



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

DECEMBER 2023

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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December 2023

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The temple of His body

Jesus spoke of His physical body as the temple of God. Amazingly, He said to the Jews, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' **Joh 2:19**. They thought that He was talking about destroying Herod's temple in Jerusalem. However, John was clear that Jesus was talking about the temple of His body. **Joh 2:21-22**. That is, Jesus' body was already the temple. The will of the Father was only being fulfilled by Him. If the Jews killed Him in an endeavour to destroy the temple of His body, He would raise it up again by the resurrection life of the Father.

This statement established a point of conflict, or divergence, between Christ and those who presumed to be righteous through their participation in the economy of the Old Covenant temple. In fact, the implication that their temple was not the temple of God at all, was one of the claims that the worthless witnesses brought against Jesus in the court of Caiaphas. Interestingly, Mark noted in his Gospel that 'not even then did their testimony agree.' **Mar 14:57-59**.

Significantly, as the chief priests began to strike Jesus in the face, and beat His back with rods, the temple of His body was being destroyed, and they were being destroyed with Him. **Mat 26:67-68. Isa 50:6**. However, in this same wounding event, as Christ was being chastened with rods for our peace, a new temple –the temple of His body, comprising Jew and Gentile – was being established. **Isa 53:5**. Paul explained this point in his letter to the Ephesians, writing, 'For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, *so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace*, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity'. **Eph 2:14-16**.

Further Study EPHESIANS 2

The corporate body

The body that the Father prepared for Christ, in which His will is done, is now *corporate*. This corporate body is the temple that was built through His death and resurrection. Importantly, to be a part of the temple of His body, we must participate in each of the wounding events through which it was established. The *agape* meal is the provision of God for our participation in this fellowship of offering through which we are being built together as a heavenly temple. A person who fails to recognise this point, and who seeks to avoid fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, is not discerning the body. They will inevitably become increasingly weak and sick, and will eventually lose their eternal sonship. **1Co 11:29-30**.

Not only are we built into the corporate temple through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, but we are also *justified*. Through His offering and suffering journey, Christ justified every son who has been sealed with the Holy Spirit. **Eph 1:13-14. Eph 4:30**. Through justification, He has worked all their works for them. They are able to fulfil the will of God that belongs to their sanctification as they are established as part of the temple of His body. Wonderfully, the apostle Paul declared that Jesus Christ was raised *because of this justification*. **Rom 4:25**.

The corporate temple focuses our attention on both the body of Christ and the bride of Christ. Let us first consider our membership of the body. Jesus used the imagery of the vine and the branches to explain the corporate body of Christ. The emphasis of the body is the individual members, who are branches of the Vine. As Jesus declared, 'I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.' **Joh 15:5**. In this regard, our obedience as sons of God and members of the body (and branches on the Vine) is addressed individually.

Further Study JOHN 15

The corporate bride

The bride of Christ, which is the church, is also a corporate expression that belongs to the temple. It particularly refers to local church congregations in a city or a region. Each local church is betrothed to Christ. It is dealt with by the Lord, as a community, for the purpose of their corporate sanctification, cleansing and presentation to Him as a chaste bride. We note, for example, the way that Paul addressed the church in Corinth, writing, 'For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have *betrothed* you [as a church] to one husband, that I may *present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.' **2Co 11:2-3**. It is remarkable that a whole church could be deceived by Satan and stray from the truth in the same way that Eve did.

The apostle Paul was burdened by the love of God for the churches that he established. As we have just noted, Paul said to the Corinthians that he was jealous over them with a godly jealousy for he, by the Holy Spirit, had betrothed them as a congregation to Christ, their husband. **Hos 2:19-20**. This godly jealousy was the expression of the jealous love of God. Accordingly, when necessary, Paul admonished churches because of their carnal responses to the word, and he exhorted them to follow in the way of salvation that is found only in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **1Th 2:10-12**.

This burden of love for the church is also carried in this present generation by messengers of Christ who are part of a presbytery. They, too, have betrothed us as congregations to Christ. Accordingly, their ministry among us is to present each congregation, or community of believers, to Christ as a chaste virgin. This requires our cleansing through the washing of the water of the Lord's word. **Eph 5:25-27**.

Further Study 1 THESSALONIANS 2

Messengers speak by the Holy Spirit

Highlighting the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church age, Jesus said, 'He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.' **Joh 16:13**. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit is simply in the background. It means that He does not promote or reveal Himself. Rather, He reveals Christ through the ministry of the messengers of Christ. This is because they speak by the Holy Spirit. **1Pe 1:12**.

The demeanour of the messengers in a presbytery should be the same as the Holy Spirit's demeanour. They do not reveal or promote themselves; they are revealing the face of Christ in the presbytery, by the Spirit. Their motive is the expression of love through their obedience. As they are among the people, their manner is gracious, yet they are faithful to preach, urge and beseech those in the church. **1Th 2:7**.

A congregation that is maturing spiritually will embrace the ministry of the Spirit; will receive the washing of the water by the word; and will avail themselves of the life of God in the blood of Christ through fellowship in His offering and sufferings. **2Co 3:7-8. Eph 5:25-27. Joh 6:53-54**. Their maturity enables them to set messengers apart for the work to which the Holy Spirit is sanctifying them. **Act 13:2-3**.

Because the messengers of Christ, proceeding from the fellowship of a presbytery, speak by the Holy Spirit, those who resist them and their message, resist the Holy Spirit. **Act 7:51-52**. Consequently, they are chastened and judged by Christ and by the Father. Importantly, the judgement seat of Christ is where we are all called to give an account for our response to the word ministered by the Holy Spirit. **Rom 14:10-12**.

Further Study 1 CORINTHIANS 2

The importance of obedience

Obedience is an amazing concept! **Rom 1:5-6**. It is the doorway of faith into the fellowship of Yahweh. However, we cannot obey God while we are in control. Faith obedience is an action of responsible freedom by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

Obedience is not self-centred. Rather, it is an accountable response that we make to the word in the conviction of the Holy Spirit. **1Th 1:5**. It is for this reason that the Scriptures declare that we must all go to the judgement seat of Christ to give an account of ourselves to God. To this end, we are exhorted by Paul, who said, '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 4:13**. Only those who are obedient to the word of the Lord proclaimed by the Holy Spirit, through His messengers, will enter Christ's rest. **Jer 6:16**.

A collegial response to the word is compliance; it is not obedience by the Spirit. This is the response of one who considers themselves equal with the messenger and his word, and thereby the measure of what is true and applicable to them. The only response we can make to the conviction of the Spirit is a bankrupt response. **Mat 5:3**. The conviction of the Spirit enables accountability because this conviction is illumination. It enables us to come to the light.

Through prevenient grace, we obtain liberty for accountability. We are able to choose whether we will come to the throne to give an account in response to the word. It is at the throne of grace that we first obtain mercy, indicating our acknowledgement of our sin and judgement. However, we also obtain grace that binds us to Christ for our fellowship in His offering and suffering journey, which leads to salvation. **Heb 4:16**. With this in mind, we acknowledge that we come to the judgement seat of Christ every day.

Further Study 1 PETER 4

The call to watch and pray

We remember the command of Christ to His disciples – ‘Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ **Mar 14:38.** The temptation that the Lord does not want us to fall into in the season ahead, is *unbelief*.

Unless an unbeliever finds repentance, they will progress to become an opposer of the word of present truth. This will lead to the betrayal of one’s friends in Christ. In this regard, we note that Judas was the only one of the twelve who was not present at the prayer meeting of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although the eleven disciples fell asleep for sorrow, the grace that they obtained in this prayer meeting was sufficient to keep them so that they were, later, able to follow Christ in the way of salvation that He had pioneered for them. **Mar 14:39-40.**

The pressure that is being placed on the church by the spirit of antichrist, which is in the world, is causing many to turn away from Christ and His messengers. Jesus warned that this would happen, saying, ‘Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.’ **Mat 24:9-12.**

Through Christ’s eternal priesthood, we are being given the power, in this present season, to overcome the world. We avail ourselves of this power as we participate, by the Holy Spirit, in the prayer meeting of the Father and the Son. In this prayer meeting, Christ travailed to bring forth the blood for our redemption, and established the pathway upon which we could be brought to glory as sons of God and sons of men in the image and likeness of God. **Isa 53:11. Isa 42:16.**

Further Study LUKE 21

Adam was a type of Christ

The first man, Adam, was a type of Christ. **Rom 5:14.** The Man who was to come, of whom Adam was a type, is Jesus Christ. With this understanding in mind, we recognise that when the Lord God determined together, saying, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him', the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were, principally, referring to *the creation of a helper for Jesus Christ*. **Gen 2:18-19.** As was the case for the first man, the formation of a bride, as a vessel of multiplication, was necessary for the work of bringing forth and nurturing sons of God.

The formation of the woman from the rib of Adam foreshadowed the establishment of the bride of Christ, the church, on the cross. **Gen 2:21-22.** We recall that after Jesus had committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father, and was received to the throne of the Father, a spear was thrust into His side. **Luk 23:46.** The water, blood, and Spirit that were caused to flow from His side, constituted the 'rib' from which the bride of Christ was formed. **Joh 19:34. Zec 12:10.**

A person is established as part of the corporate *bride of Christ* through the ministry of water, blood and Spirit, because they have been made 'bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh' as members of His corporate *body*. **1Jn 5:8.**

The corporate body of Christ was established through the seven wounds of His offering journey. It was particularly manifest in the third wound, when Jesus was chastened with rods for *our peace*, in the court of Caiaphas. **Mat 26:67-68. Isa 53:5.** The apostle Paul declared, 'For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, *so as to create in Himself one new man from the two* [Jews and Gentiles], thus making peace.' **Eph 2:14-16.**

Further Study ROMANS 5

A great mystery

Having described the creation of the woman to be the wife of Adam as ‘bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh’, Moses explained that it was *for this reason* that ‘a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh’. **Gen 2:24**. Significantly, the Son of God left the Father’s house for this purpose! He left the Father’s house in heaven and became a Man, in order to be joined in one flesh with a multitude of sons and daughters of men who would comprise His church.

The apostle Paul quoted the explanation of marriage that Moses gave in the book of Genesis, to highlight that our membership of the body of Christ is fundamental to our citizenship of the bride city, the heavenly Jerusalem. Specifically, he said, ‘*For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.*’ “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be *joined to his wife*, and the two shall become one flesh.” This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.’ **Eph 5:30-32**.

The mystery of Christ and His church is not another term for the mystery of God. The mystery of God refers to the process of becoming sons of God. We are first made sons by adoption, which gives us the right to be born of the divine nature. **Joh 1:12. Rom 8:15-17**. Beyond the mystery of God, the mystery of Christ and the church is a whole focus that we have not yet understood, nor adequately proclaimed. When we are born again and baptised into Christ, we are established in a church which is part of the bride of Christ. The bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem that was first manifest as coming down out of heaven on the Day of Pentecost. **Rev 21:2**.

Further Study EPHESIANS 5

Satan's deception

Through Christ's cleansing and purifying initiative toward His wife, she is being made a helper who is comparable to Him. We are made comparable, as part of the bride city, as we receive Christ who is coming among His churches in a spirit of judgement and burning. **Isa 4:4**. Paul described this initiative as the love of Christ for His church. Specifically, he wrote, 'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and 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 5:25-27**.

Satan recognised the true meaning and significance of the Lord God's initiative to make a helper comparable to Adam. **Gen 2:18**. He understood that the children brought forth from Adam and the woman would become the corporate bride of the Son. For this reason, Satan sought to get between Adam and the woman, and bring them both into bondage to sin. He did this so that their children would belong to him.

The serpent made his move just before the woman's capacity to bear children was established. In the timing that belonged to God's immutable plan, the woman's womb was to be opened through a word laid down to her by Adam, in fellowship with Yahweh at the tree of life. Satan pre-empted this key step, in the process of mankind being made in the image and likeness of God, by endeavouring to deceive Eve with the possibility of becoming 'like God'. By this means, Satan presented godlikeness, sourced from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as a substitute for comparability. As we know well, Satan said to Eve, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and *you will be like God*, knowing good and evil'. **Gen 3:4-5**.

Further Study GENESIS 3

Discerning good and evil

Satan's proposition was a lie. The truth is that God's purpose was always for mankind to be made in the image and likeness of God. **Gen 1:26**. However, this would come to pass in the timing that belonged to His immutable purpose for mankind. Godlikeness, with respect to discerning between good and evil, was to be a capacity *that belonged to comparability*. We note, in this regard, Paul's lament for his readers, who should have been established in the priestly order of Melchizedek, but who were still immature, or carnal, needing milk and not solid food. He said, 'For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are *of full age*, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to *discern both good and evil*.' **Heb 5:13-14**.

We know that a carnal, immature person lives by their knowledge of good and evil. This is a capacity that has been drawn from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In contrast, a mature, spiritual son of God is able to discern between good and evil because they have been established in the culture of offering that belongs to the fellowship of the *agape* meal at the tree of life. **Php 1:9-11**. Evidently, the issue for man is not just the capacity to discern between good and evil, but rather, it is the tree from which he draws this capacity.

Despite the whole of mankind being lost to God through Adam's disobedience, Adam and Eve were redeemed through the shedding of the blood of a lamb. Later, the whole of mankind was recovered to their predestination as sons in the image and likeness of God, in Abraham. The Son of God would proceed from the Father's house to become the Son of Abraham, and of David, in the likeness of men. He did this to be joined to a bride, who would also spring from Abraham and Sarah.

Further Study HEBREWS 5

The father and mother of the bride

In the book of Romans, we are directed by the apostle Paul to consider what Abraham, the father of faith, found when he received and walked in the light of the gospel of God that was preached to him, beforehand, by the Scriptures. **Rom 4:1. Gal 3:8.** We learn that Abraham found faith to receive his predestination, and to join the offering journey of Christ through which this predestination would be attained. **Rom 4:3.**

This happened when the word of the Lord came to Abraham, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield [of faith], your exceedingly great reward.' **Gen 15:1.** By this faith, Abraham believed for his predestination, which was proclaimed to him when the Lord said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' **Gen 15:5.** The Lord then directed Abraham to make offering, figuratively inviting him to join the fellowship of His offering on the cross. This encounter revealed that the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings was the means by which Abraham and his children would obtain the inheritance that was promised to him. **Gen 15:8-21.**

The faith that Abraham received became the substance of the hope of sonship. **Heb 11:1.** Paul told us that, by this faith, Abraham was illuminated to, and waited patiently for, the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. **Heb 11:9-10.** That is, he, with his wife, Sarah, confessed, by faith, that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, for they believed for their citizenship in the New Jerusalem. **Heb 11:16.**

However, even more than this, Abraham and Sarah found grace and faith, through a remnant of the Spirit, to become the father and mother of a daughter, the bride city, called 'the New Jerusalem'. The New Jerusalem would be a nation that would come through Jesus Christ, Abraham's Son after the flesh. This nation would come from Christ, the last Adam, and would possess, through the Spirit, the capacity to multiply life as His bride. **1Co 15:45.**

Further Study HEBREWS 11

A remnant of the Spirit

Abraham and Sarah obtained a remnant of the Spirit, and were established on the pathway of salvation that Christ had pioneered for them, when *El Shaddai*, the Almighty God, appeared to Abraham, commanding him, 'Walk before Me and be blameless.' **Gen 17:1**. We recognise that Isaac, who was brought forth after this encounter with *El Shaddai*, was the first child born of this bride city, for he was born according to the Spirit. **Gal 4:28-29. Mal 2:15**.

Importantly, this remnant of the Spirit, which enabled Abraham and Sarah to walk blamelessly, is the seal that entitles every family to a plot in the New Jerusalem. A believing household consolidates their entry to, and citizenship of, the heavenly city by walking in the way of blamelessness. They are able to do this by the remnant of Eternal Spirit that they have received from the Holy Spirit. Blamelessness means that they carry in their body the dying and living of the Lord Jesus Christ as they embrace their fellowship in His descending and ascending offering journey. **2Co 4:10-11**. This way of walking is fundamental to being established, and made comparable, as part of the wife of the Lamb.

The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, identified Abraham and Sarah as the father and mother of the bride of Christ, declaring, 'Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the Lord: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. *Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you; for I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him. For the Lord will comfort Zion* [the mountain upon which the heavenly Jerusalem is built], 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 51:1-3**.

Further Study GALATIANS 4

Two marriage covenants

The apostle Paul drew our attention to the marriage of Christ and His bride in his letter to the Romans. He wrote, 'For the woman [speaking of the bride of Christ] who has a husband is bound by the Law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the Law of her husband.' **Rom 7:2**. Paul then explained, 'You also have become dead to the Law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another – to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.' **Rom 7:4**.

In these statements, Paul nominated two marriage covenants between Christ and His bride, the church. The first marriage covenant is the Law Covenant, which Paul described as 'the oldness of the letter'. He described the second marriage covenant as 'the newness of the Spirit.' **Rom 7:6**.

Speaking of the old marriage covenant, Stephen described the Israelites who were delivered out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, as '*the church in the wilderness*'. **Act 7:38**. As the church, the nation of Israel was married to Christ through the Law Covenant that was made on Mount Sinai. **Jer 3:14**. This Covenant was made with the children of Israel in response to their assertion, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do.' **Exo 19:8**. It was a covenant made with the flesh.

This marriage proved to be a failure on account of the weakness of the flesh. Even before Moses had descended Mount Sinai with the Law Covenant that God had made with the children of Israel, they were unfaithful to Him, worshipping a golden calf. The establishment and worship of this idol was a religious exercise. Following its construction, Aaron proclaimed, 'Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord [Yahweh]'. **Exo 32:4-5**. The people engaged in the sacrament of the communion by 'sitting down to eat and drink'. They then pursued the lusts of flesh by 'rising up to play'. **Exo 32:6**.

Further Study EXODUS 32

A new covenant

The Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, addressed the promise of a new covenant to His unfaithful bride. He declared to her, ' "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My Covenant [made at Sinai] which they broke, *though I was a husband to them*," says the Lord. "But this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says the Lord: "I will put My Law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people". **Jer 31:31-33**. Significantly, it is the Holy Spirit who bears witness to this new covenant. **Heb 10:15-16**. The apostle John explained that the Holy Spirit was given to us as an anointing from the Holy One. By Him, we know all things. **1Jn 2:20,27. Jer 31:34**.

We note that the two covenants identified by the Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, were symbolised in the Scriptures by the two wives of Abraham. **Gal 4:22-31**. Hagar, whom Paul described as a bondwoman, symbolised the marriage covenant of Israel, the church in the wilderness, with Christ at Mount Sinai. The children of this union are in bondage, with Hagar, to the law of sin and death. **Gal 4:25**.

In contrast, Sarah is likened to 'the Jerusalem from above'. She symbolised marriage to Christ according to the Covenant of the Spirit. **Gal 4:26**. The children of the Jerusalem from above are delivered from the bondage of corruption that defines life according to the flesh, and are established in the glorious liberty of sonship. **Rom 8:20-21**. They are delivered to liberty as they are led by the Spirit on the pathway of salvation that Christ pioneered for them through His offering and sufferings.

Further Study JEREMIAH 31

The end of an old marriage

The apostle Paul explained to the Romans that a 'married woman is bound by Law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the Law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the Law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man.' **Rom 7:2-3**. The Old Covenant was brought to an end when Jesus took the Law out of the way, and nailed it with Himself to the cross, where He died. **Col 2:13-14**.

The body of Christ, the one new man, was formed as He endured the third wounding event on His offering journey. This is when He was chastened with rods, for our peace. **Mat 26:27-28**. **Isa 50:6**. **Isa 53:5**. The new man was fully established, and manifest on the cross, following the seventh wound. After this, Christ committed His Spirit into the hands of the Father and was received to the throne of the Father.

A spear was thrust into the side of Christ, causing blood, water, and a spirit of grace and supplication to flow from His side. These elements constituted the 'rib' from which the Father formed the bride of Christ. The prophet Zechariah described these elements, flowing from Christ's side, as 'a fountain for sin and uncleanness'. **Zec 13:1**. The apostle John observed this fountain as being the river of life that flowed from the throne of God and the Lamb, in the midst of the bride city. **Rev 22:1-2**.

To be married to Christ as part of His bride, we must become 'dead to the Law through the body of Christ'. **Rom 7:4**. That is, having been born from above to see the kingdom, we must be baptised into the death of Christ, where we can be joined to the process of chastening through which we are delivered from our carnality.

Further Study ROMANS 7

Walking by the Spirit

The misappropriation of the Law is the basis of all relational enmity. This is because the Law is used, by those who are carnal, to judge, accuse, or excuse others, and to justify themselves. Relational disharmony and disconnection are the unavoidable outcomes of relating to one another on this basis. Note that our establishment as a member of the one body of Christ precedes our identification as the true Israel of God, the bride.

Having been born of the Father, baptised into Christ, and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, we are led by the Spirit on the pathway of salvation that Christ pioneered specifically for us through His offering and suffering journey. By this means, we are able to walk before the Lord blamelessly, as did our father, Abraham, and our mother, Sarah. In this fellowship, the Spirit, the water, and the blood are active in our lives and households, bringing life and cleansing, and enabling us to mature as spiritual sons. **1Jn 5:6-8.**

As we walk by the Spirit in this manner, we are being delivered from our other law and from the old gospels that deceptively promote self-righteousness and self-justification as a way to life. As this deliverance is happening, we are able to serve one another in the newness of the Spirit. **Rom 7:6.** We are children of the freewoman! And we are maturing to be part of the freewoman! Having obtained this liberty, we serve one another through *agape* love. **Gal 5:13.** That is, we are worthy to partake of the *agape* wedding supper of Christ and His bride. **Luk 14:16-24.**

The waypoints of sanctification, through which the bride becomes dead to the Law and is then able to be married to Christ, are summed up in baptism. Through baptism into the death of Christ, we are delivered from an old covenant and are established in the New Covenant of the Spirit. **Rom 6:3-7.**

Further Study GALATIANS 5

Wise and foolish

Although Christ has taken the Law Covenant out of the way, and nullified the old marriage covenant through His death, we can rebuild what should have been destroyed through our fellowship in Christ's death as a member of His body. As Paul noted, 'For if I *build again those things which I destroyed*, I make myself a transgressor. For I, through the Law, died to the Law that I might live to God.' **Gal 2:18-19**. We do this when we spurn the Spirit and the way that He is leading us, and set our mind on the flesh, endeavouring to be acceptable through our religious and sacramental practices. **Eph 4:30**.

The apostle Paul addressed the Galatian church as 'a foolish virgin' because they had reverted to walking after the flesh. He exclaimed, 'O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain – if indeed it was in vain?' **Gal 3:1-4**.

In contrast to this, the 'five wise virgins' represent churches, households, and individuals who are walking blamelessly by the Spirit. **Pro 28:18**. They are receiving the word of present truth, proclaimed by the Holy Spirit, through Christ's messengers. This word is washing them and is defining for them, the pathway of life. **Eph 5:25-27**. As they walk by the Spirit in the light of the word, they are led in the pathway that Christ pioneered for them through His offering and suffering journey. **Gal 5:16**. Significantly, they are being established as members of Christ's body, and of His bride, as they are delivered from their carnality and are established in the way of obedience that belongs to submission to the headship of Christ.

Further Study JAMES 3

The true Israel of God

In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul wrote, 'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the *church* and gave Himself for her'. **Eph 5:25**. The church is the bride of Christ. Christ was married to His bride on the day of His crucifixion. **Gen 2:21-22. Joh 19:34. Zec 12:10. Zec 13:1**. Those who have been born from above, and then baptised into Christ, are established in the bride as they continue to receive the ministry of the Spirit, the washing of water by the word of the Father, and the sprinkling of Christ's blood. **1Jn 5:8**.

Informed by the prophetic writings and example of Hosea, the apostle Peter identified the church, the wife of Christ, as being a company of believers who were once not a people but who had become the people of God. **1Pe 2:9-10. Hos 2:23**. Peter further described them as 'a chosen [meaning 'elect'] generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people'. **1Pe 2:9**. From this statement, we recognise that the church is *the true Israel of God*. **Gal 6:15-16**. Since the Day of Pentecost, when the New Jerusalem was first manifest as coming down out of heaven, the Israel of God has been a body of people composed of Jews and Gentiles who are making their calling and election sure. **2Pe 1:10-11**.

Presently, the true Israel of God is a very small remnant. It is composed of believers in Christian households who are being built on Christ. They are hearers who have come to Christ, the living Stone, who is 'elect and precious'. This stone was laid in Zion, the mountain of the Lord. Having come to Christ, they are being built together upon Him as a spiritual house, or temple. **1Pe 2:4-6**. In the time of the end, this remnant will become an innumerable company when 'the fullness of the Gentiles', as well as a third of the Jewish nation, are fully restored as part of Christ's bride. **Rom 11:25**.

Further Study 1 PETER 2

A helper comparable to Christ

What does it mean for a wife to be a helper who is 'comparable' to her husband? 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. In this regard, comparability is necessary for, and demonstrated by, a person who is joined to the fellowship of headship. It is essential to the order by which the life and grace of God are ministered and multiplied through offering.

The first expression of the bride's comparability is as a vessel of multiplication. As 'bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh', the bride is proceeding from Christ, her Head. **1Co 11:8-10**. She reveals Him through the proclamation of the gospel of God. As the vessel of weakness, she does this through offering, by the capacity of Eternal Spirit from the Holy Spirit. **1Pe 3:7**. This ministry of the Spirit is the manifestation of the light of lampstand churches in the world. **Rev 4:5**. Those who hear this message may obtain faith by which they are born from above of the Father. **Rom 10:17**. Then, as they are born of water and the Spirit, they are themselves able to be brought to glory as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. **Joh 3:3-5**.

The bringing forth of sons of God is not only an implication of the public declaration of the gospel. It should also be the fruit of families who belong to a lampstand church. We note, therefore, that the fellowship of first love within a family, and from house to house, is also fundamental to the expression of the bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem. A covenant family is the place where children are born, and receive the divine nature as sons and daughters of God. **1Co 7:14**. Furthermore, through evangelism from house to house, believing households are a primary context in which hearers may be born again and delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son. **Col 1:12-14**.

Further Study 1 CORINTHIANS 11

Faith for the New Covenant

Through the ministry of the gospel, a hearer receives faith. **Rom 10:17**. This faith belongs to God. It is the same faith that Abraham received when the Word of the Lord came to him in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield [of faith], your exceedingly great reward.' **Gen 15:1**. By this faith, Abraham was illuminated to see that his children, who would be as numerous as the dust of the earth, would be brought to glory as the stars of heaven. **Gen 13:16. Gen 15:5-6**.

Because a hearer obtains faith by receiving Christ, who is the Word, they become children of Abraham by adoption. **Gal 3:7**. This adoption gives to them the right to become a son of God. The apostle John highlighted this waypoint of salvation, writing, 'But as many as received Him [speaking of Christ, the Word and Seed of the Father], to them He gave *the right* to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' **Joh 1:12-13**.

Enabled by faith to believe for the promise of the Spirit, the believer is born of the divine nature as they receive the Holy Spirit. **Gal 3:13-14. Joh 20:22. 2Pe 1:2-4**. They are born to see the kingdom of God. **Joh 3:3**. However, at this point, they have not yet received a new heart and a new spirit. Rather, they have received faith to be connected to the New Covenant of the Holy Spirit.

A believer joins the New Covenant of the Spirit through baptism in water and by the Spirit. **Joh 3:5**. By this means, a son of God is immersed into, and enabled for, their fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Their new heart and new spirit are progressively attained through a believer's ongoing fellowship in the seven wounding events that belong to Christ's offering and suffering journey. **Heb 5:9. Eze 36:26-28**.

Further Study EZEKIEL 36



Restoring
my Soul