



# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

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# Contents

Monday 1 January	The adoption . . . . .	2
Tuesday 2 January	The redemption of our body . . . . .	3
Wednesday 3 January	New birth and adoption . . . . .	4
Thursday 4 January	The Holy Spirit of promise . . . . .	5
Friday 5 January	Sealed with the Holy Spirit . . . . .	6
Monday 8 January	Revealing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit . . . . .	7
Tuesday 9 January	The light of the world . . . . .	8
Wednesday 10 January	The word from the beginning . . . . .	9
Thursday 11 January	Made ready for the Father's agape meal . . . . .	10
Friday 12 January	The polarising effect of the word . . . . .	11
Monday 15 January	Let us consider one another . . . . .	12
Tuesday 16 January	The process of comparability . . . . .	13
Wednesday 17 January	A man's restoration to comparability . . . . .	14
Thursday 18 January	A woman's restoration to comparability . . . . .	15
Friday 19 January	The adornment of a woman . . . . .	16
Monday 22 January	Coming with clouds . . . . .	17
Tuesday 23 January	Living witnesses . . . . .	18
Wednesday 24 January	Coming to His churches . . . . .	19
Thursday 25 January	Coming to the Father . . . . .	20
Friday 26 January	The seal of the living God . . . . .	21
Monday 29 January	Coming to the world . . . . .	22
Tuesday 30 January	Christ's physical coming with clouds . . . . .	23
Wednesday 31 January	Ready for His coming . . . . .	24
Thursday 1 February	Remaining in Zion . . . . .	25
Friday 2 February	Invited to the wedding feast . . . . .	26

## The adoption

Importantly, the adoption is not only a waypoint of salvation. It defines a whole pilgrimage through which a person is progressively glorified as a son of God and as a son of man. Although the adoption gives to a person the right to become a son of God through new birth, they must continue in the adoption after they have been born again, in order to be saved. **1Ti 4:16**. New birth, in and of itself, is not sufficient for salvation. Establishing this point, Paul wrote, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.' **Rom 8:14-17**.

We see that the 'adopted man' refers to a person who has *chosen* their predestination. They were predestined by the Father to adoption as a son by Jesus Christ. They were to become a son of Christ, the Everlasting Father. **Isa 9:6**. Paul explained this point, writing, 'Just as He [God the Father] chose us in Him [Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons *by Jesus Christ to Himself* [i.e. to become His sons], according to the good pleasure of His [the Father's] will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.' **Eph 1:4-6**.

Those who receive the adoption through Jesus Christ will be raised on the last day. The resurrection is, in fact, the fulfilment of the adoption!

Further Study      COLOSSIANS 1

## The redemption of our body

In His prayerful discourse to the Father on the Mount of Olives, Jesus outlined what He had given to those whom the Father had given to Him. In this regard, He prayed, 'I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.' **Joh 17:6**. The elements that are fundamental to receiving the treasure promised in the adoption include the word, the name, the glory, and the love of God. **Rom 5:5**. It is necessary to lay hold of these elements in order to obtain the treasures of resurrection life, incorruptibility, and immortality, which are promised in the adoption. **1Co 15:53-54**.

These treasures are obtained only through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Emphasising this point, we note that there is no resurrection life apart from immersion into Christ's death. As Paul so blatantly proclaimed, 'Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' **Rom 6:4**. For this reason, we can view baptism as '*an adoption contract*', entitling us to the resurrection life of Christ that belongs to the predestination of the adoption.

Paul encouraged the Romans by saying, 'For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, *eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body*.' **Rom 8:22-23**. In this passage, Paul specifically connected the adoption to receiving an immortal, incorruptible body, which is then clothed with a heavenly body from the Father. Together, they form a spiritual body. **1Co 15:44**. A believer receives their spiritual body on the day of resurrection. This is what 'the redemption of our body' means.

Further Study      1 CORINTHIANS 15

## New birth and adoption

The adoption is particularly manifest in the third wound of Christ. What was created in Adam, and then given to Abraham, *was recreated in Christ* when He was beaten with rods for our peace. **Mat 26:67-68. Isa 53:5.** In this process, we are given His life and nature, which is the divine nature, and are made a corporate new man. **Eph 2:14-17.**

It is important to acknowledge the distinction between new birth and the process of the adoption. That which is born of God does not sin, but is to grow to maturity and fruitfulness. On this point, it is notable that the apostle John said, 'Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practise righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.' **1Jn 3:9-10.**

However, John was equally clear that a person who says that they have no sin deceives themselves and the truth is not in them. **1Jn 1:8.** This highlights our need to be joined to the process that belongs to the adoption. In this process, the old man, which does sin, is being removed from us; and we are being regenerated and renewed as a spiritual identity. We are receiving a new heart and a new spirit. **Eze 36:26-27.**

The viability of our sonship, which does not sin, but must mature, is contingent upon our regeneration and renewing as adopted sons in the fellowship of Christ's offering and suffering journey. **Tit 3:4-5.** In this regard, the condition of our heart, which is the ground that is being regenerated and renewed, needs attention. If the stones of our other law and the thorns that belong to our desire for other things are not removed from us through the circumcision of Christ, then the seed of our sonship, which does not sin, can die. **Mar 4:16-19. Col 2:11-12.** When this happens, our eternal sonship is lost.

Further Study      1 JOHN 3

## The Holy Spirit of promise

In our present season, we have been considering the significance of the lordship of the Holy Spirit. The Father and the Son have given the dispensation of the church age to the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul declared that 'the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty'. **2Co 3:17**. This freedom belongs to the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem who are obedient to the Holy Spirit. The Jerusalem from above is free. **Gal 4:26,31**.

The Holy Spirit is essential to the bride's capacity to be a helper comparable to Christ. He is also the One who enables each individual's citizenship as part of the remnant church. In this regard, our citizenship requires the seal of the Holy Spirit. In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul explained that those who are born of God are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. He wrote, 'In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, *you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory'. **Eph 1:13-14**.

The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our eternal inheritance as a citizen of the New Jerusalem. When we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, we receive the title, or deed, to a residence in the holy city! It is as though a down payment has been made, guaranteeing our citizenship. **Eph 4:30**.

For a married couple, the seal of the Holy Spirit is a remnant of the Spirit. **Mal 2:15**. In this regard, on the day of their wedding, when they ask for, and receive, a remnant of the Spirit, they obtain a 'plot' in the New Jerusalem. Their house has become part of the bride city so that the children who are born in their house are endowed with the divine nature, and are the godly seed whom the Father desires. **2Pe 1:2-4**.

Further Study      EPHESIANS 1



## Sealed with the Holy Spirit

What does it mean to be sealed by the Holy Spirit? We recognise that a seal is a device, such as a signet ring or cylinder, which is engraved with the owner's name or identifying motif. The seal is applied to a document, usually through an impression made on molten wax. The seal authenticates the authorship of the document, guaranteeing that its content belongs to the one by whom it has been sealed.

Having been born of God, and baptised into Christ, we are 'epistles' of Christ, ministered by His messengers. These letters, or documents, are not written with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God. They are not written on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh; that is, on the heart. **2Co 3:1-3**. We are made epistles of Christ and are sealed by the Holy Spirit as we journey with Him in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. We know this, for the Lord said, 'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; *I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh*. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them.' **Eze 36:26-27**.

The seal of the Holy Spirit is set on our heart. **Son 8:6**. It is the authentication of what has been written on our heart, identifying our name and life as belonging to God. Importantly, this seal is not simply an identifier; it is full of power! Once opened as a book, we are able to be read by others as a living epistle. This epistle is read and known by all men as a testimony and a witness. Jesus said that we are baptised with the Spirit for this very purpose. **Act 1:4-8**.

Further Study      2 CORINTHIANS 3

# Revealing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

As living epistles, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, we are revealing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In this regard, we are the book of life, the tree of life, and the river of life to others. These expressions belong to those who have received the Covenant of the Father, the Covenant of the Son, and the Covenant of the Holy Spirit.

We specifically reveal the Father as epistles of Christ for, through this expression, we are a book of life to those with whom we interact. Paul described those who received the gospel of God the Father, which he preached to them, as 'our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men.' **2Co 3:2**.

The Son, who is the Tree of Life, is specifically revealed through our communication of the word of faith that we have received, and that is in our heart and in our mouth. **Rom 10:6-8**. Describing this expression, King Solomon proclaimed, 'A wholesome tongue is a tree of life.' **Pro 15:4**. Furthermore, he taught, 'The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.' **Pro 11:30**.

Concerning the revelation of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said that out of our heart would flow rivers of living water. Recording this declaration, the apostle John wrote, 'On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, *out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.*" But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' **Joh 7:37-39**.

Further Study      JOHN 7

## The light of the world

As those who are sealed with the Holy Spirit, our expression of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be summarised as being the light of the world. This is possible only as we are joined in one Spirit with our brethren in Christ. **1Co 12:13**. That is, we must be part of a lampstand church. *Jesus was unequivocal on this point, proclaiming, 'You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.'* **Mat 5:14-16**. Notably, in this statement, Jesus associated our connection to a lampstand church with citizenship of the New Jerusalem, a city set on a hill called Zion. **Heb 12:22**.

We are the light of the world, shining before men as part of a lampstand church, when what is true in God is true in us. This is how we can be a book of life, a tree of life, and the river of life. Establishing this point, John wrote, 'Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.' **1Jn 2:7-8**.

From John's statement, we recognise that the old commandment and the new commandment are the same commandment. The old commandment is the word from the beginning, revealing the *agape* love that belongs to Their fellowship. John described this as 'light'. The new commandment is that the nature and fellowship of Yahweh is true in us.

Further Study      EPHESIANS 5

## The word from the beginning

The word from the beginning is, 'God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all'. **1Jn 1:5**. This describes the nature and fellowship of Yahweh. We must be joined to Their fellowship so that what is true in Them *also becomes true in us*. **1Jn 2:7-8**. We are joined to Their fellowship by receiving the word from the beginning. By receiving and obeying this word, we are joined to the fellowship of the body, which is the fellowship of the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit. **1Jn 1:1-3**. Concerning the new commandment, John then exhorted us, saying, 'Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you [as a new commandment], you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us – eternal life.' **1Jn 2:24-25**.

Importantly, and helpfully, the Holy Spirit teaches the word from the beginning as the new commandment. This is the New Covenant of the Spirit operating in our lives. The darkness of our own perspective is passing away because the word from the beginning (proclaimed through the gospel of God), which is true in Them, is true in us.

This light of life is the word from the beginning. It is how They live, which is Their love, Their faith, and Their hope. It is evident that the new commandment is active within us when our perspective is changing. We are delivered from the darkness of our own way and perspective as illumination concerning the gospel of God takes hold of our lives and we are connected to the word from the beginning. As we obey this commandment, we abide in the Light, and there is no cause for stumbling in us. **1Jn 2:10**.

Further Study      1 JOHN 2

## Made ready for the Father's agape meal

Although Christ is married to the church, Paul was clear that she is in need of cleansing and sanctification. To this end, having identified the church as the bride of Christ, he then explained that Jesus gave Himself for her 'that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish'. **Eph 5:26-27**.

The presentation of the bride, by the Son, will happen at the *agape* wedding supper that the Father will initiate after He takes His seat to rule the world in the end of the age. The *agape* meal that the Father is preparing for the church will be the *exanastasis* life of Christ, which will enable us to hunger no more, thirst no more, and will protect us from heat and storm. **Rev 7:15-16**. This *agape* is a total provision, made available to us in our mortality, protecting us from Babylon and from Antichrist in the end of this age. We particularly note this protection when the Lord makes a distinction between those in the holy place, and those in the outer court which is to be trampled underfoot for forty-two months. **Rev 11:1-3**.

This protection is promised to those who belong to the bride of Christ; those who have been counted worthy to participate in the wedding feast of the Lamb and His wife. **2Th 1:11-12**. The Lord has promised this protection to the daughter of Abraham and Sarah, saying, 'For the Lord will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in it, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.' **Isa 51:3**. Zion is the city that Abraham and Sarah looked for, which has foundations, and whose builder and maker is God. **Heb 11:8-10**.

Further Study      2 THESSALONIANS 1

## The polarising effect of the word

The bride is sanctified and washed by the Son through the ministry of His word, by the Spirit. **Eph 5:25-27**. This word is proclaimed from the presbyteries that are in His right hand. Jesus used the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins to describe the polarising effect of this ministry upon the seven churches. **Mat 25:1-13**.

Jesus taught that the door to the wedding feast, hosted by the Father, was opened to the five wise virgins. In contrast, the door was shut to the five foolish virgins because they did not have sufficient oil in their vessels. Their supply of oil was depleted because they had not obtained oil from those who sold it. The 'oil' refers to 'the word of grace' that is ministered by the Holy Spirit through the ascension gift-graced ministers within presbyteries. The five foolish virgins are individuals, families and whole churches who do not respond with repentance and faith to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. They are unwilling to 'sell', or to count as rubbish, their own self-righteous perspective so that they can receive a gospel that joins them to a cleansing and sanctifying process. **Php 3:8-9**. The polarising effect of the word that they spurn appoints them to their place outside of the Father's house.

The wise virgins refer to individuals, families and churches who have responded to the initiative of Christ as He comes among the churches in a spirit of judgement and burning, through the ministry of the Spirit. **Isa 4:4-5**. As they walk by the Spirit, in obedience to this word, they are joined to the process of cleansing and sanctification which Christ established through His offering and suffering journey. Even now, they shine the light of life that is obtained through their fellowship in this pilgrimage. **1Jn 1:7**. However, they are made comparable to Christ for the proclamation of the gospel *in the time of the end*, and for the nurture of those who are born of God and come into the city during this time of great ingathering.

Further Study      HEBREWS 3

## Let us consider one another

Jesus warned the presbytery of Ephesus, saying, 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and *remove your lampstand from its place.*' **Rev 2:5.** In this regard, we note that entire churches can be cleansed, and entire churches can be taken away, on the basis of their corporate response to the initiative of the Spirit.

How does an 'elect lady', who is made up of individuals and families, respond corporately to what the Spirit is saying to the churches? Helpfully, the apostle Paul answered this query, writing, 'And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.' **Heb 10:24-25.**

Clearly, we each have an accountability to encourage one another to participate in the *agape* meal that Jesus established prior to the commencement of His offering journey. As we partake of this meal, through our response to the word, we are nourished for our fellowship – as individuals, families and churches – in the offering and sufferings of Christ. **Col 3:16-17.** By this means, we are being sanctified and cleansed, and are being made comparable to Christ. **Heb 10:14.** Our works as Christ's helper are not only expressed through the proclamation of the word, which is necessary for bringing sons of God to birth; they also include the capacity to nurture to maturity those who are immature on account of carnality. **Gal 6:1.**

The Scriptures liken churches that are being made comparable to Christ to a wise, virtuous woman. In the book of Proverbs, King Lemuel asked, 'Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain.' **Pro 31:10-11.** A church that exhibits these characteristics is being established in the *agape* meal of her Husband, and is a place of protection for her children.

Further Study HEBREWS 10

## The process of comparability

Comparability is a relational capacity that belongs to the fellowship of headship. It is established, and then expressed, by offering, through the capacity of Eternal Spirit. Eternal Spirit, from the Holy Spirit, enables a person to make offering according to their sanctification. **Heb 9:13-14**. Offering in this manner is essential to comparability. Hence, comparability is only possible by the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of sanctification. **1Pe 1:1-2**. Sanctification by the Spirit within the order of headship means that Christ does not usurp the place of the Father; the man does not usurp the place of Christ in relation to his household; and the woman does not usurp the role of the man in relation to Christ. **1Co 11:3**.

With this in mind, we note some key factors identified by Peter, which affect the comparability of the church. He wrote, *'Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The Stone which the builders rejected has become the Chief Cornerstone," and "A Stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.'* **1Pe 2:7-8**. Clearly, obedience to the word of Christ, which is possible only by the Holy Spirit, is foundational to our comparability as part of the bride of Christ. Obedience to Christ is equivalent to being built on Christ, the living Stone; that is, being built into His temple. Disobedience to the headship that comes from Him as the Chief Cornerstone appoints a person to judgement and wrath. **Rom 2:5-8**.

Peter then proceeded to highlight that the obedience of those who belong to the New Jerusalem is very practical, and pertains to the conduct of individuals and households. In this regard, the expression of the bride is not only corporate, but is equally manifest by the fellowship of first love within a family and from house to house. Accordingly, an individual, a couple, and a household who belong to the bride city will be submitted to the lordship of the Spirit.

Further Study      1 PETER 2



## A man's restoration to comparability

A man, by the Holy Spirit, submits to the lordship of Christ. As head of his home, he is to be obedient to Christ. This means that he is obedient to the word of the messengers who proceed from the fellowship of a presbytery. **1Th 2:13**. Paul described this spiritual orientation to the messengers of Christ, writing, 'You received me as an angel of God, *even as Christ Jesus*.' **Gal 4:13-14**. We see that by receiving Christ's messengers and their message, a man is submitted to the headship of Christ. He is enabled by the Holy Spirit to be obedient to the word, which builds him, and his family, into the temple of God.

The departure of the Galatians from walking by the Spirit to living according to an old covenant was not only evident in their observance of religious customs and conditions; it was also demonstrated by the way in which they heard and received Paul and his message. **Gal 4:9-10**. Having begun in the Spirit, where they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to Paul, the Galatians were now measuring the word and those by whom it was proclaimed. **Gal 4:15-16**.

A man defaults in relation to the order of headship when he turns to the face of his wife for direction for his life and for the life of his household. **Gen 3:17**. However, he equally scorns the lordship of the Spirit and the order of headship if he presumes to take the place of the gift of Christ in the presbytery. He does this when he expresses himself in his home as an alternative authority to the presbytery by reinterpreting the word for the household or by promoting a different word. In short, he does not keep faith with what Christ is saying, by the Spirit, to the church, thus undermining his family's obedience to what they are hearing the Spirit say. By doing this, he has established in his house his own 'high place', and brings himself and his household under judgement.

Further Study      GALATIANS 4

## A woman's restoration to comparability

A Christian woman finds comparability through obedience to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit enables her to be obedient to her husband in all things. She receives grace from the Spirit for this obedience, whether or not her husband is obedient to the word. Peter exhorted believing women to this conduct, writing, 'Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.' **1Pe 3:1-2.**

The apostle Peter described the submission and obedience of a wife as her 'chaste conduct', which is accompanied by the fear of the Lord. A godly woman's chaste conduct is the fruit of her fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ as she overcomes the temptation of Satan. It exemplifies the very conduct that should belong to the bride of Christ. **2Co 11:2-3.** Her chaste conduct is accompanied by the fear of the Lord because of her submission to the lordship of the Spirit. She has received the anointing of the sevenfold Spirit of God, which includes the fear of the Lord. **Isa 11:2.**

If a husband does not obey the word, his godly wife is not to take the place of her husband within the family. However, this does not mean that a wife must obey her husband if he asks her to leave the body of Christ, or the temple. Paul gave clear instructions in this regard, writing, 'And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.' **1Co 7:13-15.**

Further Study      1 CORINTHIANS 7

## The adornment of a woman

Describing a woman who is part of the bride of Christ, Peter declared, 'Do not let your adornment be merely outward – arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel – rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.' **1Pe 3:3-6.**

When a Christian woman subverts her husband in the pursuit of what she perceives to be good for herself and for her family, she spurns the Holy Spirit and rejects the fellowship of headship. Her contrary conduct within his house indicates that she is not making her election sure as part of the bride of Christ. **2Pe 1:10-11.** Her incessant prayers, her reflections and testimonies, and her works of service cannot compensate for her rejection of the Spirit. These are religious works of the flesh that produce for her the passions of sin which are aroused within her because of unfulfilled desire. **Rom 7:5.**

If we are not illuminated to the mystery of Christ and the church, our Christian conduct in our houses, and in the church, will be carnal. **Eph 5:32-33.** It cannot be anything other than a ministry of condemnation. However, as we are submitted to the lordship of the Spirit and are, thereby, established in the order of headship, we are being made comparable to Christ as part of His bride. Our expression, or ministry, in our houses, from house to house, and to the community, will be of the New Covenant. This is the work to which we are all being called as part of lampstand churches.

Further Study      1 PETER 3

## Coming with clouds

The prophet Daniel described his vision of the Son of Man coming with clouds by saying, 'I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.' **Dan 7:13**. The Ancient of Days is the Father. Jesus Christ is the Son of Man. He became the glorified Son of Man on His offering journey from the last supper to the cross. On the day of His resurrection, Jesus Christ was the full revelation of Man in the image and likeness of God. **Gen 1:26. 2Co 3:18. 2Co 4:3-4. Rom 8:29.**

When Jesus Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives, He did not sit down upon the Father's throne. Rather, He sat down *on His own throne* at the right hand of the Father. The Father said to Him, 'Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.' **Psa 110:1. Heb 10:12-13**. Jesus Christ is presently seated at the right hand of the Father, *waiting for the time* when the Father will take His seat. When the Father takes His seat as the Ancient of Days, Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne to be presented before Him. **Dan 7:13**.

Significantly, when Jesus Christ is presented before the Ancient of Days, He will be accompanied by the clouds of heaven. 'The clouds of heaven' are Christ's witnesses. In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul encouraged us all by saying, 'Since we are surrounded by so great *a cloud of witnesses*, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking 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 12:1-2**.

Further Study      DANIEL 7

## Living witnesses

We know that there is already a great cloud of witnesses in heaven who have died in faith and have received the glory of their heavenly body. **Heb 11**. However, we are also surrounded by a great cloud of *living witnesses* on the earth. The living witnesses of Christ are those who reveal Him, by the Spirit, as the members of His body and His bride. Immediately before His ascension to take His seat at the right hand of God, Jesus said to His disciples, 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be *My witnesses* both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.' **Act 1:8**.

The living witnesses of Christ on earth are called 'the clouds of heaven' because *our citizenship* is in heaven. **Php 3:20-21**. When we are born as a son of God, the glory of our sonship is immediately hidden with Christ in God, even though we still reside in our physical body on earth. **Col 3:3**. Furthermore, when we are baptised into Christ, the Father places us in the fellowship of the body of Christ where He chooses. **1Co 12:18**. Also, the Father places us within the community of the church as the bride of Christ on earth. **Eph 3:14-15. Rev 21:10-11**.

The bride of Christ comprises believing families who belong to a local congregation, in a city or communicable area, within the fellowship of a lampstand church. Each congregation within a lampstand church should be a local manifestation of the bride of Christ. **2Co 11:2. 2Jn 1:1. 1Pe 5:13**. In this regard, there is an *individual* dimension as well as a *corporate* dimension to being a witness of Christ. We are witnesses of Christ as individual members of His body. **1Co 12:27**. However, we are also part of a corporate witness of Christ as those who belong to the community of the bride of Christ in a local congregation. **Mat 5:14**.

Further Study      ACTS 8

## Coming to His churches

The coming of Christ 'with the clouds of heaven' is an important scriptural theme in the book of Daniel, in the teaching of Jesus, in the writings of the apostle Paul, and in the book of Revelation. **Dan 7:13. Mar 13:26. Mar 14:62. Rev 1:7.** The Scriptures identify *four distinct phases* when Jesus Christ comes with the clouds of heaven; that is, with 'the clouds' of His witnesses.

The *first phase* of Christ's coming with clouds is during the church age. Jesus Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God in the middle of His lampstand churches. **Rev 1:12-13.** He is *coming to His lampstand churches* through the ministry of the presbyteries, which are likened to stars, in His right hand. **Rev 1:20.** Speaking about the first phase of His coming, Jesus said to the high priest, 'You will see the Son of Man *sitting* at the right hand of the Power [Father], and *coming* with the clouds of heaven.' **Mar 14:62.** We know that Jesus was talking about the church age, because He described Himself as being *seated* at the right hand of God.

It is important to recognise that Jesus Christ is not presently coming with clouds to the world so that all the tribes of the earth will mourn. **Rev 1:7.** Rather, during the church age, He is *coming to His lampstand churches through the word* that is proclaimed by the messengers in His right hand. **2Co 13:1. Gal 4:14.** In this phase of His coming, He is *seen only* by those who turn to the lordship of the Holy Spirit in response to the word of God that is proclaimed to them. When a person turns to the Holy Spirit, the veil that has covered their eyes is removed and they can meet Christ face to face. **2Co 3:16-17.** Looking into the face of Christ as into a mirror, a person can see, by the Spirit, the true condition of their own heart, and the glory of their sonship. **2Co 3:18.**

Further Study      1 THESSALONIANS 2

## Coming to the Father

The *second phase* of Christ's coming with clouds will happen when the Father takes His seat to initiate the time of the end. When the Father takes His seat, Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne, and will then *come to the Father* with the clouds of heaven. **Dan 7:9,13**. He will be accompanied by all the overcomers from lampstand churches who have learned to walk blamelessly with Him in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. **Rev 3:5**. During this phase of His coming, Jesus Christ will move His entire administration to the throne of the Father. This will be a major transition! In the time of the end, the administration of Christ will be 'in and around' the Father's throne. **Rev 4:1-11**.

The prophet Daniel described the outcome of Christ's coming to the Father by saying, 'Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.' **Dan 7:14**. When the Father takes His seat, the time will come for Christ to rule in the midst of His enemies. **Psa 110:2**. His enemies will be made to be a footstool for His feet. **Psa 110:1**. The Father will give the throne of David to Jesus Christ and His overseers. **Jer 33:17**. 'The throne of David' is the twenty-four thrones that are around the throne of the Father. **Rev 3:21**. **Rev 4:4**.

When Jesus Christ is presented before the Ancient of Days, with the clouds of heaven, He will *confess the name* of each of His witnesses before the Father. Speaking about His cloud of witnesses, Jesus said, 'Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.' **Mat 10:32-33**.

Further Study      PSALM 110

## The seal of the living God

Jesus said to the presbytery and lampstand church in Sardis, 'He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will *confess his name before My Father* and before His angels [messengers].' **Rev 3:5**. This is an important point. Jesus Christ will confess the name of every overcomer to the Father *before* the Father instructs Christ to place the seal of the living God upon the forehead of each overcomer. **Rev 7:2-3**.

'The seal of the living God' is the name of the Father. **Rev 14:1**. The name of the Father will be inscribed upon the foreheads of the 144 000 as the firstfruits of the true Israel of God. **Rev 14:1,4**. The 144 000 will be sealed as the servants of God before Jesus Christ begins to open the seven seals upon the scroll. **Rev 7:1-4**. The scroll with the seven seals contains the full revelation of the Father's will in relation to both salvation and judgement, in the time of the end. **Rev 5:1-7**.

The prophet Daniel saw the Son of Man receive dominion and glory and a kingdom from the Father. **Dan 7:14**. The scroll with the seven seals includes the authority for Christ to establish the Father's kingdom on the earth. When the Father gives the scroll to Christ as the Lamb of God, His ascension-gift overseers, and the world-wide presbytery on the twenty-four thrones, will bow down to worship Him. **Rev 5:8**. They will all sing a new song before the Lamb, saying, 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and *we shall reign on the earth*.' **Rev 5:9-10**.

Further Study      REVELATION 7



## Coming to the world

The *third phase* of Christ's coming with clouds will commence when He opens the first seal upon the scroll. The apostle John recorded, 'I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see". And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.' **Rev 6:1-2**. When the first seal is opened, the 144 000 will be sent to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God as a testimony in all nations. **Mat 24:14**. The evangelistic ministry of the 144 000 will shatter the power of the seventh world kingdom as they bring a great multitude from every tribe, nation, people, and tongue into the kingdom of God.

During this phase of Christ's coming with clouds, He will be seen by a great multitude in all nations. We read in the book of Revelation, 'Behold, He is coming with clouds and *every eye will see Him*, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.' **Rev 1:7**. The great multitude who come into the kingdom of God during the opening of the seals will include the regathering of the remnant of Ephraim as part of the fullness of the nations. **Gen 48:19**. **Rom 11:25**. It will also include the salvation of at least one third of the Jewish nation. **Zec 13:9**. Speaking specifically about the sixth seal, Jesus said, 'Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.' **Mar 13:26**.

Following the opening of the sixth seal, the kingdom of God will be established above all the nations of the world. **Isa 2:2-4**. For at least seven years, the major agenda in the world will be the fellowship of the *agape* meal in the kingdom of God. **Zec 14:16-19**.

Further Study      ISAIAH 2

## Christ's physical coming with clouds

The *fourth phase* of Christ's coming with clouds will happen when He *physically returns* to the earth at the end of the age. When Jesus Christ physically returns, He will be accompanied by a great cloud of heavenly witnesses. **Act 1:9-11**. This cloud of witnesses will include all those who have died in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings – both before the cross and after the cross. In his letter to the Thessalonians, the apostle Paul said, 'I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God *will bring with Him* those who have fallen asleep [physically died] in Jesus.' **1Th 4:13-14**.

On the day of resurrection, Jesus Christ will physically descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. **1Th 4:16**. By the proclamation of His word, He will recreate, from the dust of the ground, a physical body for every son of God who has died in Him. **Joh 6:40,44,54**. Each resurrection body will be composed from the DNA of Christ's resurrection body. As each son of God inhabits their incorruptible and immortal body from Christ, it will be clothed with the glory of their heavenly body that they have already received from the Father. **2Co 5:1**. The union of the physical body from Christ, and the heavenly body from the Father, will form their spiritual body. **1Co 15:44**.

On the same day of resurrection, the physical body that belongs to every son of God who is alive and remaining will be changed, or transformed, by the word of Christ. **1Co 15:51-53**. After our physical body has been changed by the word of Christ, we will be clothed with the glory of our heavenly body from the Father, giving us a spiritual body that is suitable for the new heavens and the new earth. **1Co 15:50. 2Co 5:1-5**.

Further Study      1 THESSALONIANS 4

## Ready for His coming

Jesus described the final season of His coming to His lampstand churches, once the Father has taken His seat, to be like 'a thief in the night'. **Mat 24:43-44**. We do not know the day or the hour when the Father will take His seat. **Act 1:7**. For this reason, the coming of the Son of Man to His lampstand churches, for the purpose of taking all the overcomers with Him to the Father's throne, will also be at an hour that we do not expect.

This is an important point. When Jesus Christ stands up to move to the Father's throne, He will be accompanied only by those who are awake, watching, and ready for His coming. **Mat 25:1-13**. Jesus said to the disciples, 'Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming – in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning – lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping, and what I say to you, I say to all: watch!' **Mar 13:35-37**. The Holy Spirit enables us to obey Christ's command to watch and pray with Him by joining us to the fellowship of His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. **Mat 26:41**. **Rom 8:26**.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus repeatedly emphasised the need for us to be ready for His coming at an hour that we do not expect. For example, speaking about the time when the Father will take His seat, Jesus said, 'But of that day and hour no-one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were so, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.' **Mat 24:36-39**.

Further Study      MATTHEW 24

## Remaining in Zion

When the Father takes His seat to judge the world in the time of the end, the only place of safety for every son of God will be under the shadow of the Father's tabernacle on Mount Zion. **Isa 4:5-6**. As sons of God who have been baptised into Christ, we know that we have already come to Mount Zion. **Heb 12:22**. However, we will not remain in Mount Zion unless we embrace the cleansing initiative of Christ toward our families and congregations in the season of His visitation. **Isa 4:4**.

Speaking about the outcome of this polarisation, the prophet Isaiah declared, 'It shall come to pass that he who is *left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem* will be called holy – everyone who is recorded among the living in Jerusalem.' **Isa 4:3**. When the Father takes His seat, He will spread His tabernacle over all the families and congregations who have been cleansed by Christ and remain in the heavenly Jerusalem. Isaiah continued, 'Then the Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night'. **Isa 4:5**.

When we consider the polarising impact of God's word upon all the inhabitants of Mount Zion, we understand why Jesus said, 'Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.' **Mat 24:40-43**. Those who are not ready for the coming of the Son of Man when the Father takes His seat will be swept away, or taken away, in God's judgement upon the world. **Mat 13:30**. In contrast to this, every overcomer who remains in Mount Zion will accompany Christ into the wedding feast that the Father has prepared for Christ and His Bride in the time of the end. **Mat 25:10**.

Further Study      JOHN 15

## Invited to the wedding feast

In our present season, the Father, by the Spirit, is inviting us all to come to the wedding feast that He has prepared for Christ and the church in the time of the end. **Rev 19:9**. The Father will personally host this great wedding feast when He takes His seat as the King upon His throne. In the parable, it is called 'the wedding feast for the King's Son'. **Mat 22:2**. The parable of the wedding feast, and the parable of the great banquet, both highlight that we must respond to the invitation of the Father *in a prompt manner* when it is extended to us. The parable of the wedding feast also teaches us that we must be clothed in an appropriate wedding garment. **Mat 22:11**.

We respond to the invitation of the Father to the wedding feast by embracing our participation in the fellowship of the *agape* meal *now*, in the place where the Father has placed us. **Eph 3:14-15**. Our participation in Yahweh's *agape* meal is our fellowship in the body of Christ and our fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, the word of Christ is washing and sanctifying us as individuals, families and congregations who belong to the bride of Christ. **Eph 5:25-27**. Furthermore, the blood of Christ is washing our priestly robe, and making it white, as we are led by the Holy Spirit on the offering journey that Christ has pioneered for us. **Rev 7:14-15**. Our priestly garment is our wedding garment! **Rev 19:7-8**.

Jesus Christ is cleansing us now, in the fellowship of the *agape* meal, so that we are ready to participate with Him in the Father's wedding feast in the time of the end. Through His messengers, Christ is walking among His lampstand churches with eyes like a flame of fire. **Rev 1:14**. **Rev 2:18**. We must respond to Christ's cleansing initiative toward our families in the season of His visitation; otherwise, we will not remain in the heavenly Jerusalem when the Father takes His seat. **Isa 4:2-6**.

Further Study      MATTHEW 22



Restoring  
my Soul