



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

AUGUST 2021

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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August 2021

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The revelation of Jesus Christ

Introducing the book of Revelation, the apostle John wrote, 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants – things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.' **Rev 1:1-3.**

The Greek word that is translated 'revelation' in this passage is '*apokalupsis*'. It refers to the revealing, appearing, or manifestation of something. In this regard, what is revealed is substantive, or actually happening, rather than merely informative or descriptive. God gave this revelation to Jesus Christ when, in the covenant fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, before the foundation of the world, Yahweh the Son offered Himself to be the revelation of the Father's name in a multitude of sons.

Accordingly, Yahweh the Son emptied Himself, by Eternal Spirit, to become the Father's Son and Seed. Having been begotten as the Son of God, His heavenly body was the household for God the Father, composed of the sons of God whom the Father had named in the Son. We note that Christ's corporate body is depicted in the Scriptures as a 'house' or a 'temple' made up of living stones. **Heb 3:5-6. 1Pe 2:4-5. 1Co 3:16. Eph 2:19-22.**

'Heavenly places' was established when Yahweh Son was begotten as the Son of God and He was made the Head of the Father's house, which is the temple of His body. This was the fruit of the Son's offering as the Lamb of God who was slain from the foundation of the world. **Rev 13:8.** Christ's offering as the Lamb was manifest for us, *in time*, when He was crucified on the cross. **1Pe 1:20.**

FURTHER STUDY REVELATION 1

The ministry of Christ's servants

That which was revealed to the Son was given to Him by the Father so that the Son could show it to His servants. **Rev 1:1**. Jesus did this by sending and *signifying* the revelation to the apostle John by His angel, Gabriel. In the same way that the revelation of Jesus Christ was more than information about Him and His work, the signifying of this revelation was more than simply the communication of information to John. When the revelation of Jesus Christ was signified to John, he was *connected* to the manifestation, or appearing, of Jesus Christ.

John's work, as a servant of Christ, was to bear witness to the word of the Father and the testimony of Jesus Christ. He did this by writing and proclaiming what he had received, so that those who read and heard his message could obtain the *blessing* inherent in the revelation of Jesus Christ. **Rev 1:19**. A person who is blessed in this manner is not simply happy, or approved, because they are able to comprehend an eschatological proposition. They are obtaining the eternal blessing that belongs to those who are born of God and joined to the fellowship of Yahweh, in Christ. It is the blessing that is promised in the Everlasting Covenant. **Heb 13:20-21**.

John commenced this message, writing, 'Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come [the Father], and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne [the ministry of the Holy Spirit], and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth [the Son]'. **Rev 1:4-5**. John's message was the word of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It was joining those who received the revelation of Christ to Their Everlasting Covenant.

The express image of the Father

Jesus identified Himself in the opening statement of the book of Revelation, by saying, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.' **Rev 1:8**. Significantly, Jesus identified Himself in the same way that the apostle John identified God the Father – Him 'who is and who was, and who is to come.' **Rev 1:4**.

The apostle Paul explained this point as he introduced his letter to the Hebrews. He said that the Father has spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things. The Son is the brightness of the Father's glory, and 'the express image of His person.' **Heb 1:1-3**. In other words, the Father, and His desire for many sons, is revealed by the Son. We are joined to the Father's purpose for us when Christ is revealed to us as I AM through the ministry of the word of the cross, by the Holy Spirit.

In summary, the revelation of Jesus Christ that God the Father gave to Him to show to His servants is not just the revelation of all the content recorded as the book of Revelation. **Rev 1:1**. The revelation of Jesus Christ is His revelation as 'I AM'. I AM is the name of Yahweh, through which He makes Himself known to us so that we can know Him, relate with Him, and receive our sonship in Him.

The name of the Lord is the revelation of all truth, reality and substance. **Joh 14:6**. The truth transcends time. Christ as I AM is more than ever-present, and more than the God of history. He is the truth, or reality, of everything that exists. His revelation as I AM, through the ministry of the word of the cross, is the interpretative principle by which we understand and join God's purposes, which are written in all of the Scriptures. **Joh 8:28**.

Three dimensions of the oath

In the book of Hebrews, the apostle Paul outlined three dimensions of the oath that was sworn by Yahweh, guaranteeing the fulfilment of Their Everlasting Covenant. Previously, we have considered two dimensions of the oath. This is the dual-oath of the Father, designating Christ as *King* and as *High Priest* according to the order of Melchizedek. The Father made this oath so that we might have strong consolation as we flee for refuge in Christ to lay hold of the hope of sonship that is set before us. **Heb 6:17-18.**

However, in his letter, Paul was very clear that there was also an oath that was sworn by the Son when He was made the Head of the Father's house, which is the temple of His corporate body. As the Apostle and High Priest of this heavenly temple, the Son swore that those who disobeyed His word would not enter the blessed 'rest' of eternal life and fellowship with Yahweh, which belongs to those who are part of His house.

Establishing this point, the apostle Paul recorded the words of Jesus, which are ministered by the Holy Spirit, writing, 'Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, "They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways." So I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest."' **Heb 3:7-11.**

It is remarkable to consider that the Lord Jesus swore this oath in relation to His covenant people. Recognising this sobering reality, the apostle Jude warned every believer by saying, 'I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord [the Son], having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.' **Jud 1:5.**

Since a promise remains

The Lord said that He bore the nation on eagles' wings to bring them to Himself so that they might be His *firstborn*. **Exo 19:4. Exo 4:22.** Having been saved out of Egypt, this company of firstborn sons was to pass through the wilderness and enter the land that was promised to Abraham and his children as an inheritance. They were to become a kingdom of priests.

The journey of the children of Israel, from Egypt to the promised land, describes the pathway of salvation that Christ pioneered for each person through His offering journey as the Lamb of God. This was the journey through which our works as sons of God in this age, and in the age to come, were written in the Book of Life. They were written for us by the Father, in Christ, as He fulfilled them when He descended to the lowest parts of the earth in the course of His offering journey. **Isa 26:12. Psa 139:15-16.** This work was finished when the Lamb was slain *before*, and was manifest on the cross when He was lifted up as I AM. **1Pe 1:20-21. Joh 8:28.** The salvation that Christ authored, through the things which He suffered, belongs to those who *obey Him*. **Heb 5:9.**

In this regard, the apostle Paul warned the New Covenant church, saying, 'Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, *let us fear* lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For *we who have believed do enter that rest*, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" *although the works were finished from the foundation of the world!* **Heb 4:1-3.**

Let us fear

The intended entrance of the Israelites into the promised land was described by Paul as ‘the rest’ that we are to enter as sons of God. This is the inheritance of *eternal* sonship that God the Father has predestined for each person, in Christ. **Eph 1:5**. We enter this rest through obedience, by the faith which we receive as a gift as we hear the word of God. **Eph 2:8**. **Rom 10:17**. **Heb 11:8**. Equally necessary, is to receive and demonstrate the fear of God. The apostle Paul proclaimed, ‘Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, *let us fear*.’ **Heb 4:1**.

Notably, King David described the fear of the Lord as ‘clean, enduring forever’, and associated it with the *judgements of the Lord* which are ‘true and righteous altogether’. **Psa 19:8-9**. The hope of obtaining our sonship is not disappointed, but rather assured, because the love of God is poured into our hearts. This happens as we, in the fear of the Lord, maintain our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, through which we are being delivered from our propensity to disobedience. **Rom 5:5**.

The judgement of God upon the earth is not yet revealed. It will commence in the time of the end, when the Father takes His seat upon the throne. However, the oath of the Son reveals that judgement is already happening in the house of the Lord. The apostle Peter stated this reality, writing, ‘For the time has come for judgement to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?’ **1Pe 4:17**. Their end is defined by the oath of the Son who has proclaimed, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ **Heb 3:11**.

Learning the fear of the Lord

The example of the children of Israel teaches us that obtaining the promised rest of sonship, as those who live by offering in the fellowship of Yahweh, requires us to fear the Lord. This was the apostle Paul's exhortation as he wrote, 'Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.' **Heb 4:11-13.**

We learn the fear of the Lord by meeting Christ eye to eye as the word of the cross exposes our heart before Him. This is essential to our deliverance from sin and the other law, and to receiving the divine nature as an eternal possession. King David said, 'The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is *warned*, and in keeping them there is *great reward* [the divine nature as a son of God].' **Psa 19:9-11.**

Learning the fear of the Lord is the mercy of God. This is because we must fear the Lord in order to enter His rest, which is the fellowship of Yahweh. Our participation in the fellowship of Yahweh as a son of God is our spiritual service of worship. **Rom 12:1.** King David explained that worship in heavenly places requires the fear of the Lord. **Psa 5:7-8.** We worship in this manner as we journey in fellowship with Christ, and with one another, on the pathway of sonship that He has pioneered for us.

FURTHER STUDY DEUTERONOMY 31

Meeting eye to eye

Speaking of the wicked, King David wrote, 'There is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flatters [or praises] himself in his own eyes, when he finds out his iniquity and when he hates. The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; he has ceased to be wise and to do good.' **Psa 36:1-3**. There is no fear before the eyes of the wicked because they do not meet Christ, eye to eye. When they are confronted by the word of the cross, they draw back in unbelief. A notable technique of withdrawal is the rapidity of their apologies as they define, and express contrition for, their self-proclaimed shortcomings. In doing so, they close the mouth of the messenger, who is unable to speak to them and reveal the true condition of their heart, through the word of God.

A deceived person cannot find reality, nor can they see with spiritual sight, until they meet Christ face to face and eye to eye. When Christ meets them eye to eye, He looks into their heart and exposes the attitudes that are motivating them. **Heb 4:12**. They understand that unless they are delivered and change, then they are lost and damned. The fear of God grips their heart, and they are able to cry out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' **Luk 18:13**. They are then able to receive the instruction of the Lord through the word of the presbytery, and learn the fear of the Lord.

If, after hearing God's word, we rebel against it, God will become angry with us. **Heb 3:17**. In His anger, He leaves us in our unbelief. **Heb 3:18-19**. We know that unbelievers cannot enter heaven. **Luk 12:45-46**. The apostle Paul tells us that even though God and Christ have already finished for us the works that belong to our sonship, God has also sworn that if we do not fear God and obey His word, then we will not receive the promise of eternal sonship as our inheritance.

The example of Saul

King Saul's failure in relation to the test of the Amalekites demonstrated that he did not fear God. In fact, he said to Samuel that he feared the people and obeyed their voice. **1Sa 15:24**. On account of Saul's disobedience, the Lord said to Samuel, 'I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has *turned back* from following Me, and has *not performed* My commandments.' **1Sa 15:11**. Saul's disobedience revealed that he had 'an evil heart of unbelief in *departing* from the living God'. **Heb 3:12**. The Lord's soul had no pleasure in Saul because he drew back in this manner. **Heb 10:38**.

Significantly, because Saul had not learnt the fear of the Lord, he did not even know that he was disobedient! He confidently, yet ignorantly, represented himself before the messenger of the Lord, saying, 'Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.' **1Sa 15:13**. This statement revealed that Saul was cleaving *with deceit* to the messenger, because he was, himself, deceived. **Dan 11:34**. Even when confronted by Samuel, he endeavoured to excuse himself, saying, 'But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me.' **1Sa 15:13**.

Saul circumvented the first dimension of the Lord's oath, because he did not fear God. Consequently, he defaulted in relation to the second and third dimensions of God's oath. He did not stand up in his authority as king; heeding, instead, the voice of the people. And, his offerings were a corruption. Samuel said to him, 'Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.' **1Sa 15:22-23**.

The example of Jehoshaphat

Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, had riches and honour in abundance. However, he made an alliance with the king of Israel, Ahab. We can liken such an alliance to a *church merger*. After some time, Ahab and Jehoshaphat went up to Ramoth Gilead to fight against the Syrians. Although Jehoshaphat recognised the counterfeit prophecies of Ahab's diviners, he nevertheless went with Ahab, over and against the direction given by the prophet Micaiah who was being abused by Ahab. **2Ch 18:16**.

The armies of Israel and Judah were soundly routed by the Syrians, and Ahab was killed, even as he sought to conceal his identity. **2Ch 18:33-34**. Jehoshaphat, fortunate to avoid the same fate, returned to the safety of his house in Jerusalem. **2Ch 19:1**. Jehu, the Lord's messenger, went to meet Jehoshaphat with a rebuke, saying, 'Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Therefore the wrath of the Lord is upon you. Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God.' **2Ch 19:2-3**. This was the word of the cross, bringing a separation to Jehoshaphat's life.

In response to the word of Jehu, Jehoshaphat forsook his previous alliances and gave himself to the work of reforming the culture of the nation of Judah. He set judges, symbolic of those who are part of *aggelos* presbyteries, throughout all the fortified cities of Judah. **2Ch 19: 4-5**. In type, a lamp light was being placed in each of these local congregation 'flowers'.

Significantly, he said to the judges, 'Thus you shall act in the fear of the Lord, faithfully and with a loyal heart: Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities ... you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the Lord and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty.' **2Ch 19:9-10**. By this means, Jehoshaphat taught the whole nation the fear of the Lord.

The judgement of the Son

The cross of Christ is the instrument that causes a separation between those who are of the world and passing away, and those who are born of God. The word of the cross is ministered by messengers of God who are part of an *aggelos* presbytery in the right hand of Christ. Through the proclamation of the gospel, which they exemplify in their own life, Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified among their hearers. **Gal 3:1.**

Accordingly, the ministry of an *aggelos* presbytery effects the separation of the wicked from the just, within the church. Jesus used a parable to explain this mandate, saying, 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels [*aggelos*] will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' **Mat 13:47-50.**

In this parable, Jesus likened the proclamation of the gospel of sonship to a net that is cast into the sea of humanity, which draws out fish of every kind. These fish are people who respond to the gospel and are delivered out of the sea of God's forgetfulness and onto the shore of the new creation. In this regard, they are born of God and joined to the body of Christ. However, the separating effect of the word of the cross continues within the church. **Heb 4:12.** This is an aspect of the judgement that belongs to the Son, and begins in His house. **1Pe 4:17.** The good fish are gathered into vessels, while the bad fish are cast away, and go out into the lake of fire.

The winnowing fan

John the Baptist, who ministered in the spirit of Elijah, declared, 'I indeed baptise you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. *His winnowing fan is in His hand*, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.' **Luk 3:16-17.**

A winnowing fan is a tool used for separating wheat from chaff. Its identification in the *hand* of Christ reveals that this action of separation is an aspect of the work that belongs to the stars in His right hand. **Rev 1:16.** Jesus explained that these stars are the presbyteries, or *aggelos*, of lampstand churches. The separation of the wheat from the chaff, is a feature of the Son's judgement in the church. His judgement is described by John the Baptist as thoroughly cleaning out *His* threshing floor. The outcome of this judgement, through the work of presbyteries in the right hand of Christ, is that the sons of God, who are likened to wheat, are gathered into His barn, or house. The chaff, referring to those who fall away from sonship, is burned with unquenchable fire. This means that these people are cast out of the Son's house and into the lake of fire.

Those who have been called to the work of overseership within the church need to become comfortable with the separating effect of the word of the cross, but also with the work of opposing those things that are not of Christ. We note, in this regard, the testimony of Paul who said to the Christians in Thessalonica, 'We were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.' **1Th 2:2-3.**

The discomfort of separation

Testifying of his own fellowship in the offering of Christ, the apostle Paul wrote, 'But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.' **Gal 6:14.** Paul's statement highlights the need for us to accept, and to become comfortable with, the relational fallout that can result from our fellowship in the cross of Christ. This relational distress may be experienced in our families, in the church, and in the broader community. **Luk 12:51.**

We should not be surprised when our commitment to the word and culture of the cross gives rise to discord within these settings. We note, for example, the words of Jesus, who declared, 'Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.' **Mat 10:34-36.** This two-edged sword is the word of the cross that addresses every individual and every family.

The cross of Christ is the instrument that causes a painful separation between those who belong to Christ, and those who belong to the world as part of Babylon. **2Co 6:14-18.** On one side, this separation is the implication of a believer's adherence to Christ, and their obedience to His commands. The world is crucified to them as they forsake every doctrine and speech that is other than the word of the cross. **Gal 6:14.**

On the other side, those who live by the principles of the world separate themselves from those who put Christ ahead of their carnal expectations and demands. Their relational reservations, and techniques of control, are forms of reproach that are directed towards those who remain committed to fellowship in the light of the word. **1Jn 1:7.** A disciple of Christ is crucified to the world when those who are of the spirit of the world withdraw from them because of their obedience to the proceeding word of God.

FURTHER STUDY 2 CORINTHIANS 6

19 August | Our only boast

Our only boast should be in our commitment to fellowship in the cross of Christ. We must take heed to ourselves with respect to the propensity to glory in our capacity to accommodate cultures in our families, and in the church, which are contrary to the doctrine of the cross. **Rom 16:17**. Glorifying in this manner is not good. In fact, the apostle Paul identified it as a leaven which undermines a person's participation in the *agape* meal, bringing them under the judgement of God. **1Co 5:6. 1Co 11:29-30**. They demonstrate that they are not a disciple of Christ, and do not love their Lord more than they love those who despise Him and His word. **Luk 14:26**.

Those who lived, and presumptuously ministered in the church, from the basis of this leavened culture were described by Paul as insubordinate, idle talkers and deceivers. **Tit 1:10**. He noted that they professed to know God, but in works they denied Him, 'being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work'. **Tit 1:16**.

A person who glories in the cross, does not seek relational disharmony with others. In fact, if possible, and as much as depends on them, they endeavour to live at peace with all men. **Rom 12:18**. However, their undertakings are never at the expense of their sanctification as a son of God in the fellowship of the body of Christ. To this end, they follow the direction of Paul, who wrote, 'Pursue peace with all people, *and holiness* [or, sanctification], without which no one will see the Lord'. **Heb 12:14**.

A person stands in the sanctification of their sonship when their 'yes' is 'yes', and their 'no' is 'no'. **Mat 5:37**. Their 'yes' and their 'no' are expressions of faith, which they receive by hearing the word of the cross. **Rom 10:17**. Those who live this way are neither ashamed of the gospel, nor afraid of the repercussions of testifying to this word as a culture in all the contexts of their life.

Nurture and admonition

In households where fellowship in the cross of Christ is not being set as a culture, children can grow increasingly *angry* through the teenage years and beyond. This happens because they are not taught to accept what are common, or normal, difficulties, frustrations and distresses that are associated with mortality. **1Co 10:13. Ecc 9:11.** More notably, the children are not taught to receive these difficulties as their unique share in the sufferings of Christ. **Php 3:10.** In this regard, parents provoke their children to *wrath* by failing to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. **Eph 6:4.**

The nurture and admonition of the Lord is a ministry of grace to children by parents who are, themselves, submitted to the order of headship in Christ. As children receive this instruction, and are obedient to their parents, they are able to stand in grace, and mature as sons of God. **Eph 6:1-3. Rom 5:1-2.** They are being delivered from the foolishness that is bound up in their heart as a consequence of the fall of mankind, and are fulfilling the works of sonship that belong to their name in Christ. **Pro 22:15.** As they are trained in this culture of priesthood, they will begin to choose it for themselves around the age of twelve. **Luk 2:49.**

The connection of a Christian child to the offering and sufferings of Christ, through obedience to their parents, was exemplified by Isaac when he was bound by Abraham on the altar of sacrifice on Mount Moriah. These cords bound Isaac to the uncomfortable reality of his fellowship in the offering of the Lamb of God. He gave himself to this fellowship because blamelessness had been established as the culture of Abraham's household. **Gen 17:1. Gen 18:19.** Likewise, through the nurture and admonition of the Lord, by which blamelessness is established as a culture within a Christian household, the children learn how to present themselves as living sacrifices who are holy and acceptable to God. **Rom 12:1.**

FURTHER STUDY COLOSSIANS 3

The problem of compensation

Parents provoke their children to wrath when they inordinately compensate for their children's ailments and social upsets, rather than teaching them to accept their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. **1Co 10:13. 1Ki 1:5-6.** This compensation may involve their unbalanced pursuit of health interventions; relieving their children of normal responsibilities in life; or excessive intervention in situations in which their child appears to be unjustly treated. This is often a family 'familiar', as the parents themselves were similarly indulged by their parents in their teenage years. **Pro 29:15. Pro 29:17.**

As the young people emerge from this developmental phase of life, they continue to demand compensating treatments, pleasurable experiences, or reprieve from their personal accountabilities, to alleviate their physical afflictions and the resulting emotional anguish that they feel. We note, in this regard, the massive market growth in the field of alternative medicines and health therapies, as conventional methods of treatment fail to provide the relief that people desire.

With the pursuit of comfort as their motivation, people begin to cite borderline psychosomatic symptoms as their justification for not taking full responsibility for their own lives, and for their impact upon the lives of those around them. They control others in their families, and in broader social settings, through anger and accusations of mistreatment. They claim to be misunderstood and to be the victims of their parents and other significant figures in their lives.

While ever the dynamic of compensation is part of the cultural foundation of a household, it remains susceptible to the oppression of unclean spirits. **1Sa 3:13.** The beginning point for recovery is to receive the illumination that is ministered through the word of the cross as Christ comes amongst us with eyes like a flame of fire. **Pro 19:18.** Each person is accountable for their own response to this word, and must mourn alone if they are to find the repentance that leads to salvation and to the fruit of the Spirit in their life and house. **Zec 12:12.**

Deliverance from the curse

Inherent in the call to walk blameless before the Lord is His desire for the church, and for every family, to be delivered from familiar and unclean spirits. This deliverance is found as we avail ourselves of the remnant of the Spirit from the Father, through our submission to the headship of Christ. **Mal 2:15.**

The first word of the gospel through which this divine grace is ministered to us is, 'Do not fear. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward'. **Gen 15:1.** As we receive this message, we are delivered from the fear of death as the motivation of our life. Our deliverance from this fear is marked by a new motivation as the love of God is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 5:5. 1Jn 4:18.**

The faith of the Son of God, which we receive by hearing His word, works by love. **Gal 5:6.** It is demonstrated by our obedience to Christ's word within the relational context that the Father has set for us. Evidently, to love is to obey the commands of the Lord. **Joh 10:17-18.** This 'faith in action' is our protection from the fiery darts of the wicked one. **Eph 6:16.** The apostle John described the wicked one as 'the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan'. **Rev 20:2.**

The ministry of Elijah is a specific initiative of the Lord to restore families to the order of headship, so that in 'the day of the Lord', they are protected from the curse with which He comes to strike the earth. Highlighting this ministry, the Lord declared, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, *lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.*' **Mal 4:5-6.**

The flying scroll

The curse that the Lord nominated through the ministry of Malachi is the same curse that Zechariah observed as 'a flying scroll'. Zechariah recorded, 'Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits." Then he said to me, "*This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according to this side of the scroll; and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according to that side of it. I will send out the curse*", says the Lord of hosts; "it shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it, with its timber and stones." **Zec 5:1-4.**

According to Malachi, there are several cultural issues which render our houses susceptible to this curse. For example, the Lord curses those whose offerings are defiled because of their contrary attitude towards the *agape* meal. They profane the Lord's name when they express, through their speech and manner, that 'the table of the Lord is defiled; and its fruit, its food, is contemptible'. They also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' and sneer at the fellowship of the Lord's table, presuming that they are acceptable to God even though they are thieves, lame and sick. **Mal 1:12-14.**

Furthermore, the Lord curses the messengers in His house who 'depart from the way' and 'cause many to stumble at the Law'. **Mal 2:2-9.** Households that fail to sanctify themselves to right relational order in response to the word are also cursed. In this regard, the Lord specifically addresses husbands who deal treacherously with their wives through their adulteries. Notably, the Lord declared that individuals and households will also be subject to the curse because they rob God by withholding their tithes and offerings from Him. **Mal 3:9.**

Deliverance from woe

The Lord is particularly displeased with those who advance a false gospel that claims, 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them'. In the same way, the Lord is wearied by those who maintain the mindset of a victim, asking, 'Where is the God of justice?' **Mal 2:17**. Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord declared that 'woe' would befall those who hold to, and proclaim, this false doctrine. This is the 'woe' that befalls those who 'seek mixed wine'. **Pro 23:29-33**.

Specifically, the Lord said, 'Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe to men mighty at drinking wine, woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink ... Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root will be as rottenness ... because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel'. **Isa 5:20-24**.

Isaiah prophesied that God's people would be delivered from these woes when they were drawn to a banner that He would lift up to the nations. He wrote, '*He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, and will whistle to them from the end of the earth; surely they shall come with speed, swiftly. No-one will be weary or stumble among them, no one will slumber or sleep; nor will the belt on their loins be loosed, nor the strap of their sandals be broken.*' **Isa 5:26-27**. It is notable that those who are drawn to this banner are not weary, lame, or spiritually asleep. To be drawn to this banner is fundamental to eating and drinking the *agape* meal in a worthy manner.

The banner lifted up

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, 'He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar.' **Isa 5:26**. The banner to which Isaiah referred was planted when Christ was lifted up and crucified on the cross. Jesus Himself testified, saying, 'And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will *draw all peoples to Myself*.' **Joh 12:32**. As we are drawn, by the Spirit, to look on Jesus, we see how we have rejected His headship through our mixed speech and our relational dysfunction. By grace and supplication, we are able to mourn with godly sorrow. In this regard, each person must mourn alone, and every family must also mourn. **Zec 12:12-14**.

Those who mourn with godly sorrow receive the cleansing that comes from the fountain for sin and uncleanness, which flowed as blood and water from the pierced heart of Christ. **Zec 13:1. Joh 19:34-37**. As they draw near to Christ in full assurance of faith, He causes the unclean spirits to depart from the ground of their household. He takes dominion over them, and they are cut off from our houses as we journey with Him in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. **Heb 10:22. Rom 6:14. Zec 13:2**.

This is the blessing that belongs to the poor in spirit who do not turn their face away from Christ when He comes to meet them through the gospel of sonship. **Mat 5:3**. As King David testified, 'I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and *delivered me from all my fears*. They looked to Him and were radiant, and *their faces were not ashamed*. This *poor man* cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them. Oh, *taste and see* that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!' **Psa 34:4-8**.



Restoring
my Soul