and the redemption that He finished for us on the cross. This should become the daily implication of our discipleship through *baptism*.

Having been delivered from Egypt, the children of Israel were led by Moses to the shore of the Red Sea. The next element of their redemption was 'baptism'. Paul explained that 'by faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.' Heb 11:29. From this event, we learn that when we are baptised, the sufferings of this life, which should drown and kill us, do not hurt us. Our fellowship in Christ's sufferings become for us our way of escape from the kingdom of the world, upon which the judgement of the Lord has already been passed. Gen 6:13-18. Elsewhere, in his writings, Paul clarified that the journey of the Israelites through the Red Sea, as they were led by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, was their *baptism into Moses*. 1Co 10:1-2.

Baptism into Moses meant that, through his instruction, they were to be immersed into the culture of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this regard, we can view Moses as being the 'type' of a presbytery. 1Co 10:11. 1Jn 1:1-3. God first baptises the hearer into the presbytery, as He baptised Israel into Moses. The presbytery's work, then, is to baptise their hearers, through discipleship, into the name of the Father, the name of the Son and the name of the Holy Spirit. Mat 28:19-20. As they receive this instruction and walk in its light, they are abiding in God and are progressively being made in Christ's image and likeness. Significantly, disciples are then able to participate in the work of proclaiming the gospel, through offering, by the capacity of seven Spirits from the Holy Spirit.

Having experienced such a miraculous deliverance from Egypt, it is confronting to observe that a whole generation resisted the Holy Spirit, and spurned the word of discipleship, that would have delivered them to the 'rest' that belonged to entry into the promised land. As Isaiah noted, 'In His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.' Isa 63:9-10. The response of the children of Israel exemplified the point that Jesus made in the parable of the wedding feast. He concluded His discourse, saying, 'For many are called, but few are chosen [i.e., choose what God has provided and chosen for them]. Mat 22:14.

As people who have received the call of sonship, the Spirit is directing us to remember the fellowship of Yahweh from which we have fallen and to which we were predestined. We are being directed to understand, and choose, our participation in the trespass offering to avail ourselves of the redemption that

Christ accomplished for us as a sin offering. As we embrace and continue in the fellowship of this offering, the Spirit of the Lord causes us to enter rest.

In this regard, we are to be a people who remember 'the days of old'. Speaking of a people who are oriented in this way through repentance and faith, Isaiah declared, 'Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying: "Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit within them, who led them by the right hand of Moses, with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them to make for Himself an everlasting name, who led them through the deep, as a horse in the wilderness, that they might not stumble?" As a beast goes down into the valley, and the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest, so You lead Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name.' Isa 63:11-14.

Chapter One

The call to be watchmen

Introduction

The apostle Paul proclaimed the word as a watchman. He understood that he had the same mandate as the prophet Ezekiel. We recall that the Lord said to Ezekiel, 'When I say to the wicked, "You shall surely die", and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but *his blood I will require at your hand.* Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul [you are innocent of his blood].' Eze 3:18-19.

Speaking as a watchman, who had faithfully proclaimed the word of present truth in every place, Paul said to the Ephesian elders, 'I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.' Act 20:26. As he approached the end of his ministry, the apostle Paul charged Timothy, and all those who have been called to be part of a presbytery in the right hand of Christ, to also fulfil the mandate that belongs to watchmen. The presbytery of a lampstand church should be a fellowship of *watchmen.*

The apostle Paul declared to Timothy, 'I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.' 2Ti 4:1-2. The ministry of a watchman includes the mandate to rebuke, which is part of

sounding an alarm. It is an urgent call to turn to the Lord. We read in the book of Proverbs, 'Turn at my rebuke; surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you'. Pro 1:23.

The apostle Paul warned Timothy that there would be many carnal believers who would reject his ministry as a watchman. He said, 'For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires [carnality], because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers.' 2Ti 4:3. This statement describes the entire church age, but particularly our present time as we approach the end of the age. There are *a great multitude of teachers*, or theologians, who promote their own understanding of the Scriptures.

However, at the same time, there are *very few messengers* who are proclaiming what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches as a word of present truth. Paul foretold that many believers would turn aside from the word of present truth to embrace other gospels. He said, 'They will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.' 2Ti 4:4. Notably, even when a person has turned aside from the word of present truth, a watchman is still obliged to warn them about the coming judgement of God.

Paul summarised the charge to Timothy, and every presbyter, by saying, 'But you *be watchful in all things*, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.' 2Ti 4:5. We are reminded that Jesus said to the disciples in the garden of Gethsemane, 'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.' Mar 14:38. He was referring to the temptation of falling asleep or becoming lukewarm, as messengers who should be awake and proclaiming the word of present truth to the church. Jesus warned the Laodiceans that every lukewarm presbyter would be spewed out of His mouth. Rev 3:16.

The prophecy of Isaiah regarding the watchmen

Speaking about the fallen condition of His people and their false leaders, the Lord said through Isaiah, 'Now therefore, what have I here …. that My people are taken away for nothing? Those who rule over them make them wail … and My name is blasphemed continually every day.' Isa 52:5. The Lord then spoke of the restoration of His messenger administration, who proclaim His word and reveal His name to the people. He said, 'Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am He who speaks: "Behold, it is I". How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"' Isa 52:6-7.

Significantly, the Lord's messenger administration is comprised of watchmen who lift up their voices to proclaim the Lord's word from the fellowship of

a presbytery. Isaiah continued, 'Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the LORD brings back Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.' Isa 52:8-10.

The prophet Isaiah spoke as a watchman. He declared, 'For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns.' Isa 62:1. The righteousness of Zion is the revelation of sonship in godly families. The lamp that burns is the ministry of the seven Spirits of God that shines from a lampstand church as the light of the world.

Isaiah continued to describe the ministry of the 144 000 in the time of the end by saying, 'The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name.' Isa 62:2. We are reminded that Jesus said to the overcomers in Pergamum, 'I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.' Rev 2:17. The ministry of the 144 000 will reveal the glory of the seven Spirits of God to the rulers of the seventh world kingdom and to the citizens of every nation.

Speaking to all those who belong to the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of spiritual Mount Zion, the Lord declared, 'I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.' Isa 62:6-7. In addition to announcing the coming judgement of God, the watchmen are also joined to the intercession and travail of Christ that is focused toward the revelation of the bride city in the end of the age.

Jesus warned the presbytery in Sardis that if they were not willing to stand as watchmen, He would come upon them as a thief in the night for the purpose of removing their stewardship from them. Rev 3:3. Similarly, Jesus warned the presbytery in Laodicea that if they remained lukewarm, He would spew them out of His mouth. Rev 3:16. However, He also promised that the overcoming presbyters in Laodicea would be seated with Him on His throne as part of the one world-wide presbytery that will be established for the time of the end. Rev 3:21.

The mandate given to the prophet Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel was a priest, who was taken to Babylon as part of the second group of exiles. The word of the Lord came expressly to him while he

lived among the exiles by the river Chebar in the land of Babylon. Notably, 'the hand of the Lord was upon him there'. Eze 1:3. The Lord first laid His hand upon Ezekiel, and then He appointed him to be a messenger in His hand, as a watchman. His mandate as a watchman included removing the glory of the *Shekinah* from the temple in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel testified, 'Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.' Eze 1:1. Ezekiel saw the entire angelic administration that belongs to the administration of the throne of the Son of God. He described a firmament above the heads of the cherubim and then a throne above the firmament. High above the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man. Eze 1:26.

Ezekiel summarised his vision of the administration that belongs to the Son of God by saying, 'This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.' Eze 1:28. When Ezekiel saw this vision, it caused him to fall on his face. He then heard a voice of One speaking. This was the voice of the Son of God from far above the firmament. The Son of God said to Ezekiel, 'Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you.' Eze 2:1. In a similar way, when the Son of God spoke to Job from the midst of the whirlwind, He said, 'Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' Job 38:3.

Ezekiel said, 'Then the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke to me.' Eze 2:2. Significantly, the word of the Son of God that commanded Ezekiel to stand on his feet ministered the power of the seven Spirits of God to him. The Lord gave Ezekiel the faith and grace that was necessary for him to stand up and to hear what the Lord wanted to say to him. The Lord was speaking to Ezekiel because He was calling him to be a watchman.

It is remarkable to consider that the whole administration that belongs to the throne of the Son of God, who created the entire universe, had come down from heaven to the earth for the purpose of speaking to one man. The Son of God spoke to Ezekiel for the purpose of appointing him to be the face of the entire administration to the nation of Israel. He said to Ezekiel, 'Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day.' Eze 2:3.

In our day, it is the work of watchmen to proclaim the word of present truth to the Lord's people, which includes those who belong to the denominations who do not want to be part of Christ's administration of lampstand churches. The Lord first sends His messengers to a rebellious people. The Lord continued to say to Ezekiel, 'For they are impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you

to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD." As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse – for they are a rebellious house – yet they will know that a prophet has been among them.' Eze 2:4-5.

Ezekiel was strengthened with might in his inner man when the Spirit of the Lord entered him and enabled him to stand on his feet. He needed to be strengthened with might in his inner man because of the great opposition that would come against him in relation to his ministry. Likewise, the Lord must strengthen every presbyter who has been called to be a watchman, because of the opposition that they will encounter as they proclaim the word of present truth to a rebellious people. The word to Christ's lampstand churches must go to all the Lord's people, whether they receive it or reject it.

The Lord continued to say to Ezekiel, 'And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns are with you and you dwell among scorpions; do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, though they are a rebellious house.' Eze 2:6. Every messenger, who is called to be a watchman, must first be delivered from the fear of being rejected by those to whom they are sent by God to proclaim His word. A watchman must fear God, not man. Paul said, 'If I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.' Gal 1:10.

The command to eat the scroll

The Lord commanded Ezekiel to be *an obedient messenger,* otherwise he would come under the same judgement as the rebellious people to whom he was being sent. The Lord said to him, 'You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they are rebellious. But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.' Eze 2:7-8. This is a remarkable command. The word that the Lord was proclaiming to Ezekiel was the substance of the *agape* meal for him. If he was willing to open his mouth to 'eat' the word, it would give him the strength that was necessary to fulfil his mandate as a watchman.

It was the Son of God who spoke to Ezekiel. However, it was a hand that contained the scroll of a book. The word was in the hand of the Lord. It is not possible for a man to become a messenger in the right hand of Christ without first eating the word that belongs to His hand. Ezekiel said, 'Then He spread it [the scroll] before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.' Eze 2:10. This is the same scroll that the prophet Zechariah saw that has been sent out as a curse over the face of the whole earth from the cross. Zec 5:1-4.

It is notable that the flying scroll that Zechariah saw was twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide. In this regard, it was the same dimensions as the holy

place in the tabernacle of Moses. The tabernacle of Moses was a prophetic timepiece. The volume of the holy place in the tabernacle, which is 2000 cubits, is symbolic of the 2000 years that belong to the church age. The dimensions of the scroll reveal that the curse has been sent out over the face of the whole earth for the entire duration of the church age.

Ezekiel was required to read the scroll first, but then he needed to eat it before he could become the messenger of it. It is notable that the scroll contained lamentations, mourning, and woe. The priority for Ezekiel was *lamentations,* then mourning and woe, because his primary mandate as a messenger was the removal of the *Shekinah* from the temple in Jerusalem. In contrast to this, the priority for the apostle Paul, the apostle John, and then for the watchman in the right hand of Christ in our day, *is mourning*, then lamentation and woe.

When Ezekiel opened his mouth, it was the Lord who caused him to eat the scroll. Eze 3:2. We can compare the way that the Lord fed the scroll to Ezekiel with the way that Jesus ministered the word to the disciples during the last supper, and then said to them regarding the bread, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Mar 14:22. When Ezekiel ate the scroll, it was sweet in his mouth. The Lord instructed him to also fill his belly with the scroll. Eze 3:3. He had to digest the word in his own life so that he became the living epistle of the word.

Furthermore, Ezekiel needed to fill his belly with the word so that it gave him the energy and strength to become the messenger of it. We note that the word had not yet become bitter in his belly. The Lord continued to speak to him while the word was still sweet in his mouth. Even though he had received his mandate from the Lord, he had not yet experienced the bitter implications of his mandate. The word progressively became bitter in his belly as it joined him to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and particularly the fellowship of the trespass offering.

Having received his mandate as a messenger by eating the scroll, Ezekiel needed to receive the words of the Lord *into his heart* by continuing to hear what the Lord would say to him. The Lord said, 'Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears.' Eze 3:10. Ezekiel was reliant upon the Lord opening his ear, morning by morning, so that he could live by that faith that comes by hearing, and he could continue to proclaim the word of present truth to the nation. Isa 50:4. Rom 10:17.

The Lord sent Ezekiel to be the messenger to his own nation. He did not send him to a foreign nation. If he had been sent to a foreign nation, like Jonah, then they would have received his message. However, his message was rejected by his own people. The Lord said, 'For you are not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, but to the house of Israel, not to many people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, had I sent you to them, they would have listened

to you. But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.' Eze 3:5-7.

We observe the same principle during the ministry of the apostle Paul. When he came to a new city, he generally began his ministry by preaching in the Jewish synagogue. When he was rejected by his own people in the synagogue, he was then free to turn his attention toward the Gentiles. For example, Paul declared to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch, 'It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.' Act 13:46. The equivalent of the Jewish synagogues in our day are the large established denominations.

When the Lord first called us to return to first love, just over fifty years ago, the word of Christ was proclaimed to the leaders, in the ministers' fraternal, from many denominations as part of a 'first time' season of visitation. Recognising that the Lord is now proclaiming this word to us a 'second time', we know that this word needs to be proclaimed among the denominations in our own nation as part of this 'second time' season of visitation. The word of Christ to His lampstand churches is not limited to leaders. It must also be proclaimed to every individual and all the families who belong to the Lord's people.

The Lord is wanting to gather the lost sheep from among the denominations for the purpose of connecting them to the shepherding administration that belongs to His right hand. Speaking about the restoration of His people, the Lord declared through the prophet Jeremiah, 'Return, O backsliding children … for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.' Jer 3:14-15. It is the work of presbyteries in the right hand of Christ to shepherd His lampstand churches.

There will be a remnant of sons of God who will be gathered from among the denominations in the days ahead of us. However, in the parable of the wedding feast and the parable of the great supper, Jesus foretold that the invitation to come for the Father's *agape* meal will be rejected by the majority who belong to the denominations as we approach the time of the end. Matt 22:1-14. Luk 14:16-24. When the word is rejected by the denominations, in this season of the 'second time', then we can turn to the highways and compel the unbelievers to come into the kingdom of God. In the parable of the wedding feast, Jesus said, 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' Mat 22:9.

Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place

Ezekiel declared, 'Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: "Blessed is the glory of the LORD from His place!"' Eze 3:12. As we have considered, the entire administration of the throne of the Son of God, which revealed the glory of the Lord, had come from heaven to earth to speak to Ezekiel. Remarkably, when the Spirit lifted Ezekiel up to become a messenger in the hand of the Lord, the entire administration that belonged to the throne of the Son of God was now *behind him*. That is, Ezekiel was now the face, and the spokesperson, of the entire administration. He had been given the mandate to reveal the glory of the Lord, by the Spirit, to the people.

The declaration, 'Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place!', was proclaimed by a great thunderous voice. The thunderous voice was the articulation of the Lord's *mourning,* which becomes the messenger's *mourning*. We are reminded that mourning was part of the substance of the scroll that Ezekiel had eaten. The definition of the Hebrew word that is translated as 'mourning' is 'a rumbling, growling, moaning, or sighing sound'. It generally describes a sound that comes from deep within the body. The Lord's voice is also described as making a rumbling sound associated with thunder. Job 40:9.

It was the great grief of Christ that Ezekiel heard like thunder from heaven. Christ was so deeply grieved because all the abominations of His people were causing His glory to depart from the temple. We recall that the glory of the Son of God was the *Shekinah* that dwelt between the wings of the cherubim, above the mercy seat, in the most holy place. The Lord later said to Ezekiel, 'Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary?' Eze 8:6.

With great lamentation and mourning, the Son of God gave to Ezekiel the prophetic mandate to remove His glory from the temple in Jerusalem. The removal of the glory was the outcome of Ezekiel's ministry. Under Ezekiel's instruction, the angelic administration removed the glory of the Lord from the ark of the covenant to the threshold of the temple, and then to the east gate of the temple, and then to the Mount of Olives. The glory of the Lord lamented on the Mount of Olives before returning to heaven. Eze 9:3. Eze 10:19. Eze 11:23.

The glory of the Lord did not return to dwell with men until Jesus Christ was born from the womb of the virgin Mary. His physical body was the new temple in which His glory dwelt. We can compare the great grief of the Son of God in the days of Ezekiel to His great grief for the Jewish nation at the end of His own earthly ministry. Jesus lamented in relation to Jerusalem, 'How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate;

and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"' Luk 13:34-35.

Like the *Shekinah* in the days of Ezekiel, Jesus also departed from the Mount of Olives when He ascended into heaven in His spiritual body. The glory that shines from His face is now revealed to men, by the Holy Spirit, through the messengers in His right hand. We can certainly compare the Son of God's declaration to Ezekiel, 'Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place', to the words of Jesus regarding the messenger administration in the church age, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'

Recognising that the loud, thunderous voice was the expression of the Son's grief, it is also helpful to consider the words of Jesus, 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted'. Mat 5:4. From a personal perspective, mourning, or godly sorrow, is the outcome of looking upon Jesus Christ whom we have pierced. Zec 12:10. The apostle Paul taught that godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation. 2Co 7:10. A messenger who goes forth mourning will exemplify the culture of repentance in their own life and household.

However, more than this, a watchman must also embody *the mourning of the Lord* in relation to the rebellion of His people and the corruption of His house. We have considered the nature of Christ's grief in more detail in Chapter 3 of this book. This godly mourning compels the messenger to proclaim the judgement of God and to call the Lord's people to repentance. The messenger is comforted because this mode of ministry does produce a harvest. The psalmist declared, 'He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.' Psa 126:6.

Ezekiel carried the mourning of the Lord in his own spirit, that was articulated by the great thunderous voice of the Lord. He said, 'So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.' Eze 3:14. It is significant that Ezekiel went in the heat of his spirit. Unlike the presbytery in Laodicea, he was not ambivalent regarding the condition of the people or lukewarm in relation to his mandate as a messenger. The hand of the Lord was pushing him in the back. The Spirit was compelling him to proclaim the word of judgement to the nation.

The second time – appointed to be a watchman

When Ezekiel came to the captives by the river Chebar, he did not immediately say anything to them. Rather, he 'sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days'. Eze 3:15. Ezekiel was astonished because he had just received the mandate to remove the glory of the Lord from the

temple in Jerusalem. Then the word came to him a second time. The Lord declared to him, 'Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.' Eze 3:17. Ezekiel already knew what he needed to be doing, but he did not begin to do it until the word came to him a second time.

Notably, the Lord was not going to warn the people Himself from heaven. It was Ezekiel's mandate to proclaim the warning. If the people were unwilling to listen to Ezekiel, there was no other way for them to hear from the Lord. As we have already considered, this same mandate to proclaim the word of the Lord has now been committed to the presbyteries in the right hand of Christ. There is a messenger administration in every generation, which is the only way that Jesus Christ warns His people.

When the apostle John was in exile on the island of Patmos, he described the voice of Jesus Christ to be like the sound of a great trumpet. Rev 1:10. When he turned to *see the voice*, He saw Jesus Christ seated at the right hand of God, in the middle of His lampstand churches, with seven stars in His right hand. During the church age, the voice of Christ, which is like a great trumpet, is only heard through the ministry of the watchmen in His right hand. The Lord declared to Ezekiel that when a watchman sees the sword of God's judgement coming upon the land, they must blow the trumpet for the purpose of warning the people. Eze 33:1-9.

The apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians, 'If the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?' 1Co 14:8. For this reason, Paul commanded Timothy to preach the word and to stand as a watchman. This is the commandment that the presbytery, which should be comprised of watchmen, must keep, blamelessly, until the second coming of Christ. We must be willing to proclaim a word of judgement that is a warning. We cannot leave it to the Lord to do it Himself. It is sobering to consider that if we fail to warn the wicked among the Lord's people, who are within our relational sphere, then the Lord will require their blood at our hands.

The Lord clearly stated to Ezekiel as a watchman, 'When I say to the wicked, "You shall surely die", and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.' Eze 3:18. This is the judgement upon the lukewarm messenger who is ambivalent to the plight of the Lord's people. When a watchman does give warning, there is sufficient power in the word to enable the wicked man to return to the Lord, if he chooses to heed the word.

The Lord continued, 'Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.' Eze 3:19. The watchman will deliver his own soul

because he was not lukewarm. A watchman must be hot and cold. He proclaims the judgement of God while, at the same time, he extends the merciful invitation to all who are willing to come to drink of the river of the water of life. Speaking as a watchman, the apostle Paul declared to the Romans, 'Therefore consider the goodness and the severity of God.' Rom 11:22.

The same principle is true in relation to the righteous man among the Lord's people. The Lord said, 'Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you have delivered your soul.' Eze 3:20-21.

The righteous man may include the well-meaning pastor or the long-serving Christian in any congregation. A righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits iniquity when they embrace a false gospel. Significantly, when a person embraces a false gospel, the Lord Himself will cause them to stumble by answering them according to the idolatry that is in their heart. Eze 14:4. However, even though the Lord Himself has caused them to stumble, it is necessary for a watchman to warn them. If they are willing to heed the warning, their response to the word of present truth, that is proclaimed by the presbytery, will deliver them from their judgement.

Carrying the judgement of God in himself

Notably, before Ezekiel could proclaim the word of judgement to the nation of Israel, he needed to carry the judgement of God upon the iniquity of the people in his own body. Referring to a third visitation, Ezekiel said, 'Then the hand of the LORD was upon me there, and He said to me, "Arise, go out into the plain, and there I shall talk with you". So I arose and went out into the plain, and behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, like the glory which I saw by the River Chebar, and I fell on my face.' Eze 3:22-23.

The whole administration that belonged to the throne of the Son of God was waiting for him in the plain. When Ezekiel saw the administration of the Son of God, he fell down on his face, in the same way that the apostle John fell down like a dead man at the feet of Christ, who possesses the seven Spirits of God. Rev 1:17. We know that Jesus Christ laid His right hand upon John and raised him up to be His messenger to the seven churches. In the same way, the Spirit of the Lord entered Ezekiel again and stood him on his feet.

The Lord commanded Ezekiel to shut himself inside his own house. He foretold to him that the people would put ropes upon him so that he could not

go out of his house. Furthermore, the Lord said that He would cause Ezekiel's tongue to cling to the roof of his mouth so that he had no capacity to rebuke the people. Eze 3:26. In this manner, Ezekiel was given a participation in the fellowship of the curse that Christ experienced for all men when He was nailed to the cross.

The Lord constrained Ezekiel so that he could not proclaim his own word to the nation. He could only speak when the Lord opened his mouth. The Lord said to him, 'When I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD". He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house.' Eze 3:27. We note that this is the same word that Jesus delivered, through the apostle John, to all seven lampstand churches. Jesus concluded the admonition to each lampstand church by saying, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' Rev 2:7.

The siege on Jerusalem

When Ezekiel ate the scroll, it progressively became bitter in his belly in relation to his prophetic mandate and his personal fellowship in Christ's sufferings. In the first case, Ezekiel was the prophet who proclaimed the judgement of God on the city of Jerusalem and the whole house of Israel. This is an important point. It was Ezekiel who laid siege against Jerusalem to destroy it, even though the judgement was later executed by the Babylonians. The end of Ezekiel's siege against the city was about seven years before the final destruction of the city at the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar.

Under the Lord's instruction, the prophet Ezekiel depicted the judgement of God upon the city of Jerusalem in a very graphic manner. He first made a clay tablet and drew a picture of the city of Jerusalem on the tablet. He then built a siege wall around the city to cut off all its supplies. He built a siege mound to breach the wall of the city. He depicted camps of enemy soldiers around the city, and he also constructed battering rams to use against the gates of the city. Eze 4:1-2. In addition to laying siege against the city of Jerusalem, the Lord instructed Ezekiel to place an iron plate between himself and the city.

The iron plate functioned like *an iron wall* between the face of the prophet and the inhabitants of the city. It signified that the face of the prophet was against the city for the purpose of its judgement and destruction. The Lord said to Ezekiel, 'Set your face against it, and it shell be besieged, and you shall lay siege against it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel.' Eze 4:3. It is important to remember that Ezekiel had become the face of the entire administration of the throne of the Son of God. When the Lord instructed Ezekiel to set his face against the city, it demonstrated that the Lord's face was also against the city for the purpose of its destruction. Eze 15:7.

The iron plate also signified that once the city came under siege, there was no longer any opportunity for the inhabitants of the city to cry out to God for mercy or deliverance. Jeremiah prophesied to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for forty years before its destruction. All the people who rejected his ministry as a watchman, and did not heed his call to repentance, missed the season of their visitation. They rejected the Lord's mercy and were delivered to judgement. Motivated by fear and anguish, many of the people in the city would have prayed earnestly once the siege began. However, the heavens were like iron for them. No prayer could pass through. Lev 26:19. Deu 28:23. Lam 3:44.

In relation to the fellowship of the trespass offering, Ezekiel was required to lay on his left side for 390 days. Lying on his left side, he faced the north to *bear the iniquity* of the ten northern tribes of Israel. For every year of their iniquity, Ezekiel lay on his left side for one day. We note that this is an example of the prophetic principle of 'one day for a year'. According to Ussher's biblical chronology, the 390 years that belonged to the northern kingdom's iniquity began when the ten northern tribes split from Judah. King Jeroboam set up two golden calves – one at Bethel and the other at Dan – to represent the god who had delivered them from Egypt. He also established his own priesthood and his own regime of public worship. 1Ki 12:26-33. The 390 years concluded with the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.

Once the number of days was complete for the ten northern tribes, Ezekiel was required to lay on his right side for forty days. Lying on his right side, he faced the south to *bear the iniquity* of the southern tribes of Judah. The forty years of the southern kingdom's iniquity was the period when the nation rejected the prophetic ministry of Jeremiah before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Notably, Jeremiah began his ministry during the reign of King Josiah, who ushered in a period of reformation in Judah. However, despite the reformation, many of the people only returned to the Lord 'in pretence' or 'with deception'. Jer 3:10. The deception was exposed by the way in which the nation immediately regressed following the death of King Josiah.

The 390 years of the house of Israel's iniquity and the forty years of the house of Judah's iniquity, both concluded at the same time – with the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. During the days of the prophetic siege, Ezekiel was only allowed to eat a small quantity of bread and drink a small volume of water each day. Eze 4:8-13. In relation to cooking his food, the Lord made a concession for him by allowing him to use dried cow dung as the fuel source for the fire, instead of using human waste. Eze 4:14-15. His meagre survival rations signified that the siege of Jerusalem would be accompanied by a great famine. The Lord said, 'I will cut off the supply of bread in Jerusalem; they shall eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and shall drink water by measure and with dread … and waste away because of their iniquity.' Eze 4:16-17.

The prophet Jeremiah and the scroll

While the prophet Ezekiel proclaimed the word of God's judgement as a watchman to the exiles in Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah proclaimed the word of God's judgement as a watchman to the unrepentant inhabitants of Jerusalem. The Lord said to Jeremiah, regarding the certainty of His judgement upon the city, 'Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favourable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth.' Jer 15:1. By referring to Moses and Samuel, the Lord emphasised that no one could intercede for the people. He was not going to relent in relation to the judgement.

Moses and Samuel represent the Law and the Prophets. Samuel was the first prophet who belonged to the Elijah ministry. Furthermore, Moses and Samuel were two of the great intercessors. We recall that Moses interceded with the Lord on behalf of the nation of Israel when they turned aside to idolatry at the foot of Mount Sinai. Exo 32:11-14. Samuel also interceded for the nation of Israel when they were surrounded by all the lords of the Philistines. On that occasion, the Lord answered Samuel's prayer by thundering from heaven with a loud thunder. 1Sa 7:10. The thunder confused the Philistines and enabled the Israelites to overcome them.

The loud thunderous voice from heaven *helped* and *delivered* the nation of Israel because they had turned to the Lord, with repentance, in response to the word of Samuel. In contrast to this, in the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the loud thunderous voice from heaven expressed the grief of the Son of God that He had been driven far away from His sanctuary. Like Ezekiel, the primary focus of Jeremiah's ministry was lamentation. Describing his lament for the people, he said to the people, 'If you will not hear it [the word of the Lord], My soul will weep in secret for your pride; My eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock has been taken captive.' Jer 13:17.

Jeremiah had an unpopular ministry as the prophet to the nations who had been given the mandate to proclaim the judgement of God and call all men to repentance. He testified, 'Woe is me, my mother, that you have borne me, a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent for interest, nor have men lent to me for interest. Every one of them curses me.' Jer 15:10. Jeremiah did not trade or interact with others for the sake of mutual benefit. Rather, he was almost universally hated because he faithfully proclaimed the word of the Lord. Even his own family devised schemes against him and wanted to see him destroyed. Jer 12:6.

Jeremiah prayed before the Lord, 'O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In Your enduring patience, do not take me away. Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke. Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and

rejoicing of my heart, for I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.' Jer 15:15-16. Jeremiah was called by the name of the Son of God, who is the Lord of hosts. He was the Lord's messenger. He was the face of the administration of the Son's throne in Jerusalem.

The prophetic mandate that the Lord fed to the prophet Jeremiah, as an *agape* meal, was the same mandate that He fed to Ezekiel. Jeremiah's prophetic mandate as a watchman also contained 'lamentations, mourning, and woe'. In relation to eating this word, Jeremiah had the same testimony as Ezekiel. The word of the Lord was sweet in his mouth. It was the joy and the rejoicing of his heart. However, it also became bitter in his belly as he was joined to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings as a messenger to the nation.

Jeremiah continued to describe his ministry by saying, 'I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers, nor did I rejoice; I sat alone because of Your hand, for You have filled me with indignation.' Jer 15:17. In the same way that Ezekiel went in the heat of his spirit, Jeremiah was filled with the indignation that belongs to Christ. He was motivated by zeal for the Lord's house. For this reason, he did not sit among those who considered themselves to be commentators, theologians, or judges of the word. Nor did he seek to ingratiate himself to his hearers. Rather, he sat alone as a young messenger who had been called to bear the yoke that belongs to the reproach of Christ. Lam 3:27-28.

Jeremiah was not a lukewarm messenger. He was 'hot' because he was filled with the indignation of the Lord of hosts. However, he also had to learn to be 'cold' as a messenger who was sustained by the river of the water of life. It is apparent that Jeremiah did become despondent, at times, in relation to the nature of his fellowship in the sufferings of Christ and the apparent lack of fruit from his ministry. He asked the Lord, 'Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable, which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, as waters that fail?' Jer 15:18.

When Jeremiah began to speak in this manner, the Lord immediately called him to return to the faith of his mandate as a messenger. The Lord said to him, 'If you return, then I will bring you back; you shall stand before Me [as a messenger]; if you take out the precious from the vile [worthless], you shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, but you must not return to them.' Jer 15:19. If Jeremiah was willing to be an obedient messenger, he would stand before the Lord as His representative to the nation. The Lord said, 'you shall be as My mouth' because He would only speak to the nation through Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's mandate as a messenger, in his generation, was not to bring in a great harvest. His mandate was to take out, or to extract, *the precious remnant* from the unrepentant or worthless majority who had chosen to reject his word. The prophetic ministry of Jeremiah as a watchman polarised the

entire nation. In the church age, it is the work of presbyteries in the right hand of Christ to proclaim the word of cross that polarises the Lord's people. It is the polarising impact of the word that separates the precious from the worthless, as people choose to receive or reject the word.

Notably, the Lord said to Jeremiah, regarding those who had rejected his word, 'Let them return to you, but you must not return to them.' Jer 15:19. This is an important principle. We must respect the choice that a person has made in relation to the word that has been proclaimed to them and be willing to deliver them to the accountability that belongs to their choice. Our door remains open so that they can return to us, if they want to be restored, but we do not return to them by pursuing them or by trying to normalise the relationship. This is the lesson of the parable of the prodigal son. Luk 15:11-32.

The Lord did encourage Jeremiah that there would be *a believing remnant*. The Lord declared, 'Surely it will be well with your remnant; surely I will cause the enemy to intercede with you in the time of adversity and in the time of affliction.' Jer 15:11. It is important to remember that Jeremiah's mandate as the prophet to the nations extends all the way to our present day. Since the ministry of the apostle Paul, there has always been *a believing remnant* who belong to lampstand churches among the Gentile nations. The Lord said to Ezekiel, regarding the remnant, 'I shall be *a little sanctuary* for them in the countries where they have gone.' Eze 11:16.

The presbyteries in the right hand of Christ and the believing remnant in lampstand churches will experience a time of adversity and affliction as we approach the time of the end. Jesus referred to this season of trial and affliction when He addressed the presbytery in Smyrna. Rev 2:10. Notably, it is during this season that the Lord will also cause some of the enemies of lampstand churches to entreat or plead with us. Jesus said to the presbytery in Philadelphia, 'I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie – indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.' Rev 3:9.

Furthermore, when the Father takes His seat and Jesus Christ begins to open the seals, there will be a period of great tribulation upon the whole world. This will also be a time of great persecution against the church. The church will be hated by all nations. However, during this season of great trial and affliction, there will be many from the seventh world kingdom who will entreat those who belong to the believing remnant to show them the way to Mount Zion. The prophet Zechariah declared, 'Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.' Zec 8:22.

The great tribulation

The prophet Ezekiel declared, concerning the judgement of God at the hand of the Babylonians, 'For thus says the Lord GOD: "How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgements on Jerusalem – the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence – to cut off man and beast from it? Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it.' Eze 14:21-22.

The judgement of *the wild beasts* refers to the destruction that is experienced at the hands of the world kingdoms. In his prophetic visions, Daniel saw specific wild beasts that depicted the devouring nature of each world kingdom. For example, the kingdom of Babylon was depicted as a lion with the wings of an eagle. Dan 7:4. The kingdom of the Medo-Persians was depicted as a bear. Dan 7:5. In the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the wild beast that came upon the city of Jerusalem was the kingdom of Babylon. When the city of Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, the inhabitants of the city experienced the greatest tribulation that had been experienced by any city or nation from the beginning of the world until that time in history.

Jesus Christ was the watchman who announced the coming judgement of God upon the city of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans. During the week of His crucifixion, He lamented, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones whose who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"' Mat 23:37-39.

The apostle Peter heeded the prophetic warning of Christ, and when he saw Jerusalem surrounded by the Roman army in around AD 66, he led a believing remnant down to the region of Babylon where they escaped the judgement of God. Luk 21:20-21. 1Pe 5:13. The tribulation that was experienced by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, at the hands of the Romans in AD 70, was worse than the tribulation that had previously been experienced by the inhabitants of the city at the hands of the Babylonians. Josephus recorded that about 1.1 million people perished in the siege of Jerusalem, and close to a further 100 000 were captured as prisoners. The surviving prisoners were executed, torn apart by wild animals as a spectacle, forced to fight to the death as gladiators, or sold into life-long slavery.

Jesus declared that, in the time of the end, there will be *an even greater tribulation* that will be experienced by the entire world. He said, 'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world

until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.' Mat 24:21-22. The great tribulation will begin when Jesus Christ opens the second seal, and it will finish, or be cut short, when Christ opens the sixth seal. The outcome of the four sore judgements upon the seventh world kingdom during the great tribulation will be the death of one-quarter of the world's population. Rev 6:8.

Notably, the time of great tribulation will be ushered in by the 144 000 as they proclaim the gospel of God as a testimony in all nations, and the coming judgement of God upon all nations. It is important for us to appreciate that the 144 000 will proclaim *the judgement of God* upon the seventh world kingdom. The proclamation of the judgement of God is part of the new song that belongs to the 144 000. When we read the content of the new song in the Psalms, we note that the song concludes by saying, 'For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth'. Psa 96:13. Psa 98:2.

The final judgement that belongs to the little book

The prophetic mandate that Christ gave to the apostle John, in Chapter 1 of the book of Revelation, was 'mourning, lamentation, and woe'. This is the same prophetic mandate that has been given to the presbyteries in the right hand of Christ for the entire church age. The ministry of watchmen, who have expressed the mourning of Christ for His people, has produced various seasons of revival and refreshing. There have also been seasons of falling away. During the seventh world kingdom, we have witnessed many false gospels and a dramatic falling away among the Lord's people. Prophesying about our present day, Jesus said, 'Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.' Mat 24:12.

At the same time, the Lord has also been restoring the administration of lampstand churches that is suitable for the fullness of times. The greatest revival will happen after the Father takes His seat and Jesus Christ stands up to open the first seal. The 144 000 will find a great multitude of worthy houses in every nation. Rev 7:9-17. The worthy houses will then become the evangelists who will harvest over half the world's population. During the seven years that belong to the opening of the sixth seal, the celebration of the true Feast of Tabernacles will be the main agenda in the world. Zec 14:16. However, following this great world-wide revival, Antichrist will cause one *final apostasy,* or *falling away*. 2Th 2:3.

The 'lamentation' regarding the final falling away, and then the 'woe' that will invoke the final judgement of God upon Antichrist and his kingdom, belongs to 'the little book' that the apostle John received from the hand of the

mighty angel. John recorded his prophetic vision and interaction with the mighty angel in Chapter 10 of the book of Revelation. The voice of Christ from heaven commanded John to take the little book from the hand of the mighty angel. The angel then said to him, 'Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth … you must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.' Rev 10:9,11.

In relation to eating the little book, we can compare John's experience with the experience of the prophet Ezekiel in his day. For the apostle John, the prophetic word that belonged to the little book was 'lamentation, mourning, and woe'. As we have already noted, it was primarily 'lamentation' and 'woe'. However, there was also a dimension of mourning for him, because the blowing of the seventh trumpet includes the ministry of Moses and Elijah for 3 ½ years. The fruit of their ministry will be a final harvest of sons of God from the earth, before the outpouring of the vials, which will contain the fullness of God's wrath upon Antichrist and the eighth world kingdom.

Chapter Two

The crucifixion of Christ

The need for propitiation

Christ's journey from Gethsemane to Calvary was the manifestation, in time, of Yahweh's offering through which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit's covenant purpose to make man in Their image and according to Their likeness was accomplished. Inherent in this offering was provision for *propitiation*.

Propitiation became necessary when mankind, through sin, was separated from God and was condemned to eternal death. Gen 2:17. Let us be clear, there is nothing that a person can do in relation to their sin in order to appease God's judgement or to make Him propitious toward them. Rather, in mercy, God set forth His Son, Jesus Christ, as a propitiation to *destroy* sin and death, and to recover mankind to Himself and to His purpose for them. Rom 3:25. This purpose is for sons of men to be born of God's divine life and to be brought to glory in the image and likeness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Gen 1:26.

To understand the true work of propitiation, we must first consider the beginning of God's judgement. The judgement of God was *first* provoked by the fall of Lucifer and his angels. God created the angels perfect and complete for the works of service to which He appointed them. Eze 28:15. They are called to obey God, being sent forth by Him as ministering spirits to serve the heirs of salvation. Heb 1:4. The name of the Lord is in the angels, and they

have been given great might and power to fulfil the mandate that belongs to the sphere of service to which they were appointed.

Significantly, the works that pertain to the mandate of angels are not scripted for them by the Lord, who respects their initiative as spiritual identities within their sphere of service. Accordingly, essential to their creation is the choice to serve in obedience to God. However, if an angel departs from their estate, they cannot be redeemed or recovered. That is, on the day that the angels sinned, their eternal destruction was declared and was irrevocable. 2Pe 2:4. Jud 1:6.

We note, for example, that when Lucifer sinned, the Lord cast him out of the mountain of God as 'a profane thing'. Eze 28:16. Satan having been 'cut down to the ground', the Lord proclaimed that he would yet be brought down to 'Sheol [hell], to the lowest depths of the Pit'. Isa 14:12,15. The point is that Satan's destruction in the lowest recesses of hell was assured, even though, until the day of judgement, he and many of his angels were able to roam the earth. This was not the case for a number of other angels, as the apostle Peter noted, writing, 'God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgement'. 2Pe 2:4. Notably, hell is, first, the place of confinement in readiness for the judgement of fallen angels. This happened before the creation of Adam and the woman.

The first reproach against God

The first reproach directed against God was expressed by Satan when he impugned the Father by suggesting that the Father acted from His own initiative, apart from the fellowship of Yahweh. Satan said to the woman, 'Has God [*Elohim*] indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden"?' Gen 3:1. We know, of course, that it was the Lord God (Yahweh *Elohim*), communicating from a fellowship, who said that if man ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die. Gen 2:16-17. Satan then further reproached the Father by questioning His motives, saying to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' Gen 3:4-5. He was suggesting that God was deceitfully withholding something from the woman and, by this means, was limiting her potential.

Comparison and presumption

Eve was deceived by the content of Satan's reproach against God, while Adam drew back from the face of Christ in unbelief; he defaulted in relation to faith. 1Ti 2:14. Heb 10:39. Satan presumed to speak in this manner because he had been lifted up in pride on account of his beauty and power. Eze 28:18. He had sought to exceed his estate, comparing himself with the Son and endeavouring to compete with Him for power. Highlighting Satan's pride, the prophet Isaiah

declared, 'For you have said in your 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.

This same competitive dynamic surfaced in both Peter and Judas. They, too, had received a splendid mandate from God, through the Son. Jesus had given the twelve disciples power and authority over all demons, the capacity to cure diseases, and the mandate to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Luk 9:1-2. Mat 10:5-15. Not long after the disciples had returned to Jesus, His focus shifted towards His impending offering. He said to His disciples, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.' Luk 9:22. However, they could not hear His message. Luk 9:44-45.

Another spirit, or attitude, had emerged among the disciples following the success of their ministry. Instead of continuing to learn from Jesus, a dispute arose among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Luk 9:46. Notably, Peter presumed to rebuke Jesus for speaking of His decease. Jesus responded to him, saying, '*Get behind Me, Satan*! You are an offence to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.' Mat 16:23. Similarly, Judas presumed to be the measure of the word that Jesus taught. This was particularly evident when Jesus explained that it was necessary to eat His flesh and drink His blood to have everlasting life. Having noted Judas' unbelief, He said to the disciples, 'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and *one of you is a devil*?' Joh 6:70. Joh 6:64. As Christ approached the time of His offering journey, Judas' sights were set on rulership over the nation of Israel. Mat 19:28. He betrayed the Son of Man into the hands of the chief priests to bring this ambition to fruition. In this regard, he demonstrated the same ambitious and murderous spirit as his father, Satan.

Established in the kingdom of darkness by reproach

When the woman and Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in disobedience to the Lord God, they became dead to Him and were joined to the enemy of God. The devil became their father and the source of their culture. Joh 8:44-45. Paul identified this culture as 'the law of sin'. Rom 7:23,25. Having departed from God's fatherhood, every action taken as a citizen of Satan's kingdom is a reproach against the Father. Man was taken captive by Satan to his kingdom as he became man's king and ruler. Consequently, the fate of the devil and of the kingdom of Satan became man's fate – that is, the eternal judgement of God.

The power of Satan was destroyed through the cross. Col 2:15. His kingdom was judged and its power was broken. Declaring this implication of the cross, Paul wrote, 'Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood,

He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage'. Heb 2:14-15.

Propitiation for mankind required the destruction of Satan's kingdom. The apostle John explained this reality, writing, 'He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested*, that He might destroy the works of the devil.' 1Jn 3:8. All judgement, both of Satan and of mankind, is now under the judgement of the cross from which Christ, the Son of Man, now rules as Lord of heaven and earth because of the resurrection and new creation. On the cross, as Christ suffered the torment of eternal judgement, the flames of the lake of fire were lit. On the day of judgement, death and hell (the place first reserved for the fallen angels) are cast into the lake of fire, with everyone whose names are not found written in the book of life because they chose to remain citizens of the kingdom of darkness. Rev 20:12-15.

As we will consider in this chapter, the trespass offering ministers the power, the privilege and the love of the sin offering to those who accept its word, calling us back to God – that is, to be reconciled to God. 2Co 5:20. Through the trespass offering, we are delivered *from* our sin and iniquities, and *to* the life and fellowship that belongs to our predestination as sons of God. This is what it means to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in the light. We are partakers of this inheritance, having been delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son, 'in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins'. Col 1:12-14. This is the implication of propitiation.

In order to avail ourselves of this outcome of Christ's sin and trespass offering, we must be a *believer*. The evidence of believing as a son of God who has been established in the kingdom of light is that we walk obediently in the light of the word, and have fellowship with one another. If this is not the way in which we live and walk, we remain in darkness and under the condemnation that belongs to Satan and his kingdom. Jesus explained, 'He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God [i.e. they name themselves]. 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 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 3:18-21.

Offering in relation to reproach – a summary

To properly comprehend the work of propitiation, we need to consider the nature of Christ's offering. The offering of Christ was not self-centred. It was first love, revealed. Christ's expression of love involved emptying to an endpoint, by the capacity of seven Spirits from the Holy Spirit, to reveal the Father and a multitude of sons. Php 2:5-7.

Because we were enemies of God on account of our disobedience and sin, Christ's offering was an accountable response to the judgement of God. To this end, Christ 'gave Himself a *ransom* for all'. 1Ti 2:6. It is important to recognise that the ransom price was not paid to anyone. This ransom was first the cost to God of Christ becoming a curse for us. It was then the cost of shedding His blood for the purpose of our redemption.

The next dimension of Christ's offering was a suffering response as a propitiation. That is, He was set forth as a mercy seat. Rom 3:25. Christ suffered the full judgement and punishment necessary for the destruction of sin and Satan. He became the embodiment of sin when the Father made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. 2Co 5:21. Significantly, when He was nailed to the cross, Christ became a curse for us. Gal 3:13. The curse of God is death. In this regard, when He was crucified as the embodiment of sin, sin was put to death! We see that the death of sin was accomplished in Christ.

At the same time, the death that Christ died, He died to sin. Rom 6:10. As He died to sin, death had no hold upon Him. He was brought back from the dead by the life that was in His blood. Rom 6:10. Heb 13:20. Resurrection life was brought forth by the shedding of His blood through suffering. Resurrection life is more than eternal life. It is the blessing of God that supersedes the curse of judgement. It opens the door of mercy, which then rejoices, or triumphs, over judgement. Jas 2:13.

Christ was nailed to the cross by our reproaches against the Father. Reproach is the vocalised opposition of God that is sourced in Satan. Satan's name means 'adversary' or 'opposer'. The work of Satan is to reproach Christ. Satan was created 'Lucifer', which means 'light-bearer' or 'shining one'. Isa 14:12. He fell into darkness and speaks against God from the void. He speculates on things that have no substance. He has no capacity to create from the void as God did. He is therefore a liar from the day that he fell. Joh 8:44.

Christ destroyed both the ground and the works of the devil that flourish from misappropriation. He did this by filling the void. Christ left nothing outside of God's control when He filled, and fulfilled, the whole purpose and predestination of God which was to be spoken into time and space. On the cross, through obedience to the word of the Father, Christ took away any further ground for reproach against God. For this reason, the apostle Paul stated, 'Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.' Rom 8:33-34.

First love belongs to the offering of God in the beginning. The fruit of this offering is the message that has replaced all reproach. It is the word from the beginning proclaimed by presbyteries who have *returned* to first love. Testifying of this message, the apostle John wrote, '*That which was from the beginning*, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life – *the life was manifested*, and we have seen, and bear witness, and *declare to you that eternal life* which was with the Father and was manifested to us – that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ'. 1Jn 1:1-3.

The word, or message, from the beginning is that God is light. 1Jn 1:5. This light is the life that was multiplied to us from the cross. It is the word of the trespass offering by which we overcome sin and live to God. As we walk in the light of this word, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of the trespass offering cleanses us from all sin. 1Jn 1:7. However, if we say that we have no sin by denying the need to walk in the light of the word or have fellowship with our brethren, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Moreover, we make God a liar and His word is not in us. 1Jn 1:8,10.

An offering for sin

To understand how Christ was set forth as a propitiation, and how He ministers to us the redemption and salvation that He accomplished through His suffering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, we must understand that Christ, by Eternal Spirit, gave Himself to the Father to be made an offering for sin. In the garden of Gethsemane, the Son willingly received and drank the cup of sin that was given to Him by the Father. Luk 22:42. By this means, the Son, who knew no sin, was made sin and was joined to us in our separation from the Father. Isa 53:12. He was made a sin offering for the purpose of our redemption. 2Co 5:21.

The sin offering is a redemption that was worked in Christ by the seven Spirits of God, which brought Him back from the death of sin. This work was typified by *the Lord's goat* which, under the Old Covenant, was offered on the Day of Atonement. Lev 16:15-16. At the same time, Christ, as the sin offering, was sending away and judging sin, bringing it to destruction (meaning, to nothing). This was typified by the *scapegoat,* which was also offered on the Day of Atonement. Lev 16:20-22. The sin offering, in both the redemption and judgement that it accomplished, was *vicarious*. It was completely finished by one Man on our behalf.

The prophecy and demise of Caiaphas

Christ's journey as an offering for sin took Him from the garden of Gethsemane to the court of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. About a month earlier, in response to the resurrection of Lazarus, the chief priests and the Pharisees had gathered a council. They were concerned that if Jesus was left alone, everyone would believe in Him on account of the many signs that He had done. They were afraid that the Romans would come and take away their place and their nation. Joh 11:47-48.

At that time, Caiaphas responded to them, saying, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that *it is expedient for us* that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.' Joh 11:49-50. The apostle John noted that Caiaphas did not say this on his own authority. Rather, enabled by the Holy Spirit, and according to his mandate as the high priest, Caiaphas *prophesied* that Jesus would die for the nation and that, through this offering, He would gather in one body the children of God who were scattered abroad. Joh 11:51-52.

It is amazing to consider that, by the Holy Spirit, Caiaphas prophesied what was true. However, his motive for this expression was self-centred and self-preserving; it was motivated by sin. When Jesus appeared before him, Caiaphas said, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Caiaphas was inquiring as to whether Jesus was 'the Man whose name is the BRANCH', who would 'build the temple of the LORD', spoken of by the prophet Zechariah. Zec 6:12. Jesus responded to Caiaphas, saying, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Mat 26:64.

At this point, according to his mandate as high priest, Caiaphas should have rushed to the temple to get the dual crown that Zechariah had made and was to be kept in trust until the day that Melchizedek, the King-Priest – the Man whose name is BRANCH – came to the temple. Zec 6:11-14. He should have placed this crown on Jesus' head and removed his own high priestly garment in order to clothe Jesus with these vestiges. He then should have gone down on his knees in supplication before the King-Priest, begged for forgiveness, and said, 'We know that you are the provision for our salvation; what must we do to be saved?'

Instead, Caiaphas tore his priestly garments in rage, marking the end of the Old Covenant priesthood. The high priest, with the Sanhedrin, then condemned Christ to death and subjected Him to gross abuse, spitting in His face, beating Him, and striking Him with the palms of their hands. Mat 26:65-68. They then delivered Him to the Romans to be crucified. Joh 19:6. All the Jews, including the chief priests, said to Pontious Pilate, 'We have a law,

and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.' Joh 19:7.

Through these actions, the word of God that was proclaimed by the Holy Spirit through the ministry of Caiaphas came to pass. As we will now consider, Christ was set forth as a trespass offering when He was crucified. By this means, every person, including Caiaphas, was connected to the implications of the sin offering. Because his ministry was motivated by sin and the preservation of his position, Caiaphas came under the judgement of the very word that he had been given to proclaim. It was indeed expedient for Christ to die as an offering for our sin but, now, through the trespass offering, Caiaphas was connected to the implications of this offering. Like Judas, he found no place of repentance, and was taken out, with his ministry, to forgetfulness under the judgement of the sin offering, symbolised by the scapegoat.

Every person whom the Lord has called to proclaim the word of God as a messenger must heed this point. The word that they proclaim must cause them to look on Him whom they have pierced through their self-centredness, so that they minister in mourning, having embraced their fellowship in the sufferings of their Lord and Saviour. This was the apostle Paul's demeanour. He testified, saying, 'I discipline my body and bring it into subjection [to the offering and sufferings of Christ], lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified [lit: a castaway; with the scapegoat].' 1Co 9:27.

The trespass offering

The trespass offering, which includes the elements of atonement and restitution, was joined to the sin offering when Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross on Mount Calvary. The law of the trespass offering states, 'If a person commits a trespass, and sins *unintentionally* in regard to the holy things of the Lord, then he shall bring to the Lord as his *trespass offering* a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in *shekels of silver* according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering'. Lev 5:15.

The element of the trespass offering was specifically added to Christ's offering for sin on the cross because He was the *substance* of the ram that God, in type, provided to Abraham to offer on Mount Moriah instead of Isaac. Gen 22:13-14. The place where Abraham made this sacrifice was later named Mount Calvary. We further note that Jesus was set forth as an offering for the people, as declared by Caiaphas, having been betrayed into the hands of the chief priests for the sum of thirty pieces of silver. Mat 26:14-15. Zec 11:12-13. This was the value that the chief priests placed on Christ's life as the One whose death was expedient for the people as a trespass offering.

Perhaps the most compelling indication that Christ was specifically made to be a trespass offering when He was crucified was His prayer to the Father as the Roman soldiers nailed His hands and feet to the wood of the cross and lifted Him up from the earth. He said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do [that is, they do it in ignorance and therefore unintentionally; they do not understand what they are doing].' Luk 23:34. In this regard, Jesus prayed for the sin-sickness of mankind. This was the fruit of the other law that was established in the heart of every person through Adam's disobedience.

Sin-sickness is a confusing infirmity that leaves us in a state of deception, with no understanding about what motivates us. It is the consequence of living by the other law, which was established in the heart of every person as a consequence of Adam's disobedience. Rom 5:12. Describing this infirmity, the apostle Paul confessed, 'For what I am doing, *I do not understand*. For what I will to do, that I do not practise; but what I hate, that I do.' Rom 7:15. We are selfish in our actions because we are self-centred in our motivations. We claim that we are motivated by what is good when we seek to use the resources of life that are around us. These resources belong to God and are 'good'. We think that because we associate with what is good, coveting its outcome as personal profit, then *we* must be good. This behaviour is sin, and its judgement is death. In the end, what is good and belongs to God must kill us to protect creation from being destroyed by us. We see that the judgement of God upon our covetousness operates as a protective mechanism through what is good. Rom 7:7-12.

The establishment of the trespass offering as part of the sin offering, in the cross, was the Father's initiative towards us. He did it in faith, and through love, to give to us the right and responsibility of *choice*. That is, through the trespass offering, we are joined to the implications of the sin offering, accomplished by Christ for each of us. Importantly, in the trespass offering, we are given the choice either to be joined to the sin offering and obtain the redemption that Christ accomplished for us through His offering for sin; or to continue to live by the sight of our own eyes and the understanding of our own heart, and to die under the judgement of the sin offering. On account of choice, as the implication of being joined to the trespass offering, the sin offering becomes to us either blessing or judgement, which is cursing.

The cross of Christ

To more fully comprehend the implications of the sin and trespass offerings, it is necessary to consider the details of Christ's crucifixion. The crucifixion of Christ was the sixth wound of His offering and suffering journey. It encompassed the piercing of His hands and feet as He was nailed to the cross, as well as the breaking of His physical heart.

In previous writings, we nominated Christ's sixth wound to be solely the nails that were driven through His hands and feet. We identified the seventh wound as the breaking of His physical heart at the ninth hour, when He cried, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Mat 27:46. However, Psalm 22 *opens* with this prophetic statement, as King David declared, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the *daytime*, but You do not hear; and in the *night season*, and am not silent.' Psa 22:1-2.

Clearly, the scope of this statement is broader than the final moments of Christ's crucifixion; it encompasses the whole period of His suffering on the cross. In this regard, we note that Christ was crucified at the third hour (9am), marking 'the daytime'. Mar 15:25. At the sixth hour (12pm), great darkness covered the earth until the ninth hour (3pm), indicating 'the night season'. Mar 15:33-37.

We further observe that having made the statement, 'Why have You forsaken Me?', King David later wrote in Psalm 22, 'For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.' Psa 22:16-18. It is evident that these events, which marked the commencement of Christ's crucifixion, belong to David's opening statement, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?'

The content of Psalm 22 also reveals that when Christ's hands and feet were nailed to the cross, which was then plunged into the ground, His physical heart was broken and ceased to function. He now lived only by *exanastasis* life. To this end, David prophesied, 'I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint [as the cross was jolted into the ground and He was lifted up from the earth]; My heart is like wax; it has melted [lit: wasted away] within Me [lit: *in the midst of My bowels*]. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death [the end of mortal life].' Psa 22:14-15.

As Christ's heart melted 'in the midst of His bowels', He was beset with extreme nausea, resulting in vomiting and diarrhoea. This nausea was not merely the outcome of an adrenalin-induced 'fight or flight' response. We know that Jesus was not driven by the fear of death, for the Scriptures declare that He was heard by the Father 'because of His godly fear'. Heb 5:7. Rather, the physical responses associated with His nausea were the implication of having been made a curse, as our reproaches against the Father were all laid upon Him. King David established this point in Psalm 69. He wrote, '*Reproach has broken my heart*, and I am full of heaviness [lit: 'sickness' – as His heart melted in the midst of His bowels]'. Psa 69:20.

The vomiting that accompanied the piercing of Christ's hands and feet and the breaking of His heart revealed the outcome for those who are 'lukewarm' in the church. As we will consider later in this chapter, Jesus warned the presbytery in Laodicea that He would vomit them out of His mouth if they did not begin to mourn with godly sorrow, leading to repentance and godly zeal. Rev 3:16,19.

Having established that Christ's sixth wound encompassed all of the elements of His crucifixion, we recognise that the seventh wound was the sum of the six earlier wounds. This wound was the piercing of His side with the soldier's spear after His Spirit had been received into the hands of the Father. When Christ's physical body was pierced with the soldier's spear, the witness in heaven of the Father, the Word and the Spirit, which was made available on earth through the six wounds of His offering and suffering journey, began to flow as the Spirit, the water and the blood. 1Jn 5:6-8. This was the river of life flowing from His side. Now, what was true in heaven could be made true in anyone who received this witness through the ministry of the word of the cross. We will say more on the implications of this witness in Chapter 3.

Reproach laid on Christ

The reproaches that broke Christ's heart and caused Him sickness in His bowels were our reproaches against God the Father, which were laid on Him. Psa 69:9. These reproaches were the sinful implications of exchanging God's fatherhood, and the word of our sonship, for the lie that we could be the source of our own life and expression. This happened when the woman was deceived by Satan, and Adam disobeyed the Lord God by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, given to him by his wife. Gen 3:6. 1Ti 2:14. Through Adam and the woman's disobedience, another law was established in their hearts, and in the heart of every identity that would be brought forth from them. Rom 5:12. Rom 7:23. Every action that a person takes as they live by this law is in opposition to the Father's purpose and plan for them; it is a reproach against Him.

The great grief of the Father, which was caused by these reproaches, was expressed in the garden of Eden when He called to Adam and, by implication, to the whole of mankind, saying, '*Where are you*?' Gen 3:9. Mankind was lost to God, for they had rejected Him and were now dead in trespasses and sins. Eph 2:1. Importantly, it was the *Father's grief* on account of these reproaches, as well as grief on behalf of mankind who were lost to God, that broke Christ's heart when our reproaches were laid on Him.

The laying of our reproaches against the Father, on Christ, was a key implication of Him becoming an offering for sin. As we noted earlier, Christ did this in obedience to the Father's will as He drank the cup that the Father gave to Him in the garden of Gethsemane. Luk 22:42. Having 'eaten' the

command, or will, of the Father, and drunk the cup that was given to Him, Christ was *consumed with zeal* for the Father's house, culminating in His crucifixion. Concerning His crucifixion, as the *culminating* event of His offering and suffering journey, He testified, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on Me.' Psa 69:9.

The nails that secured Christ to the cross were our reproaches laid on Him. This was fundamental to the establishment of a trespass offering as part of Christ's sacrifice for sin. To establish this key point, let us consider again the content of the Messianic psalms. Christ testified that His heart broke when His hands and feet were nailed to the cross and it was lifted up and set in the ground. Psa 22:14,16. Elsewhere, Jesus prophetically testified, 'Reproach [i.e. our reproaches against the Father, which were laid on Him] has broken My heart.' Psa 69:20. Evidently, our reproaches, which broke Christ's heart, were the nails that secured Christ to the cross.

The implication of our reproaches nailing Christ to the cross and revealing Him as a trespass offering is that the whole of mankind was joined to the cross. Every person's hands were on the nails that pierced His hands and feet, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God through the pursuit of their own way. Rom 3:23. This is the implication of living according to the other law; it is an infirmity, or sin-sickness, that has afflicted every person.

Delivered into sinful hands

The Father's offering of the Son in this manner was foreshadowed by Abraham and Isaac. In the same way that Christ carried His cross to Mount Calvary, Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice to the place of offering on Mount Moriah (which was later named Calvary). Joh 19:17. Gen 22:6. Here, Abraham bound Isaac and set 'him on the altar, upon the wood'. Gen 22:9. Although it was God the Father who offered the Son, He did this by delivering the Son of Man into the hands of sinful men to be crucified. Luk 24:7. This was 'the wisdom of God in a mystery' to judge and destroy Satan, sin and death, and to join, through the trespass offering, every person to the implications of the sin offering. We were all being delivered to a choice: to be redeemed to our predestination as sons of God or to continue to live according to our own way, leading to damnation.

Specifically referring to being nailed to the cross, Jesus signified the death by which He would die, saying, 'Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.' Joh 12:31-32. Satan, the ruler of this world, incited and empowered the rulers of this age, and indeed all the people, to crucify the Lord of glory by their hands. 1Co 2:8.

Energised by Satan, the ruler of the kingdom of darkness, the chief priests and officers demanded that Christ be crucified, saying, 'We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die.' Joh 19:7. The multitudes of Jews insisted that Christ be crucified, crying out, 'Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!' Joh 19:15. And although it was the Roman soldiers who drove the nails through Christ's hands and feet and into the wood of the cross, the apostle Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, *whom you crucified*, both Lord and Christ.' Act 2:36.

The curse of the cross

The chief priests, scribes, and all those who passed by, blasphemed and mocked Jesus, wagging their heads and saying, 'Aha!' Mar 15:29. They thought that because He had been crucified, or cursed, He could not be the Messiah, the Son of God. They said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.' Mar 15:31-32. Prophetically expressing Christ's experience of these reproaches, David wrote, 'But I am a worm, and no man; *a reproach of men*, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!" ' Psa 22:6-8.

As reproach was laid on Christ when He was nailed to the cross, His offering became an atoning death that absorbed the curse associated with these reproaches. To accomplish this atonement, Christ became *a curse*. Establishing this point, the apostle Paul wrote, 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, *having become a curse for us* (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith'. Gal 3:13-14.

Becoming a curse for the purpose of our redemption reveals the focus of Christ's *travail*. This was more than simply paying the price for our sin in order to appease God and to make us acceptable to Him. Christ's travail was His offering as the Seed of the Father. Through His offering and suffering journey, Christ fell into the ground and died. In the course of the journey, He suffered the eternal judgement of God that belongs to our sin, and He fulfilled the obedience that belongs to every person's sanctification and glorification as a son of God. Heb 5:7-9. Isa 26:12. The one Seed, in whom every person's name as a son of God was written, was brought forth as the Sheaf of Firstfruits. 1Co 15:20. In this Sheaf was a multitude of seeds, each one containing the sonship name and life of a particular identity. Prophesying concerning the nature and fruit of this travail, Isaiah said, 'When You make His soul an offering for sin, *He shall see His seed*, He shall prolong His days, and the

pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the *labour* [travail] of His soul, and be satisfied.' Isa 53:10-11.

To understand the implications of Christ becoming a curse, we must first recognise that when He was nailed to the cross, the Law of God, which had been given to the children of Israel as a covenant, was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross in Him. Col 2:14. When God gave His Law, through Moses, He said that any person who kept the Law would be blessed and that those who disobeyed His commandments would be cursed. Deu 11:26-28.

On account of the other law, which was fathered in the heart of every person through Adam's disobedience, not one person has been able to keep God's Law. This means that every person who has ever lived has been subject to 'the curse of the Law' and condemned to eternal death. Establishing this point, the apostle Paul wrote, 'For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, "*Cursed is everyone* who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them".' Gal 3:10.

We just read that Christ became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the Law so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Gal 3:13-14. The curse that Christ became when He was nailed to the cross went out to every person as Christ vomited from the cross. That is, mankind was no longer cursed by the Law. They were now cursed with Christ in the cross. The two thieves who were crucified with Christ on Mount Calvary typified the situation of every human identity. Mat 27:38. Luk 23:39-43.

The prophet Zechariah described the curse that Christ had become, and that proceeded to fall upon every inhabitant of this present earth as a flying scroll. Its dimensions were twenty cubits in length and ten cubits in width. Zec 5:2. The angel who spoke to Zechariah explained, '*This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth*: "Every thief shall be expelled", according to this side of the scroll; and, "Every perjurer shall be expelled", according to that side of it.' Zec 5:3. We are all thieves and liars because of the other law that brings us into bondage to the law, or principle, of sin. Motivated by the fear of death, and through covetousness, we take hold of, or steal, what we believe to be good for us, even at the expense of others. Determined to be the source of our own expression, we manufacture projections to express the image that we have of ourselves. These identity fabrications are a lie.

Reiterating the universal application of this curse, the Lord of hosts declared, 'I will send out the curse; it shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name [that is, who uses the word as a resource, rather than as the provision for *agape* fellowship]. It shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it, with its timber and stones.' Zec 5:4. We see that this curse fell on every house as well as on every individual.

On account of this curse upon the thief, the perjurer, and those who swear falsely by the Lord's name, *we are not God's people*. Hos 1:9.

The blessing of the cross

The purpose for sending out this curse is to recover to their predestination as sons of God, everyone who hears and believes the word of the cross. The gospel of God is the message that first declares Christ crucified, or cursed. Rom 1:1-4. 1Co 1:23. When a hearer does not resist the grace of God that accompanies the proclamation of this message, they are illuminated to see that they have been redeemed from the curse of the Law and *are now crucified, or cursed, with Christ*. As we will consider in Chapter 3, this causes them 'to mourn as for a firstborn son'. Zec 12:10. The confession prompted by this illumination is the first response that a hearer makes, establishing them in the process of new birth.

Once they are born of the incorruptible seed that Christ brought forth through His travail, a believer then confesses, 'I am co-crucified [co-cursed] with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Gal 2:20. In the place where they were not God's people, on account of the curse of the cross, 'There it shall be said to them, "You are sons of the living God".' Hos 1:10.

Remembering that the zeal for God's house consumed Christ when our reproaches against the Father were laid on Him and He became a curse for us, the Lord Himself declared, 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervour I am zealous for her.' Zec 8:2. The fruit of this zeal in those who respond with faith to His word is that they are recovered to be God's people, and are established in a lampstand church. We know this because, in His zeal, the Lord of hosts proclaimed, 'Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, and seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also." Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.' Zec 8:20-22. Christ the Lord was referring to the ministry of watchmen who belong to *aggelos* presbyteries, or stars, in His right hand. Rev 1:20. These messengers, proceeding from the fellowship of presbyteries, move between cities and establish 'flowers', or local congregations of worthy houses. The word of the cross is proclaimed by messengers in the hand of Christ.

The effect of the curse on the lukewarm

Isaiah prophesied concerning the ministry of lampstand churches in the world during the days in which we presently live. Specifically, he pronounced a burden against Egypt, which is symbolic of the world and also of the spirit of

the world in the church. For example, identifying the fractured, or divided, nature of the seventh world kingdom in the days preceding its demise, Isaiah wrote, 'Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; the idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst. I will set Egyptians against Egyptians; everyone will fight against his brother, and everyone against his neighbour, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.' Isa 19:1-2.

Notably, Isaiah's statements concerning the spirit of the world in the presbytery and in the church explain the reason why Christ vomits out those who remain lukewarm, as He warned the presbytery of Laodicea. He said to them, 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.' Rev 3:15-16. Their expulsion is a direct consequence of their resistance to the word of the cross, bringing them under the implications of its curse, which was manifest and sent out when Christ was nailed to the cross and His heart melted like wax in the midst of His bowels.

These presbyters are lukewarm because of the way in which they receive and respond to the word that is laid down in the presbytery – that is, how they 'eat' the word and 'drink' of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord. They are bereft of godly sorrow leading to repentance, which would otherwise bring forth the fruit of *zeal*, which consumed Christ. 2Co 7:10-11. Although they are not zealous, nor repentant, they presume to lead and instruct their congregations according to their own burden, sight and direction. Consequently, their sight is impeded and they remain deceived.

Isaiah explained that the Lord Himself mingles a perverse spirit in their midst so that presbyters who remain lukewarm, or double-minded, do not prophesy or proclaim what is true – that is, it is not *the word of present truth*. In this regard, he wrote, 'The princes of Zoan [the leaders of the congregation] have become fools; the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also deluded Egypt, those who are the mainstay of its tribes. *The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst*; and they have caused Egypt to err in all her work, *as a drunken man staggers in his vomit*.' Isa 19:13-14.

Isaiah said that the effect of the word of the curse, or cross, proclaimed by messengers who have been restored to the hand of Christ, would be great fear in Egypt and Judah. He said, 'In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the *waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts*, which He waves over it. And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has determined against it.' Isa 19:16-17. This fear is the result of those who resist the word that ministers to a hearer their name and sanctification. The evidence of bondage to this fear is the inability to speak by faith, as well as vulnerability to familiar spirits.

Chapter Three

Preaching Christ crucified

The word of the cross that is preached by a watchman does not refer merely to the details of Christ's offering and suffering journey from Gethsemane, culminating in His crucifixion on Mount Calvary. Nor is it simply the proclamation of all the benefits of Christ's offering on our behalf. The word of the cross is *the gospel of God*. Rom 1:1. It is the word of the Father that Christ fulfilled by the capacity of Eternal Spirit from the Holy Spirit, in the course of His offering journey. The apostle John described this word as being the witness in heaven of the Father, the Word (referring to the Son), and the Holy Spirit. 1Jn 5:7. The apostle Paul described this witness as '*the counsel of Their will*'. Eph 1:11.

After Jesus had finished His offering and suffering journey and His Spirit was received into the hands of the Father, His side was pierced with a soldier's spear. The Spirit, the water and the blood that flowed from His side was now a witness on earth of what was finished in heaven through His one offering. 1Jn 5:8. Heb 10:10. This witness was now flowing as a river of life, ministering to every person the eternal implications of Yahweh's offering through which the covenant purpose of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit had been accomplished.

The river of the water of life is the word of the cross that a watchman has been set apart by God to preach. To proclaim this message, a watchman must be restored, as part of a presbytery, to the fellowship of first love that belongs to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is possible only as they receive and drink

from the river of the water of life; mourn as they look on Him whom they have pierced; and embrace their fellowship in the cross of Christ. 1Jn 1:1. Luk 9:23.

Through the ministry of watchmen enabled by the Holy Spirit, their hearers are delivered to the choice that was established when Christ was nailed to the cross as a trespass offering. A hearer can choose to participate in Christ's death and to avail themselves, through new birth and discipleship, of the redemption that He accomplished for them as an offering for sin. Alternatively, they can choose to continue to live according to the sight of their own eyes and the understanding of their own heart, leading to cursing in the place of God's forgetfulness.

Looking on Him whom we have pierced

Prophesying concerning the impact of the cross upon those who receive the message proceeding from Christ's finished offering, 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*.' Zec 12:10.

Previously, we have associated this passage solely with the seventh wound, when Christ's side was pierced with the soldier's spear. However, the Scriptures clearly reveal that the crucifixion of Christ was bounded by *two piercings*. First, His hands and feet were pierced through when He was nailed to the cross. In Chapter 2, we understood that this was the manifestation of *the trespass offering,* as well as of the sin offering. We were all connected to Christ as we crucified the Lord of glory through our reproaches against the Father. Christ's body was pierced a second time when a soldier's spear was thrust into His side. The water, blood and Spirit that flowed from His side is the river of the water of life. It is the word of life proceeding from the offering fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When a person receives this word, they are caused to look upon Him whom they pierced through their reproaches against the Father.

This implication of the ministry of the gospel of God was exemplified by Jesus, who is the primary Watchman. Following His resurrection from the dead, after His body had rested in the tomb for three days and three nights, Jesus appeared to His disciples in the upper room. Significantly, after He had said to them, 'Peace be with you', Jesus showed them *His hands and His side* – the marks resulting from His two piercings. Joh 20:19-20. He then said again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' Joh 20:21. The disciples were born again as He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' Joh 20:22.

We know that Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared to His disciples this first time. He refused to believe the report of his brethren, saying,

'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' Joh 20:25. After eight days, Thomas was present when Jesus again appeared to the disciples. The Lord said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. *Do not be unbelieving, but believing.*' Joh 20:27. Believing in Jesus is possible only as we receive this witness through the proclamation of the word, and look on Him whom we have pierced. Through repentance, and the faith that belongs to sonship, we are joined to the redemptive implications of the sin offering in the fellowship of the trespass offering. *This is what it means to be a believer.*

The faithful and true witness

The point to note is that the manifestation of Christ's pierced hands and feet, and His pierced side, is foundational to the ministry of the gospel through which a hearer can believe and be born anew as a son of God. With this in view, it is notable that the apostle John introduced the book of Revelation by identifying Jesus Christ as 'the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth'. Rev 1:5.

Christ is the Faithful Witness because He was nailed to the cross, and carried in His body the piercings that belonged to His crucifixion. He was brought back from the death of sin by the life of God that was in His blood. Heb 13:20. By this means, we were reconciled to God in the body of His flesh. Col 1:21-22. As *the Firstborn from the dead*, the Son of Man is the revelation and substance of who we are to become as sons of God who are brought to glory in the image and likeness of God. As *the Ruler of the kings of the earth*, He is the One whom the Father has raised 'far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come [the new heavens and earth, and the continuing city that is to come]'. Eph 1:21.

The apostle John continued his introduction to the book of Revelation, saying, 'To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. *Amen.* Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, *Amen.*' Rev 1:5-6.

By concluding each of these two statements with 'Amen', John was connecting our washing, our establishment as kings and priests, and seeing Him whom we have pierced, to the 'I AM' dimension of Yahweh *Elohim's* ever-present, offering fellowship. The Son of Man was saying, 'So be it, I AM!' The I AM dimension of Yahweh was revealed in the body of Christ when He was lifted up on the cross. We know this because, having written, 'Even so, Amen', John then expressed the testimony of Yahweh, writing, ' "I AM the Alpha and the

Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty".' Rev 1:5-8. Speaking of His crucifixion, Jesus Himself said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM.' Joh 8:28.

The witness of John and Paul

Jesus was the Faithful Witness because He manifested the piercing of His hands and feet, and of His side. Every messenger who belongs to Christ's administration is to *bear this same witness*. Consider the apostle John. Having recounted the piercing of Christ's side with the soldier's spear, he wrote, 'And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced".' Joh 19:35-37.

We know that John was not only testifying concerning the seventh wound, for the first Scripture that he quoted referred specifically to the beginning of Christ's crucifixion. John was quoting from Psalm 34, where David wrote, 'The LORD is near to those who have *a broken heart* [which was broken when Christ was nailed to the cross and lifted up from the earth], and saves such as have a contrite spirit. 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 34:18-20.

Importantly, John was declaring this testimony as a faithful witness, having been established as a watchman in the right hand of Christ. Rev 1:17. Significantly, this message minsters the faith that Jesus authored for each person as He finished all their works 'in the lowest parts of the earth'. Psa 139:15-16. Isa 26:12. Christ did this during the three hours of great darkness as He hung on the cross.

The apostle Paul was, likewise, a faithful witness. Writing to the Corinthians, he said, 'I determined not to know anything among you except *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.' 1Co 2:2-3. Paul preached the gospel of God, of which he was not ashamed, by *explaining* and *demonstrating* Christ and Him crucified as he carried about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Rom 1:16. 2Co 4:10. Act 17:2-3. By this means, among his hearers, Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. Gal 3:1.

Emphasising to his hearers the manifestation of the first piercing of Christ, Paul testified that he was being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of their faith. Php 2:17. His testimony, or witness, directly corresponded with the statement that Christ made when His hands and feet

were being nailed to the cross. Prophetic of Christ's experience, David wrote, '*I am poured out like water*, and all My bones are out of joint; *My heart is like wax*; it has melted within Me … for dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. *They pierced My hands and My feet*.' Psa 22:14,16.

Paul exhorted every believer to receive this message and to become a witness of Christ's piercings by bearing His reproaches. First, he highlighted that Christ suffered outside the camp, bringing an end to the fruitless religious conduct that belonged to the Old Covenant. He wrote, 'We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat [i.e. the food of this altar does not belong to those who live according to the Old Covenant]. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered outside the gate*.' Heb 13:10-12. The sufferings that occurred outside the gate of Jerusalem pertained specifically to the sixth wound – the crucifixion.

Paul then called us all to join the fellowship of the sixth wound, writing, 'Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, *bearing His reproach*. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come [that is, the New Jerusalem].' Heb 13:13-14. The reproaches of Christ were laid on Him when He was nailed to the cross. To 'bear His reproach' is to join the fellowship of this wound as a participation in the trespass offering. We eat and drink the *agape* meal in faith for participation in the altar of this sacrifice.

Bearing Christ's reproach as a participation in the *agape* meal has a particular expression through which Christ is portrayed as crucified in our relational settings. As Paul then wrote, 'Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips [our conversation and conduct], giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good [or the works of obedience that belong to sonship] and to share [lit: fellowship with one another], for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' Heb 13:15-16.

Mourning

Returning to Zechariah's prophecy, we read that when a person is caused to look on Him whom they have pierced, 'They will *mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.' Zec 12:10-11.

'The grief for the Firstborn' that leads to salvation is more than the expression of regret by those who recognise the devasting consequences of their actions. It is *godly sorrow*, or the sorrow of God Himself. This godly sorrow, or mourning, is foundational to the work of redemption; to the accomplishment

of our salvation; to the proclamation of the gospel; and to the response through which a hearer obtains their salvation. Mourning that leads to repentance and the fruit of godliness is enabled by the capacity of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, given by the Holy Spirit.

The grief of the Father

The first expression of godly sorrow is the Father's grief. In Chapter 2, we noted the deep grief of the Father when Adam, and mankind, rejected His fatherhood, giving heed to Satan's alternative word in an endeavour to become the source of their own life and expression. This grief was expressed by the Father in the garden of Eden when He called to Adam, and indeed to the whole of mankind, saying, '*Where are you?*' Gen 3:9. The Father was lamenting the rejection of His fatherhood and the loss of all His children to the kingdom of Satan. Moreover, He was grieving for His children who had forfeited the glorious inheritance that He had prepared for them.

The Father's grief was compounded when, in order to accomplish Their Everlasting Covenant purpose, the Father gave to the Son the cup of sin to drink. Luk 22:42. In so doing, the Father made the Son an offering for sin. 2Co 5:21. Now His only begotten Son was forsaken and numbered with the transgressors. Isa 53:12. Of course, the Father did this for the purpose of our redemption to our predestination as sons of God. Nevertheless, it was a breach in the Godhead and the cause of great grief.

The grief of the great High Priest

The next expression of godly sorrow was of the Son Himself. The source of the Son's grief was not the pain of His suffering; nor was it the rejection of men. It was the grief of the good Shepherd and our great High Priest. As Yahweh Son, the Son of God, and the Son of Man, Christ priested Himself as the trespass offering on the cross. Paul said that this was the key focus of his letter to the Hebrews. Heb 8:1-2.

The *first* dimension of the Son's grief was mourning *for the Father's* loss as we rejected Him through our determination to become the source of our own life and destiny. The Son was not sorrowful simply because He witnessed the mourning of the Father for the loss of His children. Rather, the Son *bore the grief of the Father's own broken heart*. That is, the Father's grief became the Son's grief.

The *second* dimension of the Son's grief was His sorrow *for mankind.* He mourned the eternal consequences of being forsaken by God. Psa 22:1. Mat 27:46. Having become sin and been numbered with us, He who knew no sin was fully acquainted with all the grief associated with our eternal separation from God. Isa 53:12. As Isaiah prophesied, 'Surely He has borne our

griefs and carried our sorrows.' Isa 53:4. Highlighting this dimension of Christ's priesthood, Paul wrote, 'For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses [infirmities], but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin'. Heb 4:15.

These two dimensions of mourning belong to Christ's ministry as our great High Priest, 'the one Mediator between God and men', of whom Paul said that He 'gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time'. 1Ti 2:5-6. Just as the Father made Christ to be an offering for sin, it was the Father who *glorified* the Son to become High Priest, saying to Him, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.' Heb 5:5-6. Ministering as High Priest, Christ, by Eternal Spirit, *offered up Himself* as a sin and trespass offering, thereby establishing a bridge between God and mankind. Heb 7:27. Heb 9:14. This was the reconciliation.

This ministry of reconciliation was possible because, prior to the commencement of His offering journey, the Son was *glorified* by the Father with the glory that He had *before*. Joh 17:5. That is, He was *Yahweh Son* who, by Eternal Spirit, could priest Himself as an offering through which the covenant purpose of the Godhead would be accomplished. It was for this reason that it pleased the Father for all the fullness of the Godhead to dwell in the Son. Col 1:19.

Essential to Christ's priesthood was His expression as the *Son of God*. When Yahweh Son was begotten as the Son of God by the word of the Father *before*, the Son became the full revelation of the Father. Heb 1:5. Joh 14:9. The name and life of every identity, sourced from the Father, was in Him. When all the identities of mankind were lost to the Father through Adam's disobedience, the Son of God not only recognised the grief of the Father but, also, He was able to comprehend and bear this grief *for Him*, because He was *of Him*.

As the *Son of Man*, our great High Priest could be fully united with us in our death on account of sin, and could be acquainted with our grief. However, as the Son of Man, Christ prayed to the Father to be glorified, through offering, as Yahweh in the flesh. He would be glorified through death and resurrection as the spiritual New Man. In the course of His offering journey, He pioneered the pathway of salvation for every son of man. Heb 5:8-9. On this pathway, they would not simply be brought back to a position of acceptability before God. Rather, they could be glorified with Him as sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God. Heb 2:10.

Although it pleased the Father for all of the fullness to dwell in Christ, and He glorified the Son to be Melchizedek, our great High Priest, Christ *priested Himself* as an offering for sin and as a trespass offering. He needed to do this *alone*, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit, for He was the Mediator between God and man. For this reason, the Son testified, 'I have trodden the

winepress *alone*, and from the peoples no-one was with Me.' Isa 63:3. The treading of the winepress directs our attention to the significance of the shedding of His blood. In this regard, His priesthood was unique in that He did not sprinkle the blood of bulls and goats for atonement, 'but with His own blood He entered the most holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption'. Heb 9:12.

The grief, or travail, through which reconciliation and our redemption were accomplished was manifested when Christ was nailed to the cross by our reproaches against the Father. As we have been considering, the implications of these reproaches, both in relation to the Father and in relation to mankind, *broke His heart*. When our Shepherd and great High Priest's heart broke, He was brought 'to the dust of death'. Psa 22:14-15. That is, His physical heart broke as He was lifted up as a trespass offering. This was the end of His mortal life.

Describing the death that belonged to this grief, Paul wrote, 'For the death that He died, *He died to sin once for all*'. Rom 6:10. Christ died to sin as His heart was broken, bearing the Father's grief and our grief. The breaking of His heart breached all rebellion, and silenced all alternatives to the word of the Father. The death that He died was an exquisite expression of love as Christ, by the power of Eternal Spirit, laid down His life for the Father and for His friends, whom He was not ashamed to call His brethren. Heb 2:11.

For the next six hours, Christ's physical heart and His natural breath were sustained by the resurrection, or *exanastasis*, life in His blood. He was sustained until He breathed His last, at which point He had brought life and immortality to light. Luk 23:46. 2Ti 1:10. Having destroyed sin in the body of His flesh, He was brought back from the death of sin by the life in His blood. Heb 13:20. As Paul explained, having died to sin once for all, 'the life that He lives, He lives to God'. Rom 6:10. Wonderfully, Christ, our great High Priest and the Shepherd of our souls, brought us all back to God with Him. By this means, He 'made peace through the blood of His cross', and we who were enemies of God were reconciled to the Father in the body of Christ's flesh. Col 1:20-22. Having destroyed the kingdom of darkness through death, He manifested the Light of the world through the life in His blood.

The redemption and reconciliation that Christ accomplished through the shedding of His blood was vicarious. Establishing this point, Paul wrote, '*When we were enemies* we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son'. Rom 5:10. However, Christ's blood was not shed simply to cover our sins and to appease an angry God. Rather, it was shed for the purpose of atonement, or to redeem a people from the death of sin and to reconcile them back to the Father and to His purpose for their lives. In this regard, having established that mankind was reconciled to God while we were sinners, Paul was very clear

that we are saved only as we avail ourselves of the life that is in His blood. Rom 5:10.

The trespass offering ministers to us the opportunity to choose the redemption and reconciliation that Christ accomplished for us through the life in His blood. As we acknowledge that we are crucified with Christ and choose to suffer with Him, He priests to us a participation in the wounds through which His blood was shed. In the fellowship of these wounds, we are made complete for the works that the Father *prepared* for us, and the Son *finished* for us as He offered Himself by Eternal Spirit. Significantly, the blood is working in us what is well pleasing to the Father, through Jesus Christ. Heb 13:21. This is because our conscience, or the faculty of our spirit by which we know ourselves and can know the Lord, is being sprinkled clean so that we may serve the living God. Heb 9:14. Paul explained that it was for this reason that Christ is 'the Mediator of the New Covenant, by means of death [i.e. through the trespass offering]'. Heb 9:15.

In the fellowship of the trespass offering, Christ reconciles us to present us 'holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight'. Col 1:22. If we continue in faith, being grounded and steadfast in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, we are delivered from the way of living that causes reproach against the Father! Col 1:23. The purpose of this ministry is 'that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance', which is our sonship in the image and likeness of God. Heb 9:15.

Godly sorrow manifesting the excellencies of Christ

While the sorrow of the Son was fully manifested on the cross, mourning was essential to His earthly ministry. Through this sorrow, Christ manifested the virtues, or excellencies, of diligence, giving a defence, indignation, godly fear, desire, zeal and justice. 2Co 7:11. This was notable, for example, in Jesus' interactions with Mary and Martha. Jesus had fallen short of Martha's expectations of Him, evidenced by her saying, 'Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.' Joh 11:21-22. Jesus addressed both her former gospel and her unbelief by saying to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. *He who believes in Me*, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. *Do you believe this*?' Joh 11:25-26.

Although Martha confessed that she believed the words of Jesus, her actions belied her confession. She went her way and secretly called her sister, *falsely* saying to her, 'The Teacher has come and is calling for you.' Joh 11:28. This was a trespass. Lev 6:2. Like her sister, Mary also impugned the Son, saying that if He had come, her brother would not have died. Joh 11:32.

When Jesus heard these words and witnessed Mary's sorrow associated with His failure to meet her expectations, 'He groaned in the spirit and was troubled'. Joh 11:33. The original text of this statement communicates a sense of *indignation*, and even rage. As one commentator noted, the groaning of Jesus revealed a 'sharp admonition, in words of anger against a person, or in a physical shudder, answering to the intensity of the emotion'. This indignation was a fruit of godly sorrow. 2Co 7:11. Affirming the point, we note that after He had responded in this manner, 'Jesus wept'. Joh 11:35. The weeping of Jesus revealed that His indignation toward the unbelief of Martha, Mary, and those who gathered to the tomb of Lazarus *was the expression of mourning*.

Christ's sorrow was further manifested in advance of His offering journey when He lamented over Jerusalem. The Gospel of Luke recounted, 'Now as He drew near, He saw the city and *wept over it*, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation".' Luk 19:41-44. In this statement, we observe that the Son was not grieving because He had been personally hurt by the Jews. Rather, He was distressed by the death and destruction that would be wrought upon the people because they rejected His message.

Jesus grieved for this same reason in the course of His journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. As He carried His cross from the Praetorium to Golgotha, the women mourned and lamented Him. However, prophesying of the destruction of the city at the hands of Titus in AD70 because of the rebellion of the Jews, Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" For if they do these things in the green wood [while the Messenger of the Covenant is among them], what will be done in the dry?' Luk 23:28-31.

Mourning in the trespass offering

As we considered earlier, Christ priested, or offered, Himself as a trespass offering. This was manifested when He was lifted up on the cross and His heart was broken by our reproaches against the Father. This was the mourning of our great High Priest as He bore the Father's grief for the loss of His children, and mourned the eternal implications for mankind of being forsaken by God. Psa 22:1-2. Mat 27:46.

However, the Father was near to Him, for the Scriptures declare, 'The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.' Psa 34:18. Jesus was being saved by the life of the Father that was in His blood, through which He was being brought back from the death of sin. Heb 13:20. The breaking of Christ's heart as a trespass offering when His hands and feet were pierced through with the nails of reproach meant that the hearts of those who were illuminated to see that He was the embodiment of their sin, and of their exclusion from God, *could also be broken*.

We know that after Jesus had finished His offering, and had committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father, He breathed His last breath. Luk 23:46. The soldier pierced His side with a spear, causing blood, water, and a spirit of grace and supplication to flow from His side. Joh 19:34-37. Luke recorded that 'the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, *beat their breasts and returned*'. Luk 23:48. As they saw the river of the water of life flowing from Christ's side, they were illuminated to see what they had done to Christ. Their hearts were broken as they were joined to His heart, which had been broken in this wounding event. They were being delivered to choice, which was brought to bear on the Day of Pentecost.

Christ's mourning was not in vain but, rather, was in hope! It belonged to His travail as the Lamb of God and the Father's Seed. He sorrowed as the High Priest and the Shepherd of our souls for the purpose of accomplishing the redemption and recovery of a great multitude to their predestination as sons of God. This was the joy that was before His face as He 'endured the cross'. Heb 12:2. In this regard, the Son was the full expression of sowing in tears and reaping in joy. As the psalmist prophesied, 'Those who sow in tears [with mourning] shall reap in joy [offering the sacrifice of praise and giving thanks]. He who continually goes forth weeping [or mourning], bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.' Psa 126:5-6.

The grief of the watchmen

Those who lead in the church are called by Christ to be watchmen. Watchmen are ministers who have been restored to the fellowship of Christ's right hand. They have individually sorrowed in a godly manner as they have received the proceeding word and have looked on Him whom they have pierced. 1Jn 1:1. Their godly sorrow has led to repentance, and is bearing in them Christ's virtues of diligence, giving a defence, indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal and justice. 2Co 7:11. They are established in the fellowship of the trespass offering and can be sent by Christ to proclaim the message of the cross.

Watchmen proceed, with mourning, to proclaim the word of the cross. In the fellowship of the trespass offering, they are revealing the two dimensions of the Son's grief through which the reconciliation of God and mankind

was accomplished. Paul was referring to this ministry when he wrote, 'Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' 2Co 5:20-21. As watchmen, they proclaim the word of the cross so that their hearers might inquire, repent and return to Christ who is the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls. Isa 21:12.

In this regard, we note the example of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. Being full of the Holy Spirit, and enabled by the seven Spirits of God, Peter said to the multitude who were in Jerusalem, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, *whom you crucified*, both Lord and Christ.' Act 2:36. This was the ministry of the river of life that was flowing from Christ's side. Peter's hearers were caused to look on Christ, whose heart was broken when He was nailed to the cross by their reproaches. As they were joined to Christ's broken heart, they were themselves cut to the heart. They began to mourn, leading to repentance and faith for sonship in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, which is enabled by the Holy Spirit. Act 2:38.

Stephen is another example of a watchman whose proclamation of the gospel was a remarkable expression of the trespass offering. Notably, his ministry was a foretaste of the ministry of 'the 144 000' in the time of the end. We know that the people were also cut to the heart when they heard his message as he proclaimed, in a spirit of mourning, 'You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? *And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers*, who have received the Law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.' Act 7:51-53. They were looking on Christ, whom they had pierced, causing the breaking of His heart. However, instead of joining the grief of Christ, they resisted the grace of God and gnashed their teeth at Stephen. Act 7:54

Amazingly, Stephen, whose face had been shining like the face of an angel, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. Act 6:15. Act 7:55. He was witnessing the time of the end, when the Father takes His seat and the Son stands up from His throne. Stephen's disposition and countenance was foreshadowing the manifestation of the sons of God at this time as they go forth proclaiming the gospel of God to the whole world. Significantly, as he was being stoned, bearing Christ's reproach, Stephen cried out with a loud voice, ' "*Lord, do not charge them with this sin.*" When he had said this, he fell asleep [in Christ].' Act 7:60.

With these words, Stephen was ministering the grace of the trespass offering to the Jews, for this is what Jesus prayed as He was lifted up on

the cross. Luk 23:34. In particular, this grace was extended to a young man named Saul, who consented to Stephen's death. Act 7:58. Act 8:1. Through Stephen's prayer, in the fellowship of Christ's travail, Saul was caused to look on Him whom he had pierced through his religious zeal. He was ultimately delivered to a choice on the road to Damascus. Through godly sorrow, Saul, whose name was changed to Paul, was himself established in the fellowship of the trespass offering. This became the culture of His life and the manner of his ministry.

At the end of his life, when all the churches of Asia had departed from him, Paul, like Stephen, prayed for the Gentile churches from the fellowship of Christ's trespass offering. He wrote, 'At my first defence no-one stood with me, but all forsook me. *May it not be charged against them.*' 2Ti 4:16. Through this prayer, and his words of exhortation to Timothy, Titus, and other faithful men, the seven churches of Asia were recovered, even though they were quite mixed in their culture. Ever since Paul's initiative toward those whom God has called to be overseers in the church, there have been seasons of restoration and recovery, as well as seasons of loss and falling away, across the whole church age. However, in this day, the bride is presently in travail to bring forth a manchild administration that is suitable for the fullness of times. Eph 1:10. Rev 12:1-5.

The grief of those who look upon Christ

Earlier, we read that when the word of the cross is proclaimed to a hearer, a spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon them and they are caused to look on Christ, whose hands and feet were pierced by their reproaches against the Father. These are the reproaches that caused Christ's heart to break as He was lifted up on the cross. By grace, and through this illumination, their heart is joined to Christ's broken heart. That is, they are cut to the heart, exposing their heart to the eyes of Him to whom they must give an account, causing them to mourn. Heb 4:12-13.

There are two ways in which a person can mourn when they are caused, through the gospel, to look on Christ and to register that they are crucified, or cursed, with Him. They either join the sorrow of God as they acknowledge their reproaches against the Father, which nailed Christ to the cross; or they draw back in unbelief and endeavour to dismiss the messengers and their message. These two responses were exemplified by the two thieves who were crucified with Christ on the day that He was lifted up on Mount Calvary.

The first thief was grieving the death of God's firstborn Son and the associated loss of his self-defined image, expression and future. He drew back in unbelief as he witnessed Christ's crucifixion as the trespass offering. The thief's hopes and dreams were fading because the Man who had confessed that He was the Son of God was dying and was not preserving and verifying the

thief's self-definition. Revealing the expression of this worldly sorrow, he blasphemed the Lord, saying, 'If you are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' Luk 23:39.

The second thief demonstrated the mourning response that leads to salvation. He acknowledged that his sin, which was reproach against the Father, was the reason why Christ was crucified, and that he was justly crucified with Him. Having been illuminated in this manner, he made confession, saying to his companion, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Luk 23:40-41. This statement reveals the virtues of Christ that are exhibited by a person who is joined to His sorrow. In particular, through this thief's confession, he gave a defence of the gospel, demonstrated fear, and proclaimed the justice of God.

We note these two responses to the word of the cross in the contrasting responses of those who heard Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost and those who heard Stephen's words on the day of his death. Like the repentant thief, Peter's hearers, when they were cut to the heart, confessed their trespasses and sought fellowship to understand how they could be recovered to God's purpose for them in Christ. Stephen's hearers were also cut to the heart; however, in contrast, they grieved the loss of their own righteousness. Their grief, which was worldly sorrow, produced death as they forfeited their salvation and killed the messenger of the cross. 2Co 7:10.

The witness of water blood and Spirit

The water, blood and Spirit that flowed from Christ's side was the fruit of His heart that was broken by reproach. It was made available to us when Christ's side was pierced with a soldier's spear. John explained that the Son of God had come by water and by blood. He was emphasising that the ministry of the faith that the Son authored and finished for us, as He carried our names and finished our works on the cross, is the sum of His life poured out for us by the capacity of seven Spirits from the Holy Spirit. Specifically, he wrote, 'This is He who came [back from the death of sin and mortality] by water and blood – Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.' 1Jn 5:6.

The water and blood, by which Christ came back from the death of sin and mortality on the cross, enabled and ministered by the Spirit, *is the provision for new birth*. Christ's blood contained the light of life. Lev 17:11. Establishing this point, the apostle John explained, 'In Him was life and the life was the light of men.' Joh 1:4. Through this blood, which '*speaks* better things than that of Abel', a hearer is born to see the kingdom of God. Joh 3:3. Through the agency of water and the Spirit, they are born to enter the kingdom of God. Joh 3:5.

John then explained that there are Three who bear witness in heaven – the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and that they are One. 1Jn 5:7. These Names, or Lights, in heaven are symbolised by the sun, moon and stars. Importantly, the witness on earth was manifested as Christ poured out Himself on the cross. This is the ministry of water, blood and Spirit. As we receive this witness, we are established as sons of light and enter the rest that belongs to Their oneness in heaven. What is true in Them is true in us, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. 1Jn 2:8.

A fountain for sin and uncleanness

The prophet Zechariah revealed that this witness on earth was a fountain for sin, and for uncleanness, or trespasses. Zec 13:1. Notably, he then explained the effect of the ministry of this river when the word of the cross is received by a hearer. Christ, the Lord of hosts, declared, 'I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.' Zec 13:2.

The Lord was revealing that joining the mourning of the Son brings to a person deliverance from the idolatry that causes reproach against the Father. It also brings reformation in households as their familiar spirits are caused to depart from the ground of their houses.

Expressing the same zeal that brought forth this witness, the Lord said, 'I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; with great fervour I am zealous for her.' Zec 8:2. He explained that the recipient of this zeal, through fellowship in godly sorrow, is established in the fellowship of prayer. In relation to the implications of this zeal, He declared, 'The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "*Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD*, and seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also." Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to *pray before the LORD*.' Zec 8:21-22. They will be established in the culture of prayer that Jesus taught His disciples. Mat 6:9-14. We have considered this culture in Chapter 5.

He then said that in the days in which believers are established in this prayer fellowship, men from every language will take hold of a true Jew, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: in those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." ' Zec 8:23. The Lord was not referring to a Jew who is genetically authentic. The apostle Paul said, 'For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.' Rom 2:28-29. Jesus contrasted the true Jew with those who say they are Jews and are not. Rev 2:9. Rev 3:9. The false Jew belongs to the synagogue of Satan.

The point that the Lord was making, through the prophet Zechariah, is that a true Jew is one who is joined to the mourning of the Son in the trespass offering. Having made a good confession, they have been delivered from the idols of their heart and have a testimony in themselves of the reformation of their household. Significantly, they have been established by the Spirit in the intercession and travail of Yahweh's prayer meeting. Proceeding from this fellowship of prayer, to which they are joined in the trespass offering, they express the word of the cross. As they testify in this manner, many will take hold of them to receive their witness, and will be joined to the same cleansing, healing and reforming work of the cross.

Significantly, having this witness in themselves, they are overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and, by the capacity of the Spirit, laying down their life to the death. Rev 12:11. As their obedience is being fulfilled in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, Satan is being cast out of heaven and trampled under their feet. Rom 16:20.

We are to become watchmen in our houses. This happens because we mourn in our houses for the loss of Christ our Firstborn. We are acknowledging that the loss of our children was the fruit of our reproach of God the Father. The way in which we reared our children has been, for many, a reproach to the Father and His culture of discipline upon the Son, which was manifested in the cross. We have normalised the rebellion of our children against God and against our parenthood and, in doing so, have reproached the Father and the Son. If we fail to look on Christ whom we have pierced in this manner, we will remain asleep, or deceived, as were the foolish virgins. We will be like those who refused to gather to the *agape* feast that the Father has prepared for His Son as our Chief Joy.

The word of the cross is being ministered to us by the Holy Spirit through messengers in the right hand of Christ. It is being poured out as a river, causing us all to look on Him whom we have pierced, and to mourn as for a Firstborn Son. If we draw back in unbelief, we will forfeit our salvation. However, let us heed the exhortation of Paul who said, 'Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.' Heb 10:22-23.

Chapter Four

Participation in the trespass offering

Peter's trespass

During the fellowship of the *agape* meal in the upper room before His offering journey, Jesus said to the disciples, '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".' Mar 14:27. Jesus was saying that all the disciples would stumble over Him and would require participation in the trespass offering to be recovered. Peter immediately denied that he would stumble. He said, 'Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be.' Mar 14:29. As soon as Peter denied that he would stumble, he immediately stumbled into a trespass.

Peter had unintentionally sinned with his lips by swearing a rash and thoughtless vow. The Lord said to Moses regarding a trespass, 'If a person swears [a vow, or oath], *speaking thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good*, whatever it is that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it [it is unintentional] – when he realises it, then he shall be guilty in any of these matters.' Lev 5:4. Similarly, we read in the book of Proverbs, 'It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy, and afterward to reconsider his vows'. Pro 20:25.

As a watchman, Jesus continued to proclaim the word to Peter. He reproved him for his rash vow and bore witness to the truth. He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you

that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.' Mar 14:30. Notably, Peter did not turn at the reproof of Christ. Rather, he reinforced his rash vow by speaking even more vehemently, 'If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' Mar 14:31. Peter's rash vow 'to do good' as a religious zealot was a trespass.

In the court of Caiaphas, Peter stumbled into three further dimensions of trespass. First, when the chief priests and the Jewish council adjured the crowd to bring testimony against Jesus, he remained silent. Peter listened to all of the false testimonies against Jesus that did not agree with one another. Mar 14:56-59. He knew that they were false, but he refused to bear witness to the truth. In relation to this kind of trespass, the Lord said to Moses, 'If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath [in a trial], and is a witness [knows the truth], whether he has seen or known of the matter – *if he does not tell it*, he bears guilt.' Lev 5:1.

Second, Peter fell into the trespass of 'lying to his neighbour'. In relation to this kind of trespass, the Lord described the person who 'sins and commits a trespass by *lying to his neighbour* about what was delivered to him for safekeeping'. Lev 6:2. Peter lied to his neighbour on three occasions in the court of Caiaphas. His 'neighbour' included the servant girl and all those who stood alongside him, warming themselves by the fire in the courtyard of the high priest. Peter's religious projection as a religious zealot failed in the court of Caiaphas because he was afraid of humiliation. He was not willing to be identified with the reproach that Christ suffered at the hands of the religious leaders.

On the third occasion, when the crowd recognised his speech and knew that he was a Galilean, he also began to curse and swear. This was another example of a rash vow. As vehemently as Peter had sworn an oath that he would die for Christ, he vehemently swore an oath that he did not know the Man! Mar 14:71. When we view the whole situation as a package, we note that he was guilty of lying three times to his neighbour in the court of Caiaphas; and swearing a rash vow three times – twice in the upper room and once in the court of Caiphas. He had certainly stumbled into a trespass!

As soon as Peter had denied Christ for the third time, the rooster crowed for the second time. Mar 14:72. We read in the Gospel of Luke that the rooster crowed while Peter was still speaking to the crowd. Luk 22:60. At the same time, Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Luk 22:61. In the first case, when Jesus turned to look at Peter, He set *His face against him*. The eyes of Christ revealed His deep grief and righteous indignation toward Peter. Notably, when the eyes of Christ pierced the depths of Peter's heart, he immediately remembered the word that Christ had spoken to him.

When Peter remembered the word of Christ, he became aware of his own guilt in relation to his trespass. He understood that he was rightly under the judgement of God, because Christ had been bruised *because of his iniquity*. However, at the same time, he understood that Christ had borne his iniquity *as his trespass offering*. He saw that Christ was pioneering the pathway of his recovery from the trespass. Jesus had said to him, 'You cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.' Joh 13:36. This twofold illumination caused Peter to weep bitterly with godly sorrow *and with hope* for restoration as he returned to his house.

Peter's recovery

We read concerning the trespass offering, 'If a person commits a trespass, *and sins unintentionally* in regard to the holy things of the Lord, then he shall bring to the Lord as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering'. Lev 5:15. We know that the ram without blemish, which was caught by its horns in the thicket on Mount Moriah, was symbolic of Jesus Christ. The priests valued the life of Christ to be thirty pieces of silver when they paid Judas that amount in exchange for his agreement to deliver Jesus to them. Mat 26:15. Mat 27:9.

In relation to the trespass offering, the ram was offered by the priests for the sake of *making atonement* for the person, and the shekels of silver were given by the person to the priests for the purpose of *making restitution*. The Lord said to Moses, 'And he shall make restitution for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.' Lev 5:16. The trespass offering involved both *atonement* and *restitution*. The outcome of the trespass offering is *forgiveness*.

What did this recovery look like for Peter? We know that Jesus made atonement for Peter's trespass in the court of Caiaphas when He was bruised for his iniquity. The blood that was shed by Christ in the court of Caiaphas, which was still on His physical body when He was lifted up on the cross, was the full provision for his redemption. On the day of His resurrection, Jesus ministered the fruit of His atoning work to Peter and to the rest of the disciples when He declared, 'Peace be with you', and showed them His hands and His feet. Joh 20:19. Along with the other disciples, Peter was born again as a son of God on the day of Christ's resurrection.

However, it is important to recognise that there was *a further agape fellowship* that Peter needed to have with Christ to be recovered from his trespass, and to his mandate as a watchman. Specifically, over breakfast on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus met Peter in the fellowship of the *agape* meal that belongs to the trespass offering. During this conversation, Peter confessed that he did not

possess the *agape* love of God that was necessary for him to lay down his life for Christ or for his brethren. Joh 21:15-17. He had been delivered from the self-righteous zeal that had caused him to swear falsely in the upper room before Christ's offering journey.

Peter's honest confession in this *agape* meal enabled Christ to then 'feed' him with the word that defined his sanctification as an overseer in God's household. In this fellowship, Jesus was 'feeding' to Peter 'the scroll' that belonged to his mandate as a watchman. Peter, having sinned against the holy things of the Lord, now received Jesus' definition regarding how he would *make restitution* in relation to the people of God by fulfilling the works that Christ had accomplished for him on His offering journey. It was the zeal for the Lord's house, which was the fruit of his godly sorrow and repentance, that enabled Peter to make this restitution.

We have considered that the scroll that the Lord fed to the prophet Ezekiel contained 'lamentations, mourning, and woe'. Eze 2:10. Similarly, the mandate that Jesus fed to Peter on the shore of Galilee contained 'mourning, lamentations, and woe'. In relation to *mourning*, Peter became the face of Christ's administration to the entire crowd who had gathered to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost when He declared, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Act 2:36. Peter's message as a watchman on the Day of Pentecost caused a great crowd to be cut to the heart, and then to mourn with godly sorrow leading to repentance.

We know that Peter's mandate also included lamentations and woe. His ministry was rejected by many Jews who insisted on maintaining the Old Covenant regime of sacrifices and offerings at the temple in Jerusalem. This abomination resulted in the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans in AD70. Prior to this destruction, Peter led a believing remnant down to Babylon to find sanctuary as part of Christ's lampstand churches among the Gentile nations for the church age.

Like the prophet Ezekiel, the word of Christ regarding Peter's mandate was *sweet in his mouth*, but it became *bitter in his belly* when he joined the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as a watchman. Eze 3:3. Jesus had forewarned Peter that the word would be bitter in his belly when He said to him in the fellowship of the trespass offering, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' Joh 21:18.

Friendship in the trespass offering

Connection to the trespass offering in the cross of Christ reveals the nature of our *friendships*. Those who choose the redemption that is in Christ are reconciled to true Christian friendship. As we have considered, Peter's religious projection as a friend of Christ failed in the court of Caiaphas. Judas also considered himself to be a friend of Jesus. When Judas went to the garden of Gethsemane accompanied by the temple guards and the great multitude with swords and clubs, Jesus said to him, '*Friend*, why have you come?' Mat 26:50. Jesus also asked Judas, 'Are you betraying the Son of Man *with a kiss?*' Luk 22:48. This was the expression of a counterfeit friendship. We know that Judas betrayed Jesus for the sum of thirty pieces of silver. Mat 26:14-15.

Such false expressions of friendship belonged to an alternative spirit among the disciples, who remained ignorant of the necessity for Christ's crucifixion. Jesus highlighted this reality when James and John asked Him if He wanted them to command fire to come down from heaven to consume the Samaritans who had rejected Him. Luk 9:51-54. Accordingly, He turned and rebuked them, saying, 'You do not know *what manner of spirit you are of*. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.' Luk 9:55-56. This alternative spirit was further evident as the disciples argued among themselves as to who was the greatest of them. Mar 9:33-34. Luk 22:24-30.

As we consider the nature of friendship in our marriage, in our family, and in the church, we are being caused to consider *what spirit we are of.* Are we empowered over and against others through association with the word? Or do we claim to be the greatest in the various relational contexts of our life through the way in which we expect to be heard and received by others? Our only deliverance from fallen friendship is through fellowship in the trespass offering of the cross.

In the court of Caiaphas, Peter met Christ eye to eye, and his iniquitous, self-righteous zeal, which informed his claims of friendship, was broken. Peter went out to his house and wept bitterly. His heart was broken in the fellowship of Christ's broken heart, manifested when He was nailed on the cross. Now Peter was able to believe to join the fellowship of *Christ's crucifixion*, which is the manifestation of the trespass offering. This happened when he was born again on the day of Christ's resurrection, and was then recovered to *true friendship* with Christ through the fellowship of the trespass offering in the context of an *agape* meal on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

We recall that Jesus said to Peter at the last supper, '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 [as My friend], strengthen your brethren [as their friend].' Luk 22:31-32. Significantly, during the *agape* meal on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus asked Peter,

'Are you My friend?' He said to him, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these [or with the greater love of friendship]?' Joh 21:15. In response to Peter's confession, which demonstrated that he had become bankrupt in spirit, Christ established Peter in the fellowship of His offering, which defined the pathway of his sanctification. Joh 21:18. Peter was established in true friendship through sanctification.

In contrast, when Jesus looked at Judas in the court of Caiaphas, Judas drew back in unbelief. He was not joined to the broken heart of Christ that was revealed when Christ was nailed to the cross by reproach. Instead, Judas *hanged himself on a tree* in self-justifying penance under his own judgement – that is, according to his other law and driven by the law of sin. Notably, his innermost being gushed out in his penance. This happened when he fell headlong, which caused his body to burst open so that his bowels gushed out of his body. Act 1:18. The money of the trespass offering – the coinage of betrayal – was used to buy the potter's field. Judas had become another vessel; that is, a vessel of judgement. With this legacy, the field became known as 'the Field of Blood' to all who dwelt in Jerusalem. Act 1:19. Mat 27:6-8. The name and use of the field expressed his outcome.

The acceptable time for fellowship in the trespass offering

James and Paul both highlighted the necessity for recovery from trespasses in the fellowship of the *agape* meal in the New Covenant. James said, '*Confess your trespasses* to one another, and pray for another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.' Jas 5:16. The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, 'If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ'. Gal 6:1-2.

When Paul said that we must 'bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the Law of Christ', he was saying that there is a New Covenant application of the fellowship of the trespass offering. We need to understand how the law of the trespass offering has been caught up into the Law of Christ in the New Covenant. The principle of bearing another's burden has a specific application for watchmen. Christ asks every watchman to join the fellowship of His sufferings for the sake of proclaiming the word of present truth to all those who have stumbled into iniquity or have been caught in a trespass.

When a person receives the word of a watchman, the conviction of the Holy Spirit enables them to meet Christ eye to eye. This illumination and conviction will lead to godly sorrow which produces repentance. The fruit of their repentance and faith will be their willingness to make 'a good confession' in the fellowship of the *agape* meal, and to entreat the discussion among their brethren that is necessary to ensure that they are properly aligned with their

sanctification. For a man who is being called to be a watchman, this discussion must happen in the fellowship of the presbytery.

The important point about this fellowship is that it must happen in *the right context* and within *the acceptable time* that has been prescribed by the Lord. The trespass offering was described as 'most holy'. Lev 7:1. It was required to be eaten by the priests *in a holy place*. Lev 7:6. The book of Leviticus does not identify the specific timeframe for eating the sin and trespass offering. However, it is reasonable to assume that it needed to be eaten on the same day that it was offered, because there was no provision for an extension of time. Jewish oral law required the sin and trespass offering to be eaten by midnight on the day that it was offered.

Similarly, if the peace offering was a thanksgiving, it needed to be eaten on the same day that it was offered. Lev 7:15. It could not be left until the morning. If the peace offering was the fulfilment of a vow or a freewill offering, it was acceptable to eat the remaining portion on the following day. Lev 7:16. However, if any flesh of the peace offering remained until the third day, it needed to be burned with fire. The Lord said, 'If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be imputed to him; it shall be an abomination to him who offers it, and the person who eats of it shall bear guilt.' Lev 7:18.

The key point is that the *agape* fellowship in relation to all of the offerings needed to *take place within the acceptable time*. If the fellowship did not happen in the required time, then the person's offering was not accepted by God. Remarkably, if the person's offering was not accepted by God, then they also lost what had previously been *imputed to them* because of their faith in Christ's atoning work as their sin and trespass offering. That is, they lost their forgiveness and came under the condemnation of judgement. Any further presumption upon the trespass offering became an abomination to the Lord.

With this sobering point in view, the psalmist declared, 'But as for me, my prayer is to You, O Lord, *in the acceptable time*; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, hear me in the truth of Your salvation.' Psa 69:13. The Lord declared through Isaiah the prophet, 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you; I will preserve you and give you as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages.' Isa 49:8. This is the mandate that belongs to watchmen. The apostle Paul quoted this same passage in his letter to the Corinthians. Speaking as a watchman who was declaring the word of present truth, he then proclaimed, 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' 2Co 6:2.

The sin of a presbyter against the holy things

What does it mean for a presbyter to 'sin in relation to the holy things'? Jesus addressed this issue when He identified the mandate that belongs to an overseer in the household of God. He said, 'Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler [an overseer] over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?' Luk 12:42. The work of an overseer within the fellowship of a presbytery is to proclaim the word of present truth to the sons of God who belong to the household of God. Pro 15:23. We recall that Jesus said to Peter, 'Feed My sheep.' Joh 21:17.

With this mandate in view, Jesus proceeded to identify *four kinds of presbyters*. He referred to the first kind of presbyter by saying, 'Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.' Luk 12:43-44. The reward for the overcoming presbyters in Christ's lampstand churches will be rulership in the kingdom of God as part of the one, worldwide presbytery that will be established for the time of the end. Jesus said to the presbytery in Laodicea, 'To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.' Rev 3:21.

Jesus described the second kind of presbyter by saying, 'But if that servant says in his heart, "My master is delaying in coming" and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.' Luk 12:45-46. A corrupt presbyter will begin to view the members of God's household as a resource that can be utilised to facilitate his own ministry. Rather than feeding the flock, he will begin to devour the resources that belong to the flock for the purpose of feeding his own ministry projection.

When a presbyter becomes corrupt in this manner, it does not mean that they were always corrupt. They most likely began with sincere intentions to serve the Lord. However, as soon as a presbyter ceases from walking in the light of the word of present truth with their brethren, they will begin to draw back into darkness, and the Lord will ultimately deliver them over to their corruption. When this happens, they are like a 'drunkard' whose spiritual senses have become so dull that they are not aware of their corruption until Jesus Christ suddenly cuts them in two and assigns them their portion with the unbelievers. This evidently refers to eternal damnation in the lake of fire.

Jesus described the third kind of presbyter by saying, 'And that servant who knew his master's will, and *did not prepare himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes.' Luk 12:47. This kind of servant is different from the servant who was guilty of beating his fellow servants or was eating and drinking with drunkards. The sin of the third kind of presbyter is the fact

that he knows the Master's will, and he is not ready or prepared to perform it. His lack of preparation reflects his lack of willingness. He has chosen to remain ambivalent in relation to the task of proclaiming the word of present truth as a watchman.

What does his lack of preparation look like? It will be his unwillingness to 'eat' the word of present truth that is sweet in his mouth, but is then bitter in his belly. A man's willingness to allow the word to process him so that it becomes real in his life and family is the necessary preparation for him to fulfil his mandate as a watchman who proclaims the word of present truth. If a man is not willing to eat the word with which the Lord feeds him, he will devour the word by using it as a resource. He will invariably begin to proclaim another gospel that has no capacity to feed the sons of God who belong to his household.

It is sobering to consider that the presbyter who is unwilling to prepare himself in the fellowship of the presbytery, for the sake of his own obedience as a watchman, will be beaten with *many* stripes if he does not repent. In contrast to the *few* stripes that belong to the chastening of the Lord, the many stripes belong to the condemnation of the world. Luk 12:47. We can compare the judgement of the arrogant servant in this parable with the judgement of the sophisticated and ambivalent presbyters in Laodicea. Jesus said, 'Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.' Rev 3:16.

In contrast, Jesus described the fourth kind of presbyter by saying, 'But he *who did not know*, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with a *few*. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.' Luk 12:48. This is the man who has been unintentionally remiss in relation to his mandate as a watchman. He has unknowingly allowed the word of present truth to be devoured by those who proclaim other gospels; or he has unknowingly allowed the drunkard to devour the resources that belong to 'the little ones' in the household of God.

For this presbyter, the few stripes belong to his fellowship in the trespass offering of Christ. The trespass offering is the provision for his personal recovery. It aligns him to his sanctification. However, more than this, his fellowship in the trespass offering of Christ is the context in which he is joined to the iniquity of those to whom he must proclaim the word as a watchman. It is also the context in which he receives the grace of Christ's resurrection life that is necessary for him to fulfil this mandate. From this perspective, the apostle Paul testified, 'I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.' Col 1:24-25.

Receiving the zeal of the Lord

When we consider the principle of *restitution* that belongs to the trespass offering in the New Covenant, we are not referring to any action of penance. Restitution is not a self-righteous action that a person who is guilty of a trespass undertakes for the purpose of 'making amends' or 'rectifying the wrong'. Penance produces only dead works. Rather, true restitution is *the fruit of repentance* that has been produced in us by godly sorrow. We engage with the principle of restitution in the fellowship of the trespass offering as we walk on the pathway of faith-obedience that Christ has pioneered for us as the pathway of our salvation.

In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul described the fruit of godly sorrow in our lives by saying, '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. When we have looked upon Jesus Christ whom we have pierced, in the fellowship of the trespass offering, we are delivered from our own *self-righteous zeal* that motivates the actions of penance. Godly sorrow produces *a new kind of zeal* in our life, which is the zeal that belongs to Christ.

The zeal that belongs to Christ is the expression of His jealous love toward the sanctification, fellowship and culture of God's household. When the zeal of the Lord is produced in us, it is expressed by our love for our own sanctification, our love for our brethren, and our love for Christ's messengers who proclaim the word of the cross to us. Having proclaimed the word of the cross to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul was comforted by their response. He said that Titus 'told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, *your zeal for me*, so that I rejoiced even more'. 2Co 7:7. The zeal of Christ that was expressed by the Corinthians as the fruit of their godly sorrow ministered comfort to the apostle Paul because it belonged to the fellowship of Christ's travail.

The godly zeal of the Corinthians was expressed by their earnest desire for fellowship with Paul and by their eagerness to walk in the light of the word of present truth that defined the pathway of their faith-obedience. Paul rejoiced that they demonstrated the same eagerness to receive Titus as a messenger. He wrote concerning Titus, 'His affections are greater for you as he remembers *the obedience of you all*, how with fear and trembling you received him'. 2Co 7:15. We note the distinction between *godly zeal,* which is demonstrated through faith-obedience, and *carnal zeal* which is the self-righteous expression of our own thoughts, initiatives, works and direction. A religious zealot has no capacity to be obedient to the word of Christ.

In contrast to a religious zealot, a believer who is resting in Christ's love, having ceased from their own self-defined works, is *hot* with the zeal of the Lord, being

motivated by the Holy Spirit. This is an implication of having been baptised with the Holy Spirit and with fire. As John the Baptist declared, 'His winnowing fan is in His hand, and *He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor*, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' Mat 3:12. This same zeal was on display when Jesus made a whip of cords and drove the merchants and money changers, and the livestock, from the temple. The disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up'. Joh 2:15-17. Psa 69:9.

As we have considered in Chapter 1, the prophet Ezekiel testified of receiving and joining the zeal of the Lord. He was directed by the Lord to eat a scroll that he received from a hand that was stretched out to him. 'Lamentation, mourning and woe' were written on the inside and the outside of the scroll. Eze 2:9-10. This scroll, containing the word of the Lord proceeding from His hand, was sweet in Ezekiel's mouth. Eze 3:3. Significantly, it established him in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, for the Lord made Ezekiel's face and forehead 'like flint'. Eze 3:8-9. By faith, Ezekiel was joined to Christ who, having set His own face like flint, despised the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Isa 50:7. Heb 12:2. Ezekiel testified, saying, 'The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the *heat of my spirit*; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.' Eze 3:14.

Becoming hot and cold

When Jesus rebuked the presbytery and lampstand church in Laodicea, He said, 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; *I wish that you were cold or hot*.' Rev 3:15. It is important for us to understand why Jesus desires us to be cold and why He desires us to be hot. Although a son of God who enters Christ's rest is hot with the zeal of the Lord, which 'eats them up', they also find rest in the heat of opposition as they drink the cool and refreshing waters of the Spirit. A believer drinks of chilled streams as they pray in the Holy Spirit, thereby receiving refreshing. As King David prophetically testified, 'The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still [lit: quiet, resting place] waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.' Psa 23:1-3.

Receiving and joining the zeal of the Lord, and partaking of the refreshing waters of the Spirit in the heat of opposition, is how a believer is *both* hot *and* cold as a disciple of Christ. This is what the presbytery and church in Laodicea were being called to by Christ as described in the book of Revelation. Rev 3:15. A believer is hot because they eat the word that comes from the hand of Christ. By the zeal of the Lord, they turn from their own ways and are resolute in their commitment to the culture of God's house. They are cold because they drink of living water, which is seven Spirits, ministered by the Holy Spirit. They are able to minister this grace as a cup of cool water to others, for Jesus said,

'Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of *cold water* in the name of a disciple [or, as a disciple], assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.' Mat 10:42.

The presbyters and church in Laodicea were *lukewarm*. Rev 3:16. Their culture was mixed, indicating, in the first instance, that their zeal was not the expression of faith that is received by hearing the word of God that is proclaimed by ascension-gift messengers in the right hand of Christ. Therefore, they were not receiving Christ. Their self-righteous zeal was not according to the knowledge that is received only by turning in response to the word to meet Christ eye to eye in the fellowship of the trespass offering. Rather, without this knowledge, they endeavoured to establish their own righteousness. Rom 10:2-3. They were sophisticated, and had departed from the simplicity of offering in the fellowship of the presbytery, which is fellowship with the Father and the Son. 1Jn 1:1-3.

Likewise, they had spurned the refreshing that belongs to entering Christ's rest, because they were not receiving living water. They may have spoken with the tongues of men and angels, but they were disconnected from the fellowship of one Spirit in the presbytery. They were not at rest in Christ's love, which was extended to them through the ministry of Christ's ascension-gift graces. 1Co 13:1. Notably, they had no testimony of reformation in their *marriages* and *houses* through discipleship. In this regard, we remember Christ's instruction to the woman in Sychar, when He said, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' Joh 4:13-14. The first implication of drinking this water was a conversation about the woman's relationships with others, particularly in her failed marriages.

The nature of their conversation and conduct in the presbytery and in the church demonstrated how the Laodiceans *were saying*, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.' Rev 3:17. Evidently, their food and drink did not belong to the *agape* meal of the Father and the Son. They were not entering God's rest through faith, even though they were confident in their assessments of themselves and of others, and were confident in their own expression in the presbytery and ministry in the church. For this reason, Christ Himself warned them that He would 'vomit them out of His mouth'. Rev 3:16. By exhorting them to be zealous and to repent, He was asking them to receive and to eat the scroll of the word that He was extending to them through His messengers, and to become hot with the zeal of the Lord. Likewise, He was compelling them to become disciples who find rest and refreshing as they drink from the cool waters that belong to the river of the water of life.

Chapter Five

Implications of participation in the cross

A key implication of our fellowship in the trespass offering is the restoration and establishment of marriages in the image intended by God. This restoration requires the application of the blood of Christ to each individual and to a couple so that they can be saved by the life in His blood. Rom 5:10. The application of the blood that belongs to the fellowship of the trespass offering is dependent upon our willingness to make a good confession regarding our default relational mode. 1Jn 1:7-9. When the word of God is preached to us, by the Holy Spirit, through the messengers of Christ, it is the illumination and conviction of the Holy Spirit that enables both a man and a woman to make this good confession.

A good confession is the confession of the truth. It is the expression that belongs to a person who has become bankrupt in spirit. It is the evidence that a person has been illuminated to see the heights of their calling and the depths of their own iniquity. This is true for both a man and a woman in relation to their marriage covenant. Regarding the heights of our calling in marriage, the apostle Paul declared, 'For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man'. 1Co 11:7.

Every man is called to reveal the glory of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, who is the image and glory of God, in his marriage. A man receives the reflection of who he has been named to be as a son of God by the Father, from the face of Christ. The glory of God shines from the face of Christ to every man when the word of God is proclaimed by the Holy Spirit through the messengers of Christ in His right hand. 2Co 4:5-6. This headship ministry is the gift of Christ to the man, that then comes through the woman who is the glory of her husband as she reveals his new-creation name and brings forth sons of God.

The good confession of a man in relation to his default mode

Immediately after the Fall, the eyes of Adam and his wife were opened. They became aware of the shame of their nakedness because they had been alienated from the life of God. Gen 3:10. Eph 4:18. However, this awareness did not lead them to a good confession. Rather, Adam and his wife worked together to make fig leaves for themselves to cover the shame of their nakedness. Gen 3:7. It was mutually beneficial for them to avoid humiliation. When they heard the Lord walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, they hid themselves among the trees of the garden.

The Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?' Gen 3:9. This cry was the expression of the deep anguish and grief of the Father in relation to the loss of the whole human race. As the harbinger of the word of the cross, this word was evidently accompanied by a spirit of grace and supplication, that drew Adam and his wife from their hiding place among the trees, to engage in a conversation with the Lord regarding their trespass and the cause of their fallen condition.

Adam began by describing to the Lord the reason that he had been hiding among the trees. He said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself'. Gen 3:10. This was an honest, insightful, and accurate appraisal of his behaviour. However, Adam's ability to articulate the reason for his fallen behaviour did not yet constitute a good confession. As helpful as it may have been for him to understand the reason behind his actions, it had no capacity to deliver him to the fellowship of the trespass offering.

The Lord asked Adam directly whether he had been disobedient by eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The conviction of the Holy Spirit in relation to this word enabled Adam to make a good confession. He responded to the Lord's word by saying, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate'. Gen 3:12. When Adam made this statement, he was not simply trying to shift the blame for the Fall onto his wife, or, by inference, onto the Lord Himself because He was the One who had given her to him. *Rather, Adam was confessing his disobedience.*

Adam's statement was the good confession of the first man, in relation to the Fall, that must become the good confession of every man in relation to his own fallen marriage covenant. When a man loses his rib, and he is then placed under the right kind of pressure from his wife to embrace her fallen perspective, every man's default is to turn away from the face of Christ and to look into the face of his wife. No man wants to admit to this. However, this is the default for all men because every man is afraid of humiliation.

Speaking of the humiliation of Christ on the cross, Isaiah said, 'In His humiliation His [right to] justice was taken away [from Him]'. Act 8:33. Isa 53:7-8. Men are afraid of humiliation because their self-righteousness is caught up in their claimed right of justice. A man will defend this right as a masculine identity expression. This motivation can make him a zealot. A zealot believes in their own capacity to establish their own true cause and guard the justice of their position.

To understand this default response, we need to consider the truth of Adam's statement regarding the woman. The Lord had indeed given the woman to Adam to be with him. In his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul reminded us that the woman was made from the man. 1Co 11:8. She was formed from the rib that was taken from his inner person. Furthermore, Paul said that the woman was made for the man. 1Co 11:9. She was given to the man to be his comparable helper.

When the Lord brought the woman to him, Adam declared, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man'. Gen 2:23. From that point, the glory of the man was to be revealed through the woman. Paul said, 'For as the woman came from the man, even so man also comes through woman, but all things are from God'. 1Co 11:12. When Adam lost his rib, that is, his comparable helper, he lost the capacity for expression and multiplication through the woman.

Adam lost his rib when his wife was drawn into an alternative conversation with the serpent at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Acknowledging that the Lord had given the woman to him to be with him, and then that he had lost her, was the first part of his confession. The second part of his confession was that, when she presented him with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he accountably chose to receive it from her hand and then to eat it. Adam was not deceived; *he was disobedient*. 1Ti 2:14.

When Adam received the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from his wife, he let go of the faith that he received from the proceeding word of God at the tree of life each day. This action revealed the first dimension that belongs to the fallen default of a man, which is 'doubting'. When Adam drew back in unbelief, under pressure from his wife, he profaned the Father's holy institution and he dealt treacherously with his wife. Mal 2:2. He also

dishonoured Christ who was his Head and the One who had authored the works of his obedience.

When the woman fell into transgression, Adam could have brought her to the tree of life to engage the fellowship of the trespass offering. The woman could have been delivered from her deception and reconciled to the Lord at the tree of life, and they could have been reconciled as husband and wife in relation to their marriage covenant. However, Adam let go of faith and chose disobedience rather than walking in the light of fellowship at the tree of life. He drew back in unbelief because he was unwilling to join the reproach of Christ in the fellowship of the trespass offering.

The transgression of the woman was a reproach against Christ because it was a reproach against Adam. The apostle Paul taught that if a woman prays or prophesies with her head uncovered, then she dishonours her head – that is, her husband. 1Co 11:5. By normalising the dishonour, Adam chose to stand with his wife, rather than with Christ. He also chose to avoid the reproach that would have occurred if he had refused to embrace her projection. He chose to maintain the peace in his marriage, rather than pursue true reconciliation in the fellowship of the trespass offering.

Furthermore, Adam chose to avoid the perceived shame, humiliation and reproach of his position, and his inability to establish himself in a justified position. He, therefore, did not bring his failed marriage to the Lord at the tree of life. He was unwilling to walk in the light, with the simple confession, 'I have a problem with my marriage'. Rather, he believed that he could fix the problem himself. Perhaps Adam believed that he would lose his mandate over creation because he had lost his rib. In reality, he lost his mandate because he drew back in unbelief from the fellowship of the tree of life. It was his disobedience to Christ that caused the entire creation to be cut off from the life of God and for all his children to be lost to God.

We observe the same default of man when we consider the behaviour of Peter in the garden of Gethsemane and then in the court of Caiaphas. In the garden, Jesus invited Peter, James, and John to join the fellowship of His prayer meeting. He said to them, 'Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Mat 26:41. Jesus was referring to the temptation of drawing back in unbelief from the fellowship of Christ's reproach, when under pressure, in the same way that Adam drew back in unbelief in the beginning.

When the temple soldiers, along with a great multitude of people with swords and clubs, came to arrest Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, Peter was more than willing to fight for Jesus. He immediately drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Joh 18:10. It is remarkable that Peter was willing to die for Jesus as a religious zealot in the garden of

Gethsemane, but his fear of humiliation caused him to deny that he even knew Jesus, three times, in the court of Caiaphas. Luk 22:56-60. It is impossible for a religious zealot to join the reproach of Christ.

Jesus knew that Peter's religious projection as a zealot would fail in the court of Caiaphas. He had previously said to Peter at the last supper, '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. The faith that Peter had received from Christ during His earthly ministry did not fail. When Jesus looked at him in the court of Caiaphas, Peter did not recoil in self-condemnation.

Rather, Peter went to his house mourning and believing for restoration in the fellowship of the trespass offering. We know that Peter returned to Christ with a good confession on the shore of Galilee. In the fellowship of the trespass offering, Jesus recovered Peter to the sanctification that belonged to his name as a shepherd and overseer among the Lord's people. Notably, Peter stumbled a second time, and he needed to be recovered by Paul, when he drew back in unbelief under the pressure of the Judaizers in Antioch.

The good confession of a woman in relation to her default mode

Once Adam had made a good confession, the Lord turned His attention to the woman. He said to her, 'What is this you have done?' The woman replied, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' Gen 3:13. When the woman made this statement, she was not simply shifting the blame onto the serpent. She was acknowledging the truth of what had happened. This was also a good confession. The woman was saying, 'I was deceived by the serpent'. In his letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul said, 'Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression'. 1Ti 2:14.

The woman began to fall into transgression when she allowed herself to be drawn away from the fellowship of the tree of life and into an alternative conversation with the serpent. The serpent undermined her trust in God, and particularly the integrity of the word that she had received from her husband in relation to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The word of Satan caused her senses to become distorted. When she looked at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she believed that it was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise. Gen 3:6.

We have considered this point many times. However, it is still not possible for a woman to acknowledge that a deceived position is her default without the illumination and conviction of the Holy Spirit. A woman may readily confess her anxiety as a default mode that compels her to take control of her marriage or circumstances. However, recognising the problem of control that is motivated by anxiety, is not the same as acknowledging the deception. That is,

a woman may recognise that her anxiety is an unhelpful mode, while still believing that she has the right outcome in view.

Let us consider this in more detail. The Lord described the enmity that exists in every marriage by saying to the woman, 'Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you'. Gen 3:16. Until a woman has been illuminated to see that she is called to reveal the glory of her husband's name, she will desire to redefine her husband into the man she believes that he needs to be for their marriage and household. Her expectations will often be informed by the word of God. When he does not meet her expectations, she will view herself as the victim of his inadequacies.

When a woman expresses her expectations and judgements to her husband, it places him in a difficult position. Unless he has been delivered from his default by looking into the face of Christ, he will either acquiesce to her demands and come under her direction, or he will react against her. In both cases, his responses are the consequence of looking into her face and forsaking the word of his obedience that shines from the face of Christ. 2Co 4:6. The default for a man is 'wrath and doubting'. When a woman articulates a man's inadequacies, it will cause him to react because he does not know how to deal with the humiliation. When the man reacts, the woman will then view herself as the victim of his reaction.

We note that the Lord spoke this word to the woman because it is necessary for every woman to be illuminated regarding the enmity that is caused in her marriage because of the expression of her desire toward her husband. However, this illumination alone is not the good confession that belongs to a woman who is bankrupt in spirit. It is another step for a woman to accept that her expectations, which belong to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, are the fruit of her deception.

When a woman becomes bankrupt in spirit, she will no longer view herself as the victim of her husband's inadequacies. She will let go of her views and judgements that belong to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Rather, the faith of the Son of God that she receives from the proceeding word of God that is proclaimed to her from the tree of life, working by the love that she possesses as a son of God who has been born of the divine nature, will enable her to reveal the glory of the new-creation name that belongs to her husband.

The apostle Peter noted that a godly woman is able to reveal the glory of her husband's new-creation name, even if her husband is not obedient to the word. 1Pe 3:1-2. This is possible because Christ has fulfilled all the works that belong to the man's name. The word of Christ gives a woman the faith and grace that is necessary for her to walk as a comparable helper to her husband, despite the lack of direction from him. If she remains faithful to her mandate, rather

than usurping the role that belongs to her husband, she will also sanctify her children as a godly mother. 1Co 7:14.

The rib from Christ's broken heart

Marriage in the image intended by God requires the establishment of a particular bond between a spiritual man and a spiritual woman. In the first marriage, this bond was typified by a rib that was taken from Adam's side and was then formed by the Lord God into a helper who was comparable to the man. The first man named her 'Woman' because 'she was taken out of Man'. Gen 2:21-23.

The marriage of Adam and Eve was a type of the marriage of Christ and His bride, the church. Rom 5:14. Eph 5:31-32. The rib, from which a bride was formed and betrothed to the Son, was the water, blood and Spirit that flowed from His side after it was pierced with a soldier's spear. Joh 19:34-37. This 'rib' was the fruit of the travail that belonged to Christ's crucifixion as a trespass offering. Significantly, the betrothal of Christ and the church, established by the fulfilment of the trespass offering on Calvary, reveals the provision for, and process of, betrothal for a man and a woman in the New Covenant.

In Chapter 2, we understood that Christ was manifest as the trespass offering when He was crucified. Our reproaches against the Father, which were laid on Christ, were the nails that secured Him to the cross. As the cross was lifted up and dropped into the ground, Christ was poured out like water as His bones were dislocated and His heart was broken. Detailing this aspect of Christ's offering, King David wrote, 'I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me [in the midst of My bowels]' and 'Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness'. Psa 22:14. Psa 69:20.

While Christ's bones were not broken, their dislocation and its connection to His broken heart is significant. Christ's heart is the place of His innermost being, which was given to form His church. As His physical heart failed and His rib bone was dislocated, this revealed the nature of the rib from which His bride was formed by the Father. This happened after His side was pierced with the soldier's spear. John bore witness that the elements of blood, water and the Spirit flowed from Christ's innermost being. Joh 19:34-37. 1Jn 5:8. This was the provision for new birth and the new marriage covenant between Christ and the church as His bride.

This principle helps us to understand the nature of the rib that was taken from Adam and was formed into 'woman', as well as the rib that is foundational to establishing a marriage covenant through the process of betrothal. To understand this process, and its connection to the

trespass offering, let us compare the marriages of Adam and Eve with Abraham and Sarah.

Marriage reformation through the trespass offering – Abraham and Sarah

When the Lord removed a rib from Adam to form a helper comparable to him, it was more than just a bone. The Lord was taking something that belonged to Adam's innermost being. Adam said she was 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh'. Gen 2:23. We note that Adam made a distinction between 'bones and flesh', indicating that she was of his person. He named her 'Woman' because 'she was taken out of Man'. Gen 2:23. The Hebrew word for 'Man' in this statement refers to his *identity* as a male. The apostle Paul said that the woman was 'of' the man and created 'for' the man. 1Co 11:8-9.

The name 'Woman' corresponds with the name 'Sarai'. Both women were wives, but they were unable to bear children until they received new names. In the case of Adam's wife, this happened following the Fall when, through the provision of the Lamb of God, Adam changed the woman's name to Eve, meaning, 'Life'. Gen 3:20. Similarly, after the Lord changed Abram's name to Abraham by giving to him a portion of His own name, *Yah*, He directed Abraham to rename Sarai as Sarah. Abraham did this by giving to Sarai the same portion of Yahweh's name as he had received. She was then able to bring forth the child of promise.

This process of naming, and the capacity for spiritual fruitfulness in the house of Abraham and Sarah, depended upon their connection, by faith, to the trespass offering of Christ, revealed in the cross. As we have been considering, the word of the cross causes us to be illuminated to the crucifixion of Christ. Christ's crucifixion joins us to the grief and mourning of the Son. This is necessary to establish a couple as friends in their marriage and among their extended family. From the fruit of this bond, they are able to bring forth godly seed. Mal 2:15.

We can observe two aspects of mourning in relation to marriage in the two occasions that Sarah was identified as Abraham's sister. In the first instance, Abram and Sarai went to Egypt because of a severe famine in the land. Egypt is symbolic of the world. On this occasion, Abram asked Sarai to say that she was his sister, stating 'that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I [lit: my soul] may live because of you'. Gen 12:13. It was Sarai who needed to make this statement, *alone*. No doubt this was a grief for them both. However, she distinguished herself from the world, learning to submit to Abram without any fear or terror.

Although they were separated from the world as a couple, they were not yet one Spirit. We know this because Sarai took it upon herself to suggest the union of Abram and Haggai, to bring to pass, through her wisdom, God's word to Abram concerning fatherhood. In this regard, her actions were not dissimilar to the Woman's, who took the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and gave it to her husband, Adam. The apostle Paul explained that this relational dynamic between Abraham and Sarah produced a child who was born according to the flesh. Gal 4:29.

The second expression of mourning occurred after Abram and Sarai had received new names. Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless'. Gen 17:1. As we have already noted, He then gave to Abram a portion of His own name, *Yah*, changing his name to Abraham. Abraham figuratively received the name that was made available when Christ's side was pierced and the water, blood and Spirit that was poured out when He was crucified, began to flow as a river. Circumcision was given to Abraham as a sign of his connection to the crucifixion of Christ.

Connected in this way to the trespass offering, Abraham then gave to Sarai the same portion of Yahweh's name that he had received. Together, they were now one 'man' walking blamelessly together before the Lord by the faith of the Son of God. Gal 2:20. The name that belonged to Abraham's identity was the rib that enabled them to be one Spirit together. They were made one in order to bring forth the child of promise, who was to be born according to the Spirit. Mal 2:15. Gal 4:29.

Following this encounter, and not long after the Lord declared that Abraham and Sarah would have a child, Abraham journeyed to the South. This time, instead of asking Sarah to say that she was his sister, Abraham himself said to Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, 'She is my sister'. Gen 20:2. He did this as a prophet. Gen 20:7. The Philistines lived in the land of promise and are symbolic of the world in the church. Abimelech took Sarah as his wife, for through regeneration, in preparation for motherhood, she was very beautiful.

Sarah's separation from Abraham was a grief that belonged to a new aspect of mourning. Her mourning, in the fellowship of the trespass offering, manifested the virtues of the fear and zeal of God and vindication. By this means, she became the expression of the prophetic initiative of her husband. On account of Sarah, the fruitfulness of Abimelech and his harem was completely impeded. Abimelech was unable to father children, and all his wives were unable to conceive. The fruitfulness of this mixed 'congregation' was brought to an end. Significantly, Abimelech gave a thousand pieces of silver to Sarah to 'justify her'. Gen 20:16. This silver represented the restitution needed for a trespass offering. Lev 5:15.

In this event, Sarah typified the bride of Christ in the days in which we live. The bride of Christ is composed of those who are joined to the mourning of Christ in the fellowship of the trespass offering. They are among the unclean daughters of Zion. Through their mourning, as they reveal the word of the cross, they are bringing an end to the ministry yield of these mixed congregations.

In the same way that Abimelech offered sheep, oxen and male and female servants to Abraham, and a thousand pieces of silver to Sarah, the Lord said to the presbytery of Philadelphia, 'I know your works. 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. Indeed I will make those of the *synagogue of Satan* [symbolised as the Philistines in the land of promise], who say they are Jews and are not, but lie – indeed *I will make them come and worship before your feet*, and to know that I have loved you.' Rev 3:8-9.

We know that after this encounter with Abimelech, Sarah conceived and bore Isaac. He was a child of promise, born according to the Spirit. The reformation of Abraham and Sarah's marriage reveals the process through which our marriages are to be reformed through our connection to the cross of Christ. However, more than this, Sarah is prophetic of the bride of Christ's ministry in this present season. Individually, and corporately, we are mourning, in the fellowship of Christ's travail, to bring forth the manchild who will rule the nations with a rod of iron in the time of the end. Rev 12:5.

Look to Abraham and Sarah

As we approach the time of the end, those who belong to the bride of Christ are being directed by the Spirit to, 'Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you'. Isa 51:2. Their culture of faith is to be our culture and the culture of our marriages and houses. We look to Abraham and to Sarah in this manner because we are those who 'follow after [meaning, pursue] righteousness'. Isa 51:1. This means that we are sons of God who are being discipled as we walk in the light of the word proceeding from Christ as the river of the water of life. This word is bringing refreshing and reformation to each individual, marriage and household who receive this ministry.

Notably, the word to those who belong to the household of faith is, 'Do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults'. Isa 51:7. We are delivered from fear as we receive the faith of the Son of God that comes by hearing His word. Gal 2:20. Rom 10:17. By His faith, we are able to embrace our fellowship in the trespass offering, which is the reproach offering. This is the context for our salvation and is also the ground from which we minister the gospel. Directing us to receive this illumination, the Lord is saying, 'Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD!' Isa 51:9. We are to be wise virgins

who are obtaining a double portion of oil as we partake of the divine nature and as we abide in God through discipleship and sanctification.

Cain and Abel

To further understand the implications of our participation in the trespass offering, it is helpful to consider the account of Cain and Abel. The offerings that Cain and Abel made at the gate of Eden were a participation in the trespass offering of Christ. We know that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground. This was the fruit of his excellence as a tiller of the ground; it was his riches as he appeared to have subdued the ground that God had cursed. Abel brought the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. Yahweh respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering.

In Chapter 3, we noted that the first implication of Christ's initiative towards us in relation to the trespass offering is 'mourning'. This was true for Cain and Abel, revealing two forms of mourning. Through the offering of a lamb, Abel was joined to the mourning of the Son. He understood that his reproaches against the Father were borne by the Lamb, and he identified himself with this witness. Abel ministered as a prophet from the basis of his connection to this offering.

In contrast, Cain was very angry and his countenance fell when the fruit of his hands was not received as an acceptable offering. Gen 4:5. He was grieving the rejection of his self-image which he sought to verify through the work of his hands. This was another form of mourning, or sorrow, that led to the death of his brother and to his eternal exclusion from fellowship with Yahweh. His mourning was not dissimilar to the emotion of the Jews who stoned Stephen to death having been cut to the heart by his message. Act 7:54-60.

The murder of Abel was a manifestation of the *mystery of iniquity* in the church. 2Th 2:7. This mystery was described, according to the wisdom of Agur, as 'the way of a serpent on a rock'. Pro 30:19. It was the fruit of Cain's self-righteous offering. We note, in this regard, that where a person fails to join the fear and sorrow that leads to repentance, the trespass offering multiplies corruption within them. This is an abomination that causes desolation in the holy place. Dan 11:31. Mat 24:15.

Abel's participation in the trespass offering, connected him to the element of the sin offering typified by the Lord's goat. That is, he was accepted, or brought into the fellowship of Yahweh, by the blood of the Lamb. In contrast, Cain's response in the fellowship of the trespass offering connected him to the element of the sin offering typified by the scapegoat. The Lord said to him, 'A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth'. Gen 4:12.

Implications for the presbytery and the church

Those who have been called to the work of the ministry as part of a presbytery must not minister according to the motivation of Cain. Our fellowship in the trespass offering is not acceptable on account of our industry or enterprise. This motivation becomes evident when the fruit of our labour becomes the basis of our own sense of acceptability, and our judgements of others as lazy or unfruitful. Our connection to the trespass offering must be mourning, revealing our sanctification through fellowship with our brethren in the light of the word proceeding from the cross.

Cain's orientation to the trespass offering was a notable characteristic of the presbytery of Laodicea. Jesus addressed them as, 'the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the creation of God'. Rev 3:14. This is how John introduced Christ in the preamble of the book of Revelation. As we have considered in Chapter 3, Jesus was revealed as the 'Amen', or 'I AM' when He was lifted up from the earth on the cross as a trespass offering. Joh 8:28. This was the basis of His witness, or testimony, and the place where He pioneered the pathway of salvation upon which every person could become a new creation in Him. The point to note, is that Jesus was addressing the Laodicean presbytery specifically as the trespass offering.

Like Cain, these presbyters were known for their works. Rev 3:15. However, they were not the works that belonged to their fellowship in the trespass offering. They were not 'hot' because they had not mourned with godly sorrow in response to the word of the cross. Their zeal was not the fruit of godly sorrow which is produced when a person is joined to the broken heart of Christ. They were not 'cold' because they were not drinking from the river of the water of life that flowed as a testimony from Christ's side, which would have been evident in their capacity to refresh others in the fellowship of the presbytery. Rather, they were confident in their own industry and expression, and in so doing, they were saying, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'. Rev 3:17.

The Lord loved the Laodicean presbytery. We know this because He said to them, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.' Rev 3:19. In this regard, the Holy Spirit is reminding us of the exhortation that we can easily forget in the midst of chastening. He is saying to us, 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.' Heb 12:5-6.

The Lord is coming to the presbytery, and to the church, to rebuke and chasten us in order to train us in holiness. Those who receive this initiative are being turned from their blindness and deception and are being joined to the fellowship of His sufferings. Through mourning, they are ceasing from the

actions that belong to reproach against the Father, and are able to minister, through mourning, the word of the trespass and sin offerings.

We must all heed and respond to this word to become overcomers in our families, in the church and in the world, and then be caught up as part of an administration that is suitable to rule with Christ upon the earth in the time of the end. If we will not heed this message, and instead continue in our double-mindedness and presumption, Jesus has promised that the effect of the trespass offering upon us will be that He will vomit us out of His mouth. Rev 3:16.

Sorcery and identity dystrophy

In Chapter 2, we considered that when Christ was nailed to the cross through the reproaches that broke His heart, He became a curse. Gal 3:13. Significantly, the curse of the cross was sent out upon every individual and into every house. Zechariah prophesied concerning this implication of the cross, declaring, '*This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth*: "Every thief shall be expelled", according to this side of the scroll; and, "Every perjurer shall be expelled", according to that side of it.' Zec 5:3. He further prophesised, 'I will send out the curse; it shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it, with its timber and stones.' Zec 5:4.

The impact of the curse of the cross is that it brings the fruit of rejecting God's predestination to bear in the life and house of a person. In this regard, instead of obtaining the blessing of identity verification through new birth, a person's identity will progressively and perpetually dystrophy as they remain in bondage to the Law, or principle, of sin and death. This dystrophy is evidence of being consumed by the curse.

Likewise, instead of the blessing of Abraham establishing a house in peace, the household is consumed. This may be manifest by the intractability of its familiar cultures, through the dysfunction in a marriage and house, and by relational disharmony between those who are in the house. Conflict in a marriage, and in a house, is a consequence of identity dystrophy. Those who quarrel are grieved because their identity is not being verified by others as they expect. This is a house that is bereft of the peace that should belong to those who have been established in the fellowship of Yahweh.

Under these conditions, being driven by the fear of death, a person will endeavour to have life by some other means. Belief in the mere possibility of obtaining life, in this way, is a delusion that is fed to them as *a perverse, or distorting, spirit*. This perverse spirit is sent by the Lord, from the cross, as an implication of the curse. As Isaiah declared, 'The LORD has mingled a perverse spirit in her midst; and they have caused Egypt to err in all her work, as a

drunken man staggers in his vomit.' Isa 19:14. Under the effects of the curse, the actions that a person takes to verify their identity, at the expense of, or by using others, is energised by this spirit.

This is the nature of *sorcery* which keeps a person in bondage to the law of sin and under the condemnation of death, leading to oppression and possession. Sorcery is the mechanism through which the curse causes identity dystrophy and the consumption of households. Its power comes from the curse of the cross and belongs to the judgement of God. Let us now consider two notable expressions of sorcery and their impact upon individuals and households.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, whom the prophet Daniel nominated as 'the head of gold that belonged to the statue in the king's dream', was a man of warfare or combat. He sought identity verification through conquering and ruling over others. The Scriptures reveal that the strategies that he used to satisfy this need for validation were sorcery, incited by the word of the Lord. In this regard, the Lord directed Ezekiel to appoint for himself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go – one road to the Ammonites and the other to Judah. The Lord then said, 'The king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images [teraphim], he looks at the liver. In his right hand is *the divination for Jerusalem*: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to lift the voice with shouting, to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a siege mound, and to build a wall.' Eze 21:21-22.

'Shaking the arrows', 'consulting teraphim', and 'looking at the liver' typify sorcerous strategies that war-like people employ in the world, in families and in the church, to assert themselves over others for the sake of identity verification. Combative actions such as these may deliver ascendency over others but inevitably lead to identity dystrophy. In a very stark way, this happened to Nebuchadnezzar. We recall that as he was walking about his palace, he said, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honour of my majesty?' Dan 4:30. Under the judgement of God, the identity destruction resulting from his sorcerous pursuit of honour was manifest as acute madness. Dan 4:31-33.

Another expression of the pursuit of identity verification through sorcery is *trading*. This is the nature of the conduct that belongs to the culture of Babylon, the great harlot. This trading dynamic is overtly manifest in the desire and quest for wealth – be it economic wealth through business endeavours, cultural wealth or social wealth. In the context of the presbytery and the church, this sorcerous conduct is demonstrated by those who cleave to the messengers with deceit or flattery. Dan 11:34. They profess fellowship, but their connection is for the purpose of their own empowerment. This is evident because their conduct, beyond the relationship with the messengers

whom they flatter, is different to what is professed. Their initiatives are often shared with Christ's ascension-gift messengers, or in the presbytery, in an opaque manner that lacks accountable detail, or is concealed altogether.

When a person seeks empowerment through connection with ascension-gift grace, they are at odds with the culture of fellowship that belongs to the sanctuary – that is the fellowship of the presbytery, which is fellowship with the Father and the Son. 1Jn 1:3. This results in the corruption of their identity. As the Lord revealed to Daniel, 'Those who do wickedly against the covenant he *shall corrupt with flattery*; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.' Dan 11:32. Our history as a church and a presbytery bears this principle out, as we note the ruin of many who have engaged in our fellowship with this deceptive trading manner.

Our deliverance from sorcery, and its destructive impact upon our identity, begins by receiving the word that declares our sanctification as sons of God. Instead of pursuing the verification of our own image, we are caused to 'look on Christ whom we have pierced' with the reproaches that belong to this pursuit. We acknowledge that we are indeed cursed with Christ. In the fellowship of His death, we are able to receive the life in His blood. We no longer seek for self-verification, leading to identity dystrophy. Rather, we are verified as sons of God who are being strengthened with might through the Spirit in the inner man. Eph 3:16.

Through the word of the cross, a hearer is delivered, through repentance, from bondage to fear and into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. *This is the freedom to love through obedience*. The evidence of this liberty, which belongs to faith, is believing and conversing by faith in our houses, our marriages, from house to house, in the church and in the presbytery. Such conversation is marked by confession and testimony. This is the antidote to sorcery.