



# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

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MARCH 2022

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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# **RESTORING MY SOUL**

*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

**March 2022**

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## Yahweh *Elohim* formed man

In his account of the seven days of creation, Moses identified '*Elohim*' – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – as the Creator of the heavens and earth, and all that is in them. However, he specifically explained that it was '*Yahweh Elohim*' who formed man from the dust of the earth. **Gen 2:7**. In other words, the revelation of God's name was in relation to the creation and naming of man.

Yahweh *Elohim* revealed Himself by this name to Moses, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you ... The Lord [*Yahweh*] God [*Elohim*] of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'" **Exo 3:14-15**.

The name '*Yahweh Elohim*' reveals who God is and how He lives. Moses brought this to Israel's attention, declaring, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord [*Yahweh*] our God [*Elohim*], *the Lord* [*Yahweh*] is one!' **Deu 6:4**. Yahweh is one because the Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in *one Spirit* and by *one life*. **1Co 8:5-6**. This oneness is fundamental to the expression of each Person's unique name as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the work of bringing Their covenant purpose to pass.

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not known without the Others revealing Them. Through the offering that established the Everlasting Covenant, the order of headship was revealed. Within Their fellowship, before, the Father is not the first among equals. That is, as co-equals in 'My Covenant', He is not the Father of the Son, or preeminent in relation to the Holy Spirit. Headship, then, is an order that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit established by offering. It was through this order that Their covenant purpose would be proclaimed and achieved in creation.

## The nature of God's creation

In the fellowship of the Everlasting Covenant, the Holy Spirit and the Son reveal the *giving* of the Father, who is the *source* of all life; the Father and the Holy Spirit reveal the *sharing* of the Son, who is the *substance* of the life; and the Son and the Father reveal the *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit, who is the *expression* of the life. **Psa 36:9. Act 17:24-25.** Mankind was predestined to fellowship with Yahweh as sons of God within this order of life.

In contrast to the angels, and to every living creature on the earth, mankind was predestined by God to *sonship*. When we are considering the nature of God's creation, it is important that we appreciate the differences between mankind and the angels.

Angels are spirits. The psalmist noted this aspect of their creation by God, writing, 'Who makes His angels spirits [OT: 7307 – '*ruach*', meaning spirit], His ministers a flame of fire'. **Psa 104:4.** The Scriptures also reveal that angels have a physical form, like that of a man, which is awesome in appearance and commensurate with their fiery mandate. **Jdg 13:6. Mat 28:2-4. Luk 24:4-7.** While angels have a body and a spirit, they do not possess a soul.

Angels were created by God before mankind. They were created as ministering spirits to support the creative work of the Son, and to serve the heirs of salvation. **Psa 103:20. Heb 1:14.** Angels were made perfect and complete in the day of their creation. **Eze 28:14-15.** They have no reproductive capacity or destiny. **Mar 12:25.**

In contrast to the angels, every person has a biological body, a soul and a spirit. Concerning the nature of mankind, we note the words of Paul who wrote, 'Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit [NT: 4151 – '*pneuma*'], soul [NT 5590 – '*psuche*'], and body [NT4983 – '*soma*'] be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'. **1Th 5:23.**

## The life of every living thing

In relation to all the living creatures of the earth, Job said, 'But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life [OT: 5315 – '*nephesh*', meaning soul] of every living thing [OT: 2416 – '*chay*', meaning a living organism], and the breath [OT: 7307 – '*ruach*', meaning spirit] of all mankind? **Job 12:7-10**. Furthermore, King Solomon wrote, 'Who knows the spirit [OT: 7307] of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit [OT: 7307] of the animal, which goes down to the earth?' **Ecc 3:21**.

The Hebrew word for 'spirit', which pertains equally to the Spirit of God, the spirits of angels, the spirits of men, and the spirits of living things on the earth, is '*ruach*' (OT: 7307). **Gen 6:3. Psa 104:4. Gen 45:27. Num 27:16**. This word literally means, 'spirit, wind, breath'. It corresponds with the Greek word, '*pneuma*' in the New Testament.

The Hebrew word for 'soul', is '*nephesh*' (OT: 5315), meaning, 'breath, the inner being with its thoughts and emotions'. This word corresponds with the Greek word '*psuche*' in the New Testament. According to Strong, '*nephesh*' pertains to the vitality, or expression, of a being. Most of the uses of this term in the Scriptures fall into one of three categories: breath, literally or figuratively; the inner being with its thoughts and emotions; and the whole person. **Gen 1:30. 1Ki 17:22. Gen 2:7**. The theologian, Spiros, noted that when it was applied to a person, it did not apply to a specific part of a human being. Rather, he said, 'The Scriptures view a person as a composite whole, fully relating to God and not divided in any way.'

## Mankind fathered through creation

God created the creatures of the sea, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the earth. **Gen 1:21. Gen 1:25.** He formed them from the ground with their life in them. In other words, their soul, spirit and physical bodies were created in one action, by the word of God. **Psa 33:6.** Their life was from the breath of God, *through His word*. Until they were established in the order of headship as Adam named them from the fellowship of Yahweh, the animals were alive but without functional expression in a defined and appropriate context. **Gen 2:19-20.**

While the animals do not have accountable identity, meaning they do not have possession of their identity, they are held accountable if they leave their sphere and slay a man. **Gen 9:5.** When an animal dies, its spirit, which is part of its soul life, goes back to the dust, ceasing to exist. **Ecc 3:21.**

In contrast, Yahweh *Elohim* formed man from the dust of the ground, creating his fully functional biological body. *Then*, the Lord God breathed the breath of lives into the nostrils of man and, by this means, he *became a living being, or soul*. **Gen 2:7.** Whereas the animals were alive and milling around without expression, Adam's life, self-awareness and expression, were in the name that he received as the Lord breathed into his nostrils and he became a living soul. From this point, his life and expression and predestination were tied to fellowship with Yahweh.

The name 'Yahweh *Elohim*' reveals the order of life through which the covenant purpose concerning the sons and daughters of man comes to pass. We note, therefore, that this creative action was sourced from, and initiated by, the Father's breath, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit. By this creative action, through the order of headship, man received self-possessed and accountable identity in the image and likeness of God. **Gen 1:26.**

## The context for fellowship

The identification of Yahweh *Elohim* as the Creator of man *signified* Their Everlasting Covenant initiative and desire for mankind to be born of Their life and to be participants in Their fellowship. Accordingly, man's life, and the unique expression that belonged to his name, would also require him to live in one Spirit with the Lord and by Their one life. **Rev 2:17. 1Co 6:17.**

This was fundamental to man's natural name 'under the sun' and to the name he was to later inherit, in the Son, through new birth. **Ecc 2:11.** In this regard, we note that Adam, and every identity in him, has a natural name. To this end, Solomon explained, 'Whatever one is, he has been named already [in Adam], for it is known [who he is]; and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.' **Ecc 6:10.** Solomon was not referring to a person's sonship name, which was predestined in Christ. Rather, he was describing the expression, or glory, of a human being's identity 'under the sun'.

Further revealing fellowship with Yahweh as essential to man's life and expression, Moses explained that it was Yahweh *Elohim* who planted a garden in the east of Eden, where He placed man. **Gen 2:8.** The garden of Eden was the context of man's daily fellowship with Yahweh *Elohim* and for the exercise of his mandate, which he received from the Lord God. This mandate was to tend and to guard the garden, and to name the living creatures of God's creation over which Adam had been given dominion by Yahweh. **Gen 2:15. Gen 2:19.**

The name 'Adam' means, 'to make from the red ground'. Significantly, the first mention of Adam's name in the Scriptures was in relation to the exercise of his mandate to name every living creature. **Gen 2:19.**

## Wisdom and grace through fellowship

Adam's capacity to fulfil his mandate depended upon his connection to the order of headship through fellowship with Yahweh *Elohim* at the tree of life. **Gen 3:8**. The work of naming the animals was in fellowship with Yahweh. This is where Adam inquired of the Lord and obtained the wisdom and grace to fulfil this work. He did not presume to name the animals outside of this conversation.

Through the action of naming the animals from the fellowship of Yahweh, the living creatures were brought under the order of headship. Within this order, they were sustained by the grace of life as it was expressed according to the name that Adam had given to them.

Adam fell because he disobeyed God, believing Satan's lie that, by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he could obtain the capacity to exercise dominion over the creation without the necessity for fellowship with Yahweh. Satan's lie was not only that this was possible, but that in doing so, Adam and Eve would become 'like God'. **Gen 3:5**.

In other words, Satan falsely declared that the Father's creative initiative was the expression of His own identity and life, apart from the fellowship of Yahweh. It was a rejection of the truth that the Father had laid down His fullness to the Son. **Col 2:9**. He was no longer seen, except by the Son. **Joh 14:9**. The Son was the full revelation of the Father, by the Holy Spirit, who gives, or expresses, the life. **Joh 6:63**. Satan was denying that the order of headship was the order of life through which Adam's natural name had its expression.

When Adam rejected fellowship with Yahweh as the basis for the exercise of his dominion over the creation, his name was lost. Moreover, the connection of the animals to the order of headship was also severed and they were subject to the implications of the law of sin in creation. **Rom 8:20-22**.

## Adam's choice

In the garden of Eden, Adam exercised dominion over all the works of the Lord God's hands. Adam exercised this dominion over the creation as he continued in fellowship with Yahweh each day at the tree of life. **Gen 3:8**. That is, Adam fulfilled the works that the Father had chosen for him to do in the Father's house. **Joh 10:37-38**.

Eve's fall put pressure on Adam to reveal where he stood in relation to the sonship that the Father had chosen for him in His house. Significantly, God the Father had prepared Adam for this choice when He said to him, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, *for in the day* that you eat of it you shall surely die.' **Gen 2:16-17**.

This statement implied that, eventually, Adam would be required to choose the fellowship and life that the Father had already established for him or choose another way of life typified by another source of food. It is important to note that the choice was not whether to exercise dominion over the creation, or not; it was whether he would believe and accept the call to be a son and reveal the Father through this work. **Jos 24:15**.

To this end, Adam was pressed to choose whether he would believe the word of the Father pertaining to his predestination as a son. That word was, 'I will be a Father to him, and he will be to me a son'. To choose this, Adam needed to believe and receive this word, and respond by saying, 'You have offered me fatherhood; I will be Your son and reveal You.'

## The rejection of fatherhood

If Adam had chosen sonship when Eve presented him with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would have brought her, and their conversation, to the light of fellowship with his Father at the tree of life. He would have done so, recognising that the resolution of this breach in their marriage could only be found there. Instead, under the pressure applied by Eve, Adam chose to exercise dominion apart from relationship with God as his Father, viewing his own household as a separate entity from the house of the Father.

We know that this was an accountable and deliberate choice that Adam made, because Paul explained that Adam had not been deceived by the alternative word that Satan offered to him through Eve. **1Ti 2:14**. In doing so, Adam chose death for himself and for his children, for God had said, 'In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' **Gen 2:16-17**.

We note that, like Adam, Eve also came under pressure to choose what the Father had chosen for her. He had chosen her to be a helper to Adam, and for her life and fruitfulness to be found under the headship of Adam. **Gen 2:20**. However, Eve rejected God's Fatherhood, aspiring, instead, to become like God, and coveting what she believed was the capacity to create an image for herself and to bring forth children in her own image. We note that the relationship between a daughter and a father – even God the Father – has particular nuances that Satan endeavours to exploit. The relationship is vulnerable to his influence when it is based in a conversation outside of the tree of life.

The ensuing chaos within creation following Adam's disconnection from fellowship with Yahweh, revealed that the capacity for the works of rulership, or dominion, was not intrinsic to his abilities. **Rom 8:19-21**. This capacity was only available to Adam in the one Spirit fellowship of Yahweh.

## God's knowledge of death

God said to Adam that he would die if he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **Gen 2:17**. Satan said to Eve that she would become like God by eating of this fruit. **Gen 3:5**. Clearly, however, there was no way of becoming like God without coming to the knowledge of death. God alone has this knowledge, and He is the One who administers it as judgement, and as mercy and redemption.

When Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they became 'like God' because they began to experience, or know, death. However, this knowledge was apart from God. **Gen 3:22-23**. It was the knowledge of death under the condition of cursing. **Gen 3:17-19**.

Before Adam and Eve were driven from the garden and barred from eating the fruit of the tree of life, a different death was revealed to them. God killed an animal on their behalf, signifying the provision of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. **Gen 3:21**. **1Pe 1:18-21**. This death was for their redemption, and to provide them with priestly garments to make offering.

Through this prevent offering, Adam and Eve were atoned for, and were recovered again to choose either death or the sonship that God had predestined for them. To choose His predestination for them, they would need to, figuratively, join the offering of the Lamb of God by making offering at the gate of Eden according to the pattern established by the Lord. By joining this offering death, their cursed death under the judgement of God, would be 'for their sake'.

## Choosing sonship

The sons of God were distinguished from the sons of men by their choice to make offering at the gate of Eden as instructed by the Lord. **Gen 6:1-2**. We know that Adam chose sonship through offering because he was listed in the genealogy of the sons of God. **Luk 3:38**. Likewise, his son, Abel, chose sonship through fellowship in offering. **Gen 4:4**.

Obviously, Cain did not choose the predestination that God had chosen for him. He presumed to make offering at the gate of Eden from the fruit of his self-made image. The Lord did not respect Cain's offering, yet He did meet him and free him to choose the predestination that God had chosen for him. The Lord said to Cain, 'If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.' **Gen 4:5-7**. The only way for Cain to rule over sin was to humble himself and become obedient to the fellowship of offering that the Lord Himself had established.

It is important that we understand and appreciate *the freedom of choice* that is inherent in God's Everlasting Covenant purpose for mankind. He has chosen sonship and fellowship in His house for every person. There is no life or future that a person can possibly choose that is better, or more glorious, than the destiny that the Father has chosen for them in Christ. To choose a way other than what He has chosen for them is, therefore, to fall short of the glory of God. Falling short in this manner is sin. **Rom 3:21-23**.

Through prevenient grace, every person is set free from the imposition of the 'other law' upon their capacity to make this choice. Without this liberating effect of God's grace, a person's choice would be unavoidably self-centred.

## I have chosen you

Paul emphasised the point that the prevenient grace of God gives us the opportunity *to choose what God has already chosen for us*, by saying, 'It is for freedom [of choice] that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.' **Gal 5:1.**

Jesus taught His disciples that the principle of choice, revealed in the creation and fall of Adam, equally applied to them. He said to them, '*You did not choose Me, but I chose you* and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.' **Joh 15:16.**

Jesus said to the disciples that He had chosen them so that they would go and bear fruit and that their fruit would remain. **Gal 5:22-23.** This is the fruit of eternal life that belongs to the sons of God. **Joh 4:36.** It is the fruit of the Spirit, for the Spirit gives life and He is the expression of this life for a son of God. **Joh 6:63.**

In order to bear fruit that remains, a person must progress from the adoption, to be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven. **Joh 3:5.** By this means, they are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings through which He multiplied His life to those who receive the new birth and grow as sons of God in Him.

The only way for a person to bear fruit is to be born again and to be conformed to the likeness of Christ's death and His resurrection. His was a death that multiplied life to them. In the fellowship of this offering, their testimony will be, 'We who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.' **2Co 4:11-12.**

## Peter's deliverance from iniquity

At the last supper, after washing his feet, Jesus revealed to Peter that Satan had asked for him that he might sift him as wheat. However, He said to Peter, 'I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' **Luk 22:31-32**. In response, Peter declared his readiness to lay his life down for Jesus. **Luk 22:33. Joh 13:37**. Jesus prophesied, saying, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.' **Joh 13:38**.

This interaction demonstrated Peter's self-righteous zeal. Peter's reliance on the sight of his own eyes, and his readiness to act according to the dictates of his own heart, were iniquity within him. **Isa 5:21**. Fundamentally, Peter's iniquity was his rejection of God's fatherhood. Peter was self-fathered as he endeavoured to name himself and define his own works of righteousness. On account of his self-righteous iniquity, Peter was in bondage to the law of sin and death, and under the judgement of God. **Rom 8:2**.

Each time that Peter denied Jesus in the court of Caiaphas, the zealous iniquity within him was dying. His self-proclaimed resolve to lay his life down for Christ's sake was coming to nothing. It was dying in Peter as it was being laid on Jesus through Peter's denials. By the time that Peter denied Jesus for a third time, he had totally failed. **Joh 18:26-27**. The zealot was dead; the circumcision of this iniquity within him was complete. Christ took it out with Him into the sea of God's forgetfulness. At this point, Peter was bankrupt in spirit. **Mat 5:3**.

## Joined to Christ's prayer of faith

When Jesus looked at Peter, meeting him eye to eye, Peter joined the fellowship of faith that Christ had prayed would not fail. **Luk 22:32**. Under the prevenient grace of God at the last supper, Peter had *chosen* this fellowship by receiving the washing that was necessary for his part in Christ's offering journey. Judas never chose this fellowship of faith. **Joh 13:8-10**.

As Peter met Christ eye to eye, he remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' **Luk 22:61**. By this means, Peter was illuminated to the depths of his iniquity. However, in the reflection from Christ's eyes, he also saw the heights of his sonship. The face of his new creation was in the eyes of Christ, reflected to him, heart to heart, from the priestly ministry of Christ as Melchizedek. **Heb 7:17**.

The life of Peter's sonship was being multiplied to him as Christ's blood was being shed for his iniquity. This would become Peter's life as the seed, which he had received by faith, germinated within him, birthing him from above, and as the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings became the daily reality of his Christian pilgrimage. **1Pe 1:17-19**. In this fellowship, he would be able to strengthen the brethren according to the word of his sanctification, which Jesus had already proclaimed to him.

Through this interaction with Jesus in the court of Caiaphas, Peter was joined to Christ's prayer of faith. This was the only prayer to join. Through fellowship in this prayer of faith, his iniquity was taken away and his sin was purged. Moreover, he became obedient to the word of his sanctification, which was to strengthen his brethren. **Luk 22:32**.

## Christ's prayer

In the garden of Gethsemane, the golden altar of the true temple was revealed when Jesus began to pray to the Father, by the Spirit, having been made an offering for sin by the Father. **Luk 22:41.**

When the angel came and strengthened Jesus, He received the capacity of Eternal Spirit through which His blood was shed for the cleansing of our sin. **Luk 22:43. Heb 9:13-14.** The work of atonement, which had previously been facilitated by the seraphim, now belonged to Jesus, the Son of Man. Atonement, including our deliverance from iniquity and cleansing from sin, was now being achieved and ministered through His offering and sufferings. Through this offering prayer, He was feeding His flesh and blood to the world as 'the bread of heaven'. **Joh 6:51.**

The full expression of this offering prayer for every person was manifest in the garden of Gethsemane. Then, in each wounding event, there was a *specific* application of prayer associated with the specific work of atonement that He was achieving.

Christ's prayer accompanied each wound. The content and effect of His prayer was twofold. First, Christ's prayer was establishing and fulfilling the word and will of the Father for the salvation of His sons. Second, Christ's prayer was proclaiming judgement upon the enemies of the Lord. These two dimensions of Christ's prayer are captured in the Messianic psalms.

In relation to Christ's offering in the court of Caiaphas, where He was bruised for our iniquities, we note the words of Christ in the prophetic psalm of King David. 'Let not those who wait for You, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed because of me; let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel. Because for Your sake I have borne reproach.' **Psa 69:6-7.** In this statement of prayer, Christ was feeding the bread of life as deliverance from iniquity to those who would receive it.

## Two sets of keys

The prayer of Christ which ministered the bread of life for deliverance from iniquity *also* declared judgement upon those who rejected His priestly initiative towards them, saying, 'Pour out Your indignation upon them, and let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their dwelling place be desolate; let no one live in their tents. For they persecute the ones You have struck, and talk of the grief of those You have wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not come into Your righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.' **Psa 69:24-28.**

The two sides of Christ's prayer that are recorded in Psalm 69, through which the bread of heaven was being fed to the whole world, revealed two sets of keys that Christ obtained as He was crowned with glory and honour in the course of His offering journey. **Heb 2:9.** These keys are described in the book of Revelation.

Revealing the ministry of salvation through His prayer, Jesus said to those in His churches who were overcoming through fellowship in His offering and sufferings, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the *key of David*, He who *opens and no one shuts*, and *shuts and no one opens*: I know your works [of sonship]. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.'" **Rev 3:7-8.**

In contrast, revealing His mandate to judge and condemn all unrighteousness, Jesus said to the apostle John, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. *And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*' **Rev 1:17-18.**

## The prayers of the saints

Describing the throne room scene in the book of Revelation, the apostle John wrote, 'Now when He [the Lamb] had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.' **Rev 5:8.**

From this passage, we recognise that the conversation of prayer belongs to the golden censers in the hands of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures. The prayers of all the saints are in these censers. **Psa 141:2. Rev 8:3-4.** They are there because the saints are those who are joined to the fellowship of the presbytery, which is the fellowship of the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit. **1Jn 1:3.** An implication of this reality is that a person's prayers will be ineffective if they are, themselves, disconnected from the fellowship of Christ, and the place where the Father has set them. **1Co 12:18.**

The prayers of the saints that are in the golden bowls of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, are for the sanctification, forgiveness and healing of all the saints. They are praying that they will be brought forth as sons of God.

In his epistle, the apostle James provides us with an application of the golden bowls full of incense in the hands of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures. James directed those who were sick to call the elders of the church for fellowship in the conversation of prayer. In this fellowship, there is healing, cleansing from sin, and the removal of one's iniquity. **Jas 5:14-15.** This is part of the ministry that belongs to the presbyteries of the seven lampstand churches during the church age.

## The seraph lifted up

When a person calls the elders because they recognise that they are weak and sick, it is essential that they engage in the right conversation. The deliverance of the children of Israel from the deadly venom of the fiery serpents in the wilderness, provides us with an illustration of this conversation.

Yahweh sent seraphim – fiery serpents – into the camp of the Israelites to sting those who complained against God and Moses, saying, ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.’ **Num 21:5**. Many in Israel died as a consequence of this judgement. The people ‘called for Moses’, confessing, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us.’ **Num 21:7**.

In answer to Moses’ prayer, the Lord directed Moses to make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole. Those who were becoming weak and sick and were dying, because of their unwillingness to receive the bread from heaven, which was the provision for their participation as a kingdom of priests, identified themselves as having been bitten.

By looking on the serpent, they received healing, deliverance from iniquity, and their sin was purged by the Lord, through the ministry of the seraphim. This was the same process that Isaiah experienced when one of the seraphim touched his lips with a live coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar of incense. **Isa 6:4-7**.

In type, as the children of Israel looked upon the fiery serpent, they met the Lord eye to eye and heart to heart, in the same way that Peter met Christ, who was lifted up before his eyes, in the court of Caiaphas. **Luk 22:61-62**.

## Prayer for sin not leading to death

The apostle John declared, 'If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask [in prayer], and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death.' **1Jn 5:16-17**. An obvious point of consideration for us is the distinction between sin leading to death and sin not leading to death. The sin of Peter and of Judas exemplified this distinction. We know that Jesus prayed for Peter. **Luk 22:31-32**. However, Jesus did not pray for Judas.

The apostle Paul described the sin unto death as 'wilful sin'. It refers to a person's determination to proceed in their own way, and according to the sight of their own eyes, after receiving a knowledge of the truth. That is, it is an active rejection of the truth and those who minister this message. Making this point, Paul wrote, 'For if we *sin wilfully* after we have received the knowledge of the truth, *there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*, but a certain fearful expectation of judgement, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries'. **Heb 10:26-27**.

A knowledge of the truth is found through dialogue with the elders when they are called to minister to those who are weak and sick and may be dying before their time. **1Co 11:29-30**. The dialogue through which a knowledge of the truth is obtained is not a theological discussion. Rather, it is fellowship in the light of present truth through which a hearer is obtaining faith for their personal fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. Only in this fellowship, are they able to obtain the resurrection life in the blood of Jesus. By the life in His blood, they are raised up. **Jas 5:15**.

## Christ's prayer for Peter

When we pray, we come to the tree of life. In the New Testament, the tree of life is called 'the throne of grace'. Mercy and grace are the fruit that Christ ministers to us from His throne. Grace, as the light of life, shines from His face as He is seated on His throne. Grace is the fruit that is able to help us in our need. **Heb 4:16.**

The distinction between praying for a brother sinning a sin not unto death, and not praying for a person whose sin is leading to death, was evident at the last supper. Christ said to Peter, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me [are converted], strengthen your brethren.' **Luk 22:31-32.** In contrast, Jesus did not pray for Judas. The disobedience of Judas was incorrigible; it was a sin unto death.

The prayer of Christ gave grace to Peter so that his faith did not fail at the last supper. **Luk 22:32.** At the last Passover, which was an *agape* meal, the Lord rose from the table, laid aside His garment, took a bowl, into which He poured water, and washed the disciples' feet. This action signified the washing of the water of the word, which was applied to Judas, to Peter, and to the rest of the disciples. **Eph 5:25-26. Joh 13:3-17.**

Peter initially resisted Christ on this point, saying, 'You shall never wash my feet!' **Joh 13:8.** However, upon hearing that he had no part with Christ if he was not washed, Peter requested a full washing and cleansing from his sin. However, Jesus said to Peter that he was already clean because of the word that He had previously spoken to him. **Joh 15:3.** Peter only needed the water of the word applied to his feet, because of how he walked, ministered, and projected himself. **Joh 13:10.**

## The pride of Judas

In contrast to Peter, Judas' faith failed him. He drew back in unbelief from Christ at the last Passover when, by washing Judas' feet, Jesus reached out to him, relationally. Judas refused this aspect of fellowship. He could not receive a word that asked him to humble himself and become a servant to his brethren, for that is what Jesus was exemplifying and speaking to them about.

As Judas refused this ministry of Christ, Satan entered and possessed him, making him a betrayer. **Joh 13:27**. He betrayed Christ and his fellow disciple-apostles, and then ended his own life by suicide. **Mat 27:5**.

Judas' idol was the image that he had of himself as an entrepreneur. This attitude made him vulnerable to covetousness. He became a thief when his entrepreneurial pursuits and schemes failed. **Joh 12:4-6**. A thief despises those from whom he steals. A thief cannot join fellowship. Jesus was wanting to open a dialogue with Judas as He washed his feet. However, Judas would have none of this.

Judas proceeded from despising Christ and his brethren, to promoting himself and his own image as the greatest among the apostles. This was, in fact, a leaven that was among them all. Luke noted that at the last supper, 'There was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest'. **Luk 22:24**.

From this pride, Judas fell into self-deception, became a thief and then a betrayer. **Mat 26:25**. His pride was his idol, for it was the strength of his pride that made him the judge, and then executioner, of his own life. He stumbled in his own iniquity as he bowed before his own pride, placed the noose around his own neck, and fell to his own death. His own pride destroyed him. As the Scriptures declare, 'Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit [or attitude] before a fall'. **Pro 16:18**.



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