The Great Reconciliation

The ministry of the apostle Paul

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Section One

An offering for sin and trespasses

Paul's ministry of the trespass offering

- The apostle Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy recognising that the end of his life was drawing near. He said to Timothy, 'For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.' 2Ti 4:6-7.

- In this letter, Paul lamented that all the churches in Asia had turned away from him and from the gospel that he had proclaimed to them. 2Ti 1:15. Significantly, the presbyters of these churches had begun to preach a gospel that they had not received from Paul and from those with ascension-gift grace in the presbytery. Eph 4:11-12. Signalling this propensity to both

accommodate and tender alternative gospels, Paul had earlier written to the church in Corinth, saying, 'For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom *we* have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it!' 2Co 11:4.

- The churches in Asia were not the only churches that Paul established; however, they did belong to his glory and the crown of his rejoicing. 1Th 2:19-20. It appeared, at least in part, that something of Paul's glory and crown had been lost with the departure of the Asian churches. In the same way that Eve had been deceived by the craftiness of the serpent, the churches in Asia had been bewitched, and their minds had been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:1. 2Co 11:3-4.

- In the garden of Eden, the woman, who was supposed to be the glory and crown of Adam, rejected the headship of her husband by heeding the serpent's alternative word and eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Instead of bringing the matter to the tree of life, to find a resolution in fellowship with Yahweh, Adam ate the fruit in wrath and doubting, seeking to bring the situation back into his control.

- In contrast to Adam, Paul did not respond with wrath and doubting to the falling away of the churches in Asia. Rather, Paul bore the reproaches associated with their rejection, maintaining his fellowship in the trespass offering of Christ. From this fellowship, Paul exhorted Timothy, Titus and other faithful men, in order to establish them in this ministry of reconciliation.

- It is evident that Paul's letter was an expression of the trespass offering, for he testified that he was serving God

'with a pure conscience'. 2Ti 1:3. A person can only have a pure conscience as they bear the reproaches of Christ that belong to the trespass offering. The blood that was shed for their redemption, reconciliation and sonship, as Christ offered Himself as a sin and trespass offering, sprinkles them clean from an evil conscience so that they can serve the living God. Heb 9:14-15.

- In this regard, we note that Paul's lament for the churches of Asia was not merely the pain of their disloyalty, nor was it grief for his personal loss. Rather, Paul was joined to the grief of Christ, our great High Priest. Christ's heart was broken by our reproaches against the Father, which were laid on Him as He was nailed to the cross. Having been lifted up as a trespass offering on account of these reproaches, He mourned for the Father's loss as we rejected His fatherhood. At the same time, the Son also grieved for the eternal consequences of mankind's separation from God on account of our unbelief and sin. These two dimensions of mourning belonged to His ministry as our great High Priest, 'the one Mediator between God and men'. 1Ti 2:5.

- Testifying of the grief that pertained to the trespass offering, Jesus said, '*I am poured out like water*, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax;
it has melted within Me [having been broken by reproach].' Psa 69:20. Psa 22:14. Paul identified himself with this offering, and with the work of redemption and reconciliation that Christ accomplished as He priested Himself as a sin and trespass offering. He said to Timothy, 'For I am already being poured out as a drink offering.' 2Ti 4:6.

- At the end of his life, Paul was writing this final letter to instruct Timothy, and other faithful brethren, concerning

the culture and ministry of the administration that he was delivering to them. In this regard, he was warning Timothy against defaulting in relation to his ministry in the face of the impudence and rebellion of the Asian churches. It appears that Timothy's default was timidity, for Paul exhorted him, saying, 'Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' 2Ti 1:6-7.

- No doubt, other presbyters defaulted in different ways, including, for example, through wrath, despondency or retreat. The answer for these default responses was for a presbyter to bear the reproaches of Christ and to embrace their fellowship in the trespass offering. This is what Paul meant when he said to Timothy, 'Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but *share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God*, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' 2Ti 1:8-10.

- Timothy's timidity, in the face of the reproaches associated with the rejection of the Asian churches, was a *shame* response. Through sufferings, Timothy was being sifted by Satan. Just as Peter had been sifted by Satan, Timothy was at risk of being caught in the snare of the devil through his default responses. Warning Timothy of the impact of these default, or oppositional, responses, he wrote, 'And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting

those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will'. 2Ti 2:24-26.

- Paul was praying for Timothy, in the same way that Jesus had prayed for Peter, whom Satan desired to sift as wheat. Luk 22:31-32. 2Ti 1:3-4. He also instructed Timothy to despise the shame of his default response and receive the power of God for His fellowship in Christ's sufferings. In this regard, Paul was directing Timothy, and every faithful witness, to look unto Jesus, 'the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God'. Heb 12:2.

Despising the shame

- From Paul's instruction to Timothy, we understand that *reproach is endured by the power of God*. It belongs to godly sorrow, or the sorrow of God, for grief at our reproaches against the Father first broke His heart. Gen 3:9. The Father was shamed by our reproaches against Him. He sorrowed for the rejection of His fatherhood and for all His children who had forfeited the glorious inheritance that He had prepared for them.

- By choosing the kingdom of Satan, mankind had made God their enemy and had become the enemies of God. To bring their covenant purpose to pass, Christ was set forth as both the great High Priest and the Lamb of God. He was 'the one Mediator *between* God and men' who 'gave Himself a ransom for all'. 1Ti 2:5-6. All the reproaches against the Father, and the shame of these reproaches,

were laid on Christ as He priested Himself as a sin offering and a trespass offering.

- As our great High Priest, Christ was *Yahweh Son* who, by Eternal Spirit, could priest Himself as an offering through which the covenant purpose of the Godhead would be accomplished. Col 1:19. As *the Son of God*, Christ was able to comprehend the Father's grief, and bear this grief *for Him*, because He was *of Him*. Christ was able to be fully united with us in our death on account of sin, and was thereby acquainted with the grief associated with our sin-sickness, or infirmities, because He was *the Son of Man*. Heb 4:15. Rom 7:24-25.

- The grief of the Father and the grief of mankind broke Christ's heart as our reproaches against the Father were laid on Him and nailed Him to the cross. Psa 69:9,20. By Eternal Spirit, the Son endured this grief and despised the shame of these reproaches as His blood was shed for our redemption and our reconciliation to God. Heb 12:2. As it was shed, the life of God that was in Christ's blood was bringing Him back from the dead and brought us back to God with Him. Heb 13:20. Isa 8:18.

- Resurrection life is more than eternal life. It is the life of God that springs from the love of God. This life was revealed through Christ's grief as His heart was broken by reproach. It is suffering life, and it brought Christ back from the dead. We are brought back from the death of sin by this life as we suffer with Him. This life 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.

- We obtain the blessing of resurrection life when we are joined to Christ's broken heart. When the word of the

cross is proclaimed to us, it is accompanied by a spirit of grace and supplication. Through illumination, we are caused to look on Him whom we have pierced through our reproaches against the Father. Zec 12:10. These are the reproaches that broke Christ's heart when He was crucified. Our heart breaks as we are joined to His broken heart.

- At this point, we begin to mourn with godly sorrow. The seven steps of mourning, which lead to repentance, become the pathway forward to finding reconciliation with God. Nominating these steps, Paul wrote, 'For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: what diligence it *produced* in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication!' 2Co 7:11. Godly sorrow and prayer, bearing these virtues within us, are the repentance that is given to us as a *gift* when we are illuminated to the impact of our reproaches upon Christ. 2Ti 2:25.

- The Father is near to the broken-hearted and He saves those who have a contrite spirit. Psa 34:18. In the fellowship of Christ's broken heart, we are washed and cleansed by the word of the Father as it is ministered to us by the Holy Spirit, and we are delivered from our idolatry and from the familiar spirits that belong to the kingdom of darkness. Eze 36:25. Zec 13:1-2. Moreover, we receive a new heart as sons of men and sons of God. This happens through the washing of regeneration as our hard heart of stone is removed from us and we are given a heart of flesh which belongs to the *first man*. Eze 36:26. We also receive the sevenfold Spirit of God from the Father, through the Son and by the Holy Spirit. This is our life as new-creation *sons of God*. Eze 36:27.

The priesthood and offering of Christ in the fellowship of Yahweh

- On the Mount of Olives, just prior to the commencement of His offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary, Jesus prayed, 'And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.' Joh 17:5. Jesus was asking to receive again His glory as Yahweh Son.

- As Yahweh Son, Christ could priest Himself as Yahweh's offering, for it pleased the Father for all the fullness of the Godhead to dwell in Him. Col 1:19. The covenant purpose of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit could be accomplished through this offering. With this purpose in view, the great High Priest then prayed, 'Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. *And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth*.' Joh 17:17-19.

- This statement revealed the goal of Christ's offering as the great High Priest, which He declared through the prophet Ezekiel, saying, ' "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but *for My holy name's sake*, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. *And I will sanctify My great name*, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes."' Eze 36:22-23.

- Christ was praying on the Mount of Olives for those who, through godly sorrow, repentance and faith, would be established and sanctified in His holy name according to God's covenant purpose. This would be a people drawn

from the world, as well as from the unclean daughters of Zion. Isa 4:1,4. The unclean daughters of Zion are those in churches who identify as God's people, but who have defiled His land and profaned His name in the world through the uncleanness of 'their own ways and deeds', bringing them under the judgement of God. Eze 36:17,20.

The hard heart of reproach against God

- The motivation to pursue our own ways and deeds was established in the heart of every person in the garden of Eden when Adam disobeyed God and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Rom 5:12. The apostle Paul called this motivation 'another law', which brings a person into bondage to 'the law of sin and death'. This is the culture of Satan's kingdom. Rom 7:23.

- Mankind rejected the fatherhood of God when Adam ate this fruit, desiring to become the source of their own life and expression. By making this choice and taking this action, *mankind reproached God*, saying to Him, 'You are not our Father'. We alienated ourselves from God through these wicked works and by hardening our hearts against Him. For this reason, the Father said to us, 'You are not My people, and I will not be your God.' Hos 1:9.

- To be recovered to our predestination as sons of God in the name and fellowship of Yahweh, our hard-heartedness needs to be broken, and we need to receive a new heart. This was a key focus of Christ's priesthood as He sanctified Himself to make offering for the sake of Yahweh's name.

Deliverance through godly sorrow

- In the garden of Gethsemane, the Father made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us when Christ, enabled by Eternal Spirit from the Holy Spirit, drank the cup of sin given to Him by the Father. 2Co 5:21. Christ now embodied, and carried in Himself, the hard-heartedness of mankind as our reproaches against the Father were progressively laid upon Him.

- Having become our sin, Christ was strengthened by Eternal Spirit to bear the Father's grief, and the grief of our separation from God on account of our hard-hearted reproaches. This '*help*' from the Spirit enabled Christ to set His face like a flint in relation to His obedience, so that, as He grieved unto death, the stony heart that belongs to the body of sin was being broken. Through the prophet Isaiah, He testified, 'For the Lord GOD will *help* Me [strengthen Me with Eternal Spirit]; therefore, I will not be disgraced [reproach will be broken]; therefore, I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.' Isa 50:7.

- As Christ mourned in each wounding event of His journey as an offering for sin, the breaking of His heart was accompanied by the shedding of His blood. Through this blood, He was being brought back from the death of sin and was bringing us back with Him. Heb 13:20. By this means, the whole of mankind was being redeemed from their captivity to sin and death, and was being reconciled to God through the precious blood of Jesus. Col 1:20. 1Pe 1:19.

- This work of redemption and reconciliation was vividly manifested in the garden of Gethsemane. In this first wound, having been strengthened with Eternal Spirit,

Christ was in agony. This was a sorrow unto death, as He testified, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.' Mat 26:38. However, it did not cause Jesus' physical death. As He grieved, praying more earnestly in the Spirit, His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Luk 22:42-44. The wilfulness associated with our hard-heartedness was broken in this wound.

- Beginning with this first wound, Christ journeyed *alone* as a sin offering. As He testified Himself, 'I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no-one was with Me.' Isa 63:3. This was a completely vicarious offering. On Mount Calvary, Christ was nailed to the cross for our transgressions, or trespasses. Isa 53:5. As He was lifted up from the earth and the cross was plunged into ground, the grief associated with this final and sweeping dimension of our reproaches against the Father *literally* broke His heart. Psa 69:20. 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. 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.

- When Christ was lifted up and died this death, the kingdom of Satan was destroyed, for Christ was the serpent on the pole. Joh 3:14-15. Moreover, when His heart broke, the hardness of our hearts broke, because He was the embodiment of our hard-heartedness.

- The breaking of Christ's heart, by the power of the Spirit, for the purpose of reconciling mankind to God, was an exquisite expression of the covenant love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for each Other and for us. Through the blood of the cross, the light of life was now manifested to all men. Speaking of this witness, Jesus said, '"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 [on the cross], will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die.' Joh 12:31-33.

- Because our hard hearts have been broken in the broken heart of Christ, and we have been delivered from the power of Satan, every person can now receive this illumination. Through the word of the cross, God breaks in on our darkness. We can see what we have done to the Father and to His Firstborn Son, and we can see the predestination that we have lost as a consequence of our reproaches against the Father. Under the influence of grace and supplication, we begin to grieve with Christ as this illumination delivers us to a *choice*.

- Exemplifying this principle, we observe that, on the day of Christ's crucifixion, the hearts of those who witnessed this event were breached and they were illuminated to see what they had done to the Son of God. The centurion who stood opposite Christ confessed, 'Truly this Man was the Son of God.' Mar 15:39. 'And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, *beat their breasts and returned*.' Luk 23:48. This choice was brought to bear on the Day of Pentecost when Peter proclaimed the word of the cross to many who had witnessed Christ's crucifixion.

- When our heart is breached, and we are illuminated to see that our reproaches against the Father nailed Christ to the cross, we understand that we are no longer God's people and are cursed. This is a grief as we recognise the loss of our future. However, if we do not draw back from Christ, we are enabled to mourn with Him for reconciliation. In the fellowship of His death, we are recipients of the life in His blood. In the place of cursing with Christ, where we were not God's people, there we are called the children of God!

- In the fellowship of Christ's broken heart, we are washed and cleansed by the word of the Father as it is ministered to us by the Holy Spirit, and we are delivered from our idolatry and from the familiar spirits that belong to the kingdom of darkness. Eze 36:25. Zec 13:1-2. Moreover, we receive a new heart as sons of men and sons of God. This happens through the washing of regeneration as our hard heart of stone is removed from us and we are given a heart of flesh which belongs to the *first man*. Eze 36:26. We also receive the sevenfold Spirit of God from the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit. This is our life as new-creation *sons of God*. Eze 36:27.

- Having received a new heart as sons of men and sons of God, we are established, through sanctification, in the name of the Lord. His name is no longer profaned among the nations through our carnal enterprise. Rather, He is hallowed in us before the eyes of those among whom we are sent. Eze 36:23.

For His Holy name's sake

- The question that we must ask ourselves is why does the Lord help us? He helps us because He has concern for His holy name. Eze 36:21. Christ's work, as the Holy One who

was sent to us from the Father, is to hallow the Father's name. He sanctified Himself *before* time as Yahweh Son to become the Father's Son, so that, as the Son of God, He could reveal the Father through offering.

- By becoming the sin offering in Gethsemane, and the trespass offering on Mount Calvary, the Son sanctified Himself so that the great name of Yahweh could be sanctified. Because of the sin of Israel and Judah in the promised land, the Lord cast them out of the land and scattered them among the nations. Wherever they went among the nations, the great name of the Lord was profaned. The nations said, 'These are the people of the Lord and yet they have gone out of His land.' Eze 36:20. This was a reproach against Israel and Judah, but it also profaned the great name of Yahweh, the Lord God, by which He had called them. Isa 43:1.

- The work that Christ accomplished by becoming the trespass offering on the cross, was how the name of Yahweh would be hallowed among the nations as the Holy One of Israel. He would sanctify – that is, *lift up* – the name of God so that, by this means, the Father would be glorified. This is what it means to 'hallow His name'. Jesus went to the cross as a common criminal who was unhallowed. However, He was lifted up, or hallowed, as Yahweh when they lifted Him up on the cross. As Jesus had said prior to His offering journey, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM [Yahweh].' Joh 8:28.

- Once hallowed as Yahweh on the cross, the Son of Man would draw all men to Himself as the Light of the world so that they would honour and worship Him. We note, in this regard, that the centurion, who had led the beating, abuse and crucifixion of Christ, confessed, 'Truly this was

the Son of God!' Mat 27:54. He made this confession after he had witnessed the work that Christ had accomplished on the cross. Moreover, the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned to their houses. Luk 23:48.

- Praying on the Mount of Olives, Jesus said, 'As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.' Joh 17:18-19. We note that these people, who would be sanctified by the truth as Christ's name was hallowed, would be *sent* into the world. In the same way that the Son was sent into the world by the Father, they would be sent into the world by the Son. This is in contrast to the Israelites who were *scattered* among the nations, profaning the name of the Lord. Eze 36:19-20.

- Jesus prayed, 'For their sakes I sanctify Myself'. He was sanctifying Himself to become our sin and trespass offering so that we might be sanctified by the truth. The truth is the word of the Father concerning our name as a son of God. Our names were lost when Adam, and mankind, forsook the Father and sought to be the source of their own expression and destiny. To be sanctified by the truth is to be restored to our name and sonship from the Father.

- To explain this further, speaking as the Holy One of God, Jesus said that He had been sent into the world by the Father to reveal the heart, name and works of the Father. He said to the Jews, 'Most assuredly [or emphatically], I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will

show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.' Joh 5:19-20. The 'greater works' were to be lifted up on the cross and to be glorified as He journeyed from mortality to immortality.

- In the course of this conversation with the Jews, Jesus spoke of His life-giving and judging work that He would do on the cross. He spoke in this manner as they sought to kill Him for doing the works of His Father on the sabbath. Joh 5:16. He said to the Jews, 'For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no-one, but has committed all judgement to the Son, that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life.' Joh 5:21-24.

The Holy One of Israel

- Yahweh Son holyfied Himself to empty Himself, through offering, to become the Son of God. When He was brought forth as the Son of God by the word of the Father – 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You' – He was established as the Creator. Heb 1:5. Joh 1:1-3. The first action of creation was the establishment of the void, or room, in Yahweh, for something new. Christ established Zion as the bridge between time in the void and the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*, *before*.

- In the void, the Son created the heavens and then the earth. The angels were created as part of the heavens. Lucifer was the first angel created, being identified by the prophet Isaiah as 'the son of the morning'. Isa 14:12.

He was perfect on the day of his creation, until iniquity was found in him. Eze 28:15. When Lucifer fell, he became Satan, meaning 'accuser' or 'reproacher'. The source of his reproach was speculation from the void, or the darkness, as the father of lies. This became the basis of his kingdom. His speculations, or lies, were in opposition to the substance of the word of the Father that Christ was to become, through offering, as 'the fullness of Him who fills all in all'. Eph 1:23.

- As the Holy One of God, the Son of God then became the Holy One of Jacob, and then the Holy One of Israel. The Son then further holyfied Himself to further empty Himself by humbling Himself, through offering, to become an embryo in the womb of the virgin Mary. We know that He humbled Himself in this manner, for the Scriptures declare that He was made 'a little lower than the angels'. Heb 2:7. Psa 8:5. He was then born and grew to maturity in the family of Joseph and Mary, and among His siblings who, until His crucifixion, did not accept or acknowledge His holiness.

- From the Mount of Olives, the Son of God holyfied, humbled and emptied Himself, through seven wounding events, as a sin offering and a trespass offering. Highlighting this action of Christ holyfying, humbling and emptying Himself in this manner, Paul wrote, 'And being found in appearance as a man, He *humbled* Himself and *became obedient* to the point of death, even the death of the cross'. Php 2:8. Christ humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death when He was made sin in the garden of Gethsemane, and then when He died on the cross as the trespass offering.

- In the course of His offering journey, He sanctified and redeemed us back to God as His sons and daughters.

His sanctifying work involved delivering us from Satan and the kingdom of darkness. Then, by healing and cleansing, and through regeneration and new creation, the Son brought us to maturity as sons of the Father. Eze 36:24-29. He did this to make us a kingdom of priests and to establish us, with Him, in the ministry of reconciliation. Rev 1:6. 2Co 5:18-19.

- Christ accomplished this work when He was holyfied, or lifted up, on the cross. When His heart broke, sin died because He was the embodiment of sin. Through this death, He destroyed the devil who had the power of death, and He released those who, through fear of death, continually sought to live by the alternative expressions fathered from the void by Satan. Heb 2:14-15. Rom 7:23-24.

- Having destroyed sin and the devil, the Son then fulfilled all the works that belong to our sanctification, or holiness, as sons of God. Isa 26:12. He did this as the function of His heart and His breath was sustained by Eternal Spirit and He was being brought back from the death of sin by the life in His blood. These works included the works for the new heavens and earth, which He fulfilled in 'in the lowest parts of the earth', during the three hours of great darkness as He hung on the cross from the sixth to the ninth hour. Psa 139:15-16. Mat 27:45.

- By this means, the darkness of the void was dispelled, as it was filled with the light of life that belongs to the expression of every person's sanctification as a son of the Father. Joh 1:5. At the end of this sanctifying work, He had redeemed mankind and declared to the Father, 'Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given Me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells in Mount Zion.' Isa 8:18.

- Submission to the order of headship *is* the fellowship of Yahweh. It reveals the dignity and majesty of identity, which is expressed through holiness by the capacity of the seven Spirits of God. The seven Spirits of God enable offering. When we are established in this fellowship, and receive the capacity of seven Spirits from the Holy Spirit, we are able to make offering according to our name as a son of God.

Cursed with Christ

- After Christ prayed to the Father for the forgiveness of mankind, it took three hours, in the process of suffering with Christ, for the repentant thief to find salvation. Let us now consider the process of our recovery from sin and death in the fellowship of the cross. This is a journey that we are to make with Christ on the pathway that He pioneered for us. We proceed from forgiveness to the finished work of perfection, which He declared when He breathed His last, having brought life and immortality to light through His offering. Joh 19:30. 2Ti 1:10.

- When we crucified Christ, as the action of our reproaches against God, we were also crucified and cursed with Him. In the place where we were not God's people, as we crucified Him and lifted Him up as accursed before God, God lifted us up with Christ and cursed us with Him. Deu 28:15-20. Zec 5:4. Num 22:12. Num 23:8.

- As we noted earlier, the Father had committed all judgement to the Son so that the Son would be honoured, in the same way that the Father is honoured. Joh 5:22-23. This happened in the context of Their own sanctified relationship. Although the Son had received the right to judge the world, this was not His motivation. Rather, knowing that He had been set forth by the Father as a

propitiation, or mercy seat, the Son sanctified Himself to this purpose.

- It was the Father's will to forgive us in Christ when He set forth the Son as an appeasement or a propitiational mercy seat. The Father did this so that we might have forgiveness through faith in the Son's blood. Rom 3:25. The Son only does what He sees the Father doing. Joh 5:19. Accordingly, instead of judging us, the Son *mourned for us*, praying, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do', as He was nailed to the cross by our reproaches against the Father. Luk 23:34.

- Christ's prayer was the antithesis of cursing. It is notable that the first expression of cursing is through 'prayer' (Greek: *ara*). It is an imprecation uttered out of malevolence by men, or pronounced by God in His righteous judgement. The effect, or penalty, of cursing is a piercing through. This is what we did to Christ through our reproaches, for the mouths of every fallen person is 'full of cursing and bitterness'. Rom 3:10,14. In this regard, Jesus testified, 'In return for My love they are My accusers [cursing adversaries], *but I give Myself to prayer*.' Psa 109:4.

- The Son did this so that we would not come under judgement, but rather, would receive faith from Him through godly sorrow and repentance. By His faith, we would be enabled to *believe* unto eternal life. In this regard, He said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.' Joh 5:24-25. When Jesus raised Lazarus,

He demonstrated that He was the resurrection and the life, and that He had received the power to judge and to forgive as the Son of Man. He manifested this power as He addressed the unbelief of Mary and Martha with wrath and sorrow. Joh 11:33,35.

- The Son's heart was identified with our heart as He asked the Father to forgive us for our reproachful trespasses. Heb 2:9-18. Christ's threefold grief, which included the Father's grief, our grief, and His own grief, made His heart melt like wax within Him and become sick. Psa 22:14. Psa 69:20. His heart failed Him and was no longer able to sustain Him. Psa 73:26. The Son was then sustained only by the power of Eternal Spirit. Heb 9:14. The sevenfold Spirit of God caused His heart to beat and enabled Him to continue to breathe as His blood flowed from His wounds and sprinkled our hearts, softening them as they came under His priestly, atoning influence.

Illumination gives the capacity to mourn

- In response to Christ's prayer, the Father granted to Christ the capacity to pour out the Spirit of grace and supplication upon us so that we can see, mourn, repent, and believe. In this regard, when His heart was broken, as He prayed for our forgiveness, He was poured out as a drink offering upon us. The drink offering first gives to us the blessing of grace and supplication, which the Son pours out upon us by the Holy Spirit, through the seven Spirits of God.

- Because our hearts have been breached by the breaking of Christ's heart, the Spirit of grace and supplication illuminates our darkness so that we can look upon Christ whom we have pierced with our reproaches and our cursing. If we do not resist the Holy Spirit, and do not

draw back in unbelief, He pours the love of God, and the love for God, into our heart, enabling us to mourn with godly sorrow. Rom 5:5. The impact of this mourning upon us is a rekindling of the love for the Son of God, as if He was a firstborn Son whom we have lost through death. More than this, we now understand that, in our blindness, we betrayed and murdered Him. We demonstrated, through these actions of betrayal and murder, that we were enemies of God and we were not His people.

- When we receive the word of the cross, and do not resist the Spirit of grace and supplication that belongs to this ministry, we confess, as the repentant thief did, 'I am, justly, co-cursed with Christ. He has committed no sin and yet is crucified with me. I am who I am as a sinner. The Father has passed judgement upon me and cursed me with Christ.'

- The Spirit of grace and supplication enables us to sorrow with godly sorrow as we grieve for, and with, the Father at the loss of His firstborn Son. Zec 12:10. This sorrow melts our hearts, challenging our self-centred righteousness, from which our reproach of God, and of others, springs. As we mourn, we are able to cease from our agitations, come to silence and find rest for our souls. This happens as we are yoked to Christ in the fellowship of the cross, and the fellowship of His sufferings, as we die with Him. Mat 11:28-30.

- As our darkness is illuminated and we mourn, as in the light of the proceeding word, we can see what we have done to Christ. The unclean familiar spirits that afflict our spirit and family go out of our home. This is the impact of the fountain for sin and uncleanness that is ministered to us as the proceeding word of God. Revealing this provision, Christ Himself said, 'In that day a *fountain* shall

be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for *sin and for uncleanness*. It shall be in that day, says the LORD of hosts, that 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 13:1-2.

A New Covenant

- At the last Passover, as He picked up a cup of wine, Jesus said, 'This cup, which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in My blood.' Luk 22:20. The New Covenant replaced the old Law Covenant as the marriage covenant between Christ and Israel. At this point, the Law Covenant was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross.

- Christ's mortality failed Him as His heart broke in grief and as His blood was poured out from His wounds. His blood poured out became the New Covenant of His marriage to those who would become His bride, as they came forth from His body, as His church, through His redeeming work on the cross.

- The *zoe* life that was in Christ's blood brought Him back from the death of sin. Heb 13:20. We were also redeemed by Christ's blood and delivered from the power that sin had over us. In this regard, we were brought back to God as we were delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His Son. Col 1:13-14.

- Christ poured Himself out as a drink offering. As we join Him in the fellowship of His suffering on the cross, we have a participation in this offering. 1Co 10:16. As we do this, the blood of the New Covenant becomes the bond of our marriage to Christ. Significantly, this is our fellowship

in the ministry of reconciliation as an ‘elect lady’. 2Co 5:18. That is, through our conversation and conduct in the fellowship of the cross, we show forth the perfecting work of the ministry that we have received from the cross. 1Co 11:26.

- Having been crucified with Christ, we have received the capacity to mourn with godly sorrow in the fellowship of Christ’s broken heart. We have also received repentance and faith as a gift from Him, who accomplished our repentance and who authored and finished our faith on the cross. Heb 12:2. In the fellowship of the trespass offering, having received power from on high from the Holy Spirit, we are able to proceed to minister this word of faith to others, which is the ministry of reconciliation. This is what it means to be a witness of Christ. Luk 24:46-49. Act 1:8.

Section Two

A ministry for the church age

- Paul was confident concerning the restoration of believers through the ministry of the trespass offering, for he confessed, 'Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.' 2Ti 4:8. Evidently, Paul trusted that the glory and crown that he had lost, through the departure of all the churches in Asia, would be restored to him.
- Paul's initiative extended beyond the restoration of the Asian churches. He was exemplifying and commending a ministry to overseers, or watchmen, who would continue to be effective among Gentile churches until the Father

took His seat at the end of the age. Paul himself had been restored to his predestination through this very ministry as it was exemplified by Stephen. We recall that as Stephen was being stoned, bearing Christ's reproach, he 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 Paul, who was consenting to Stephen's death. Act 7:58. Act 8:1. Through Stephen's prayer, in the fellowship of Christ's travail, Paul 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, Paul was established in the fellowship of the trespass offering. This became the culture of his life and the manner of his ministry.

- Now, 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, the ministry of reconciliation, that was extended to the Asian churches by Paul, and by those who embraced their participation in the trespass offering with him, *was effective.* About twenty years later, the Lord was able to send letters to the seven churches of Asia by the hand of the apostle John. These churches had received times of refreshing from the presence of God, by the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of overseers established by

Paul in the culture of the trespass offering. Now these churches were receiving further exhortation and refreshing from the Lord through John, who was also proceeding to minister from the fellowship of this offering. Rev 1:17-18.

- Although the seven churches of Asia had been recovered through Paul's initiative, and through the ministry of Timothy and other faithful brethren, the content of Christ's letters reveal that these churches were quite *mixed*. Indeed, this became indicative of cultural mixture that has plagued presbyteries and congregations for the whole church age. In this regard, throughout the history of the church, there have been seasons of restoration and recovery, as well as seasons of loss and falling away. It is for this reason that we have many denominations.

- Fifty years ago, when the Lord met me and delivered to me the word concerning lampstand churches, He said to me, 'If I can call you to repent, can't you believe that I can bring it to pass?' In this 'first-time' encounter, the Lord was delivering faith to me to believe for the restoration of lampstand churches. However, in this 'second-time' season, we are now understanding how this ministry of repentance and faith is exercised through our fellowship in the trespass offering.

- We are presently in the time of birth pangs, which precede the Father taking His seat, initiating the time of the end. These birth pangs are marked by both reproach and difficulty, as well as by times of refreshing, as the gospel of God and the message concerning lampstand churches is being restored to us. These birth pangs indicate that the bride is in labour to bring forth a manchild administration that is suitable for the fullness of the times. Through this

administration, the Father will gather together, in one, all things in Christ. Eph 1:10. *This is the great reconciliation.*

Paul's final exhortation

- The New Covenant presbyter is exhorted by Paul, in his final letter, to lay hold of, and be strong in, the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2Ti 2:1. This is necessary so that they do not stumble into iniquity, as the apostle Peter did in Antioch.

- Although he had previously been recovered by Christ after stumbling in the court of Caiaphas, Peter again required recovery through the ministry of the trespass offering, extended to him through the admonition of Paul. Gal 2:11-18. Peter was condemned because of his hypocrisy as he sought to *avoid* the reproaches of the Judaisers. Paul addressed Peter's fault through his own testimony. Paul had *chosen* the reproaches of Christ that belong to the fellowship of His crucifixion. From the fellowship of the trespass offering, Paul admonished Peter and said to him, '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.

- Every presbyter must heed this admonition, for the Scripture is clear that we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ to give an account of everything that we have done while on earth, whether good or bad. 2Co 5:10. Unless we receive the word of the cross and choose to bear the reproaches that belong to fellowship in the trespass offering, we will proclaim and live by another gospel. On the day of judgement, we will be surprised

when Christ declares, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practise lawlessness!' Mat 7:23.

- As we have already noted, Paul commenced his final epistle by telling us that we must not be ashamed of Christ and His testimony, nor be ashamed of His watchmen. 2Ti 1:8. The work of overseership and shepherding, to which Christ's watchmen have been called, requires them to give an account to God for those whom He has placed in their care. Heb 13:17.

Instruction to faithful messengers

- Paul sent his letter to Timothy because the young man was in danger of stumbling into iniquity on account of the disaffection of the Asian churches. 2Ti 1:13-15. As we noted earlier, it appears that Timothy had a propensity to timidity under the pressure of dissent in the presbytery and the departure of some men from the gospel that Paul had proclaimed.

- The answer for Timothy, and for other faithful messengers, was to forsake the *shame* of the reproaches against them and to join Paul in the fellowship of Christ's trespass offering. 2Ti 1:8,12. In this fellowship, they were able to receive instruction regarding *overseership,* and could minister, through weakness, in the Spirit and power of God. 1Co 2:3-5. Let us now consider some of the instructions that Paul gave concerning overseership.

- Paul's first instruction to overseers was 'to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands'. 2Ti 1:6. Graced messengers are to stir up, and keep faith with, the gift that they have received from God. However, it is important to note that stirring up the gift is dependent upon remaining connected to the fellowship of

Christ's hand. This is because the gift comes from His hand. Eph 4:11-12. As participants in this fellowship, faithful messengers are able to wage a good warfare. Watchmen can wage war in this manner because they continue to receive faith through the word that is proclaimed in the presbytery, and maintain a good conscience as it is sprinkled clean in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. 1Ti 1:18-19.

- Paul then wrote, 'Hold fast the pattern of *sound words* which you have heard from me, *in faith and love* which are in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us'. 2Ti 1:13-14. The sound words of Paul are the gospel of God, which is proclaimed to the church, season by season, as the word of present truth. Rom 1:1. Luk 12:42. 2Pe 1:12. A messenger can only hold fast to these words in faith and love which are in Christ. That is, they must receive the word that is laid down in the presbytery by offering (which is the expression of love). Then, by faith, and through offering, they can proclaim the word from the presbytery, according to their sanctification.

- With this in mind, we note that the departure of the Asian churches was because some messengers began to proclaim a word that was sourced from their own reasoning, historical traditions and devotional musings. They were no longer continuing in the things that they had learned, and had, in their own estimation, graduated from the fellowship in which this instruction had come. 2Ti 3:14. Their message was neither the fruit of offering nor the gospel of God received from Paul in the fellowship of the presbytery. Consequently, it was unable to minister the seven Spirits of God from the Holy Spirit to their hearers.

- Next, Paul explained that overseers who keep faith with the proceeding word, received by offering in the fellowship of the presbytery, were to commit this living word to faithful men who could teach others. 2Ti 2:2. With this instruction, Paul was directing overseers to identify, instruct and support men who were applying themselves, and their houses, to the program of discipleship initiated from the presbytery. As worthy houses, these men were growing to firstfruits and exemplifying the culture of godliness in the church. 1Co 16:15. To this end, Paul also gave some very clear instructions regarding the necessary attributes for elders and deacons in the church. 1Ti 3:2-13. Tit 1:6-9.

- Overseers are to engage with, and confront, those who are deviating from the gospel of God and the fellowship of faith in the presbytery and the church. However, they must do this from the fellowship of the trespass offering, which will have a bearing on their demeanour towards others. For example, Paul said to Timothy, 'A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.' 2Ti 2:24-26.

- This same principle applies to the ministry of the word by watchmen. They are to minister from the trespass offering so that those who hear their message will be joined to this same fellowship. In this regard, he exhorted Timothy, saying, 'Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. *Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching*. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own

desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, *endure afflictions*, do the work of an evangelist, *fulfil your ministry*.' 2Ti 4:2-5.

Mixture in the presbytery and the church

- Having considered some of Paul's key instructions for overseers, we also note that he illustrated these points using particular people and situations. For example, Paul nominated Phygellus and Hermogenes, who had been close to Paul, but who had turned away from him with the Asian churches. 2Ti 1:15. They represented a faction in the presbytery who had departed from Paul and the fellowship of the word that he had established. In contrast to other people and matters, it is notable that Paul did not pray for mercy to be granted to these men, implying that he had delivered them to be judged by Christ.

- Timothy was warned by Paul to beware of those who had excommunicated themselves from Christ and had continued in blasphemy against Him and His messengers. Specifically, Paul identified Alexander, the coppersmith, as a man who had done him much harm, greatly resisting the words of the presbytery. This was not the first mention of Alexander. In Paul's first letter to Timothy, he mentioned that Alexander and Hymenaeus had rejected 'faith and a good conscience'. Consequently, Paul had delivered them to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. 1Ti 1:19-20. Evidently, Alexander had continued in his impudence. To this end, Paul gave an account of him to Christ, asking that the Lord would repay him according to his works. 2Ti 4:14.

- A man called Onesiphorus had gone astray as part of the Asian churches, but he was being recovered from his stumbling as he embraced the reproaches of Christ and was not ashamed of Paul's chains. In the same way that Jesus had prayed for Peter, Paul had prayed that the Lord would grant mercy to Onesiphorus and his household. 2Ti 1:16. It is evident that Onesiphorus' recovery was an implication of his participation in the trespass offering, for when he arrived in Rome, he sought Paul out 'very zealously'. 2Ti 1:17. Zeal is a fruit of godly sorrow. 2Co 7:10-11. This sorrow belongs to those who look on Him whom they have pierced and embrace the reproaches of Christ that broke His heart as He was lifted up on the cross as a trespass offering. Zec 12:10. Having been restored to fellowship in Christ, Paul prayed that Onesiphorus would find mercy from Christ at His judgement seat. 2Ti 1:18.

- Demas was another man who had forsaken Christ by forsaking His messenger, Paul. This happened either on the journey to Rome or when they arrived in Rome. Demas departed from Paul because he loved this present evil world. 2Ti 4:10. In other words, he was afraid and ashamed of the chains that belonged to the persecution which Paul suffered at the hands of the Romans.

Overcoming Satan

- The Lord is establishing an administration that is suitable for the fullness of times in our day. Eph 1:10. This administration is a shepherding administration that will follow in the pathway of reproach that Jesus suffered in the course of His offering and suffering journey. Those who belong to this administration will be persecuted and struck with Christ, the good Shepherd.

- As these shepherds and overseers are struck, bearing the reproaches of Christ, their hearers will be at risk of stumbling, in the same way that Christ's disciples stumbled when He was struck. As Jesus said, 'All of you will be made to stumble [become offended] because of Me this night, for it is written: I will strike the Shepherd [and, by implication His under-shepherds], and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' Mat 26:31.

- The shepherding administration that is suitable for the fullness of times is *a praying administration* who follow in the steps of Jesus. Joh 13:36. Jesus said to Peter, and to all of us, '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 [i.e. when you are converted after you have stumbled], strengthen your brethren.' Luk 22:31-32. Jesus was praying for Peter as the great High Priest and Shepherd of our souls. Heb 8:1-2. 1Pe 2:25.

- A travailing presbytery is able to pray for those who belong to lampstand churches with this focus because they have, themselves, overcome Satan in the same manner as Job. In this regard, we note that after he had embraced his fellowship in the travail of Christ, which led to his repentance and the manifestation of the virtues of Christ, Job was able to pray for his friends. In doing so, he extended to them a fellowship in the trespass offering, which was necessary on account of their folly, or senselessness. Job 42:8.

- We have been called to overcome Satan and his temptations. Rev 12:11. We overcome him by the blood of the Lamb as we join Christ in the fellowship of His reproach and offering. We overcome him through the word of our testimony, which is the word and expression

of our obedience in relation to the works of discipleship that belong to our name. And we overcome him by laying our lives down to the death in the fellowship of Christ's death, as we are crucified with Him.

- Identifying ourselves as co-crucified with Christ means that we have embraced our fellowship in the trespass offering. As the obedience that Christ learned for us is being completed in us, Satan is being bruised under our feet. Heb 5:8. Making this point, Paul wrote, 'For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore, I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush [bruise] Satan under your feet shortly.' Rom 16:19-20.

- Fulfilling our obedience in the fellowship of the trespass offering, and thereby overcoming Satan, is the implication of receiving power from Christ to 'trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy'. Luk 10:19. It is by this means that we are able to deal with sorcery in all of its manifestations, including dispelling familiar spirits from households. Zec 13:2.

- We are recovered from our stumbling when the Lord visits us a second time. We learn this lesson as we consider the life and ministry of Peter and the rest of the apostles, all of whom stumbled and were scattered when Christ was struck. We know that, afterward, the Lord met Peter in the *agape* meal on the shore of Lake Galilee. Jesus was establishing Peter in his sanctification, which he could only fulfil in the fellowship of Christ's trespass offering. Joh 21:12,15-19.

- We are also able to follow the life of Paul and see how he found grace from the Lord and learnt not to stumble.

In this regard, he testified, 'And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.' 2Co 12:7. Paul received grace from God to endure this suffering for the sake of his sanctification. The Lord said to Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' 2Co 12:9. Having learnt to walk in the fellowship of Christ's weakness, he was strengthened to overcome the Roman world as he laid his life down and died the martyr's death in Rome.

- The twenty-four elders are the manchild spoken of in the book of Revelation. Rev 4:4. Rev 12:5. Their ministry is to offer up, as priests, the prayers of all the saints. Rev 4:8. The saints are praying that they will be delivered from the temptation of compromise, with Satan and the world, as they live among the last generation upon the earth in the time of the end. During this season, which is to come, Christians will be subjected to great tribulation. As they are strengthened with might in their inner man by the power of the Spirit, they will emerge out of this tribulation as those who have overcome every kind of temptation.

Enabled by the Spirit to endure

- The trespass offering is applied to us on a daily basis as we, by faith, walk by faith and are maintained in blamelessness before God. We are to take up our cross daily as those who are being *sanctified*. Luk 9:23. That is why the epistles of Paul, which the apostle Peter described as the Scriptures, are written to the saints – the sanctified, or holy, ones. Christians who are saints maintain fellowship with Christ in a local church and keep faith with Christ's watchmen-messengers.

- We are to keep, through grace, what has been entrusted to us in the new birth. We have the treasure of the divine nature within us. We must not fall away from Christ as we come under the pressure of the world and the pressure of those who are disaffected and set themselves against us.

- The fruits of the Spirit are essential within us so that we can remain calm in trial and immovable in Christ. This is particularly applicable to us in the season just prior to the Father taking His seat. The Scriptures describe this season as 'birth pangs'. Mat 24:8. 1Th 5:3. During this time, we will experience the beginning of the pressures, which portend the great tribulation, as well as times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord through the initiative of the Spirit. This is a time of sifting, initiated by the Lord, to prepare us for when the Lamb stands after the Father takes His seat, the twenty-four elders are established, and the 144 000 are sent forth to proclaim the gospel of God to the whole world.

- To draw back in unbelief, as we suffer persecution or because we are ashamed of the suffering of the watchmen who have been called to shepherd among us, puts us in danger of coming under the rebuke of Christ. It belongs to sinning wilfully. Heb 10:26. Through the prophetic Scriptures, expressed by Paul, the Lord Himself has said, 'Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.' Heb 10:38. Similarly, the apostle Peter warned, 'You therefore, beloved, since *you know this beforehand*, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' 2Pe 3:17-18.

Section Three

The default for a man and a woman

Excerpt from Chapter 5 of The fellowship of the trespass offering

- 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.