



# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

FEBRUARY 2024

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

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## **Contributing Authors**

Victor Hall

Peter Hay

## **Compiled by**

David Baker

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## Hearing what the Spirit is saying

As a presbytery, we are applying ourselves to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. **Rev 2:7. Luk 8:18.** In His mercy, the Lord has been addressing our former, fleshly gospels and religious traditions, and has been restoring to us the gospel of God. **Rom 1:1,16.** This restoration has not merely been our comprehension of a more exact theology. Rather, it has been evidenced by cultural reformation within the fellowship of the presbytery, and in our marriages and families. By this means, we are becoming worthy houses.

This reformation has been progressively realised by those who have humbled themselves, received illumination by the Spirit, and responded to the word of present truth with repentance and faith. This faith is demonstrated as we embrace our fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. In this daily fellowship at the tree of life, which is the cross, we are able to find deliverance from our carnal, religious ways of relating, which lead only to death, and are finding reformation through *exanastasis* as we walk by the Spirit.

For this reason, the word that we receive, as it is laid down within the presbytery, is in our heart and in our mouth as a testimony. **Rom 10:6-9.** We minister this testimony as those of 'like passions' with our hearers so that they might be established in the same fellowship from which the word proceeds. **Jas 5:13-18. 1Jn 1:3.**

The recovery of the gospel of sonship, and its eschatology, is foundational to our establishment as part of lampstand churches who are making themselves ready for the marriage feast of the Lamb and His bride. As we are being found worthy through our response to the gospel, we are being joined to the work of its proclamation, both in the world and among the unclean daughters of Zion, by the spirit and power of Elijah.

Further Study      JAMES 1

## Prepare the way of the Lord

The spirit and power of Elijah is a prophetic ministry that goes before the face of the Lord, ' "To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' **Luk 1:17**. This ministry was exemplified by John the Baptist, who was the final Old Covenant prophet to discharge this mandate. **Luk 1:16-17**.

The prophet Isaiah declared, ' "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" says your God. "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."' **Isa 40:1-5**.

This prophetic passage provides a notable example of the threefold implication of the prophetic Scriptures. That is, they have an application that belongs to the time in which they were written; they were fulfilled during Christ's ministry on earth; and they have a final fulfilment in the time of the end.

Isaiah was first prophesying regarding the future return of the Jewish nation from Babylon following their seventy-year exile. **Isa 40:2**. Second, this prophetic statement referred to the ministry of John the Baptist who prepared the way for Christ. **Isa 40:3**. It also referred to the ministry of Christ Himself as He pioneered the highway of holiness through His offering and suffering journey. **Isa 40:4**. Finally, this statement referred to the time when the Father will take His seat, initiating a great evangelistic ministry through which a numberless multitude will be brought into the kingdom of God in the time of the end. **Isa 40:5**.

Further Study      ISAIAH 40

## All flesh is as grass

Isaiah himself was commissioned to minister in the spirit and power of Elijah. Like John the Baptist, he was directed by the Lord, 'Cry out!' **Isa 40:6. Joh 1:23.** In response, Isaiah asked, 'What shall I cry?' **Isa 40:6.** Isaiah was asking for the content of the message that he was to proclaim in the spirit and power of Elijah. Christ instructed him to proclaim, 'All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.' **Isa 40:6-8.**

'All flesh is as grass ... but the word of our God stands forever' is the prophetic message that is given by Christ to His messengers as they prepare the way before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah. This message declares that the flesh is transient. **Psa 103:13-18.** Moreover, seeking to attain the righteousness of God through the endeavours of the flesh is futile. At best, this glory is as 'the flower of the field'. Only that which is born of the Spirit, through the living and enduring word of God, will endure and will inherit the promise of eternal life in fellowship with Yahweh.

Church religion is a great deception. Its concomitant gospels assert that the good works of men, particularly those who are deemed to serve and advance humanity, are righteousness. A case in point is the Anglican Church's veneration of the late Queen of England. Her service and comportment as the head of state, and as the head of the church, has been extolled by this church as the epitome of Christian virtue. However, the attributes and actions of the Queen, which are used to justify this claim, merely describe the glory of a notable 'flower of the field'. Only what is born of God and is established in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings enters the kingdom of heaven. **Joh 3:3-5.**

Further Study      1 PETER 1

## The source of the prophets

Jesus is the 'Lord God of the holy prophets [who] sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place'. **Rev 22:6**. With this understanding in view, Jesus Himself testified that He was 'the Root and Offspring of David'. **Rev 22:16**. That is, David received his prophetic grace from Christ, even though Christ came in the flesh as the Son of David. As the Root, *Jesus is the source of all prophetic expression*, for He is the Word from the beginning. Joh 1:1. Moreover, the Scriptures teach that 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy'. **Rev 19:10**.

The prophets were able to declare the gospel in the spirit and power of Elijah because they were branches who were connected to Christ, the fatness of the root of the olive. **Rom 11:17-18**. We note this, for example, in the prophetic psalms of Moses and David. Moses wrote, 'In the morning they [children of men] are like grass which grows up: in the morning it flourishes and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers'. **Psa 90:5-6**.

Likewise, David declared, 'As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His Covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.' **Psa 103:15-18**.

John the Baptist's message was also 'All flesh is as grass'. **Luk 3:3-4**. This ministry was acutely demonstrated as John addressed the Pharisees and Sadducees who came out to him to be baptised. Endeavouring to keep the Law through the flesh, and glorying in their genetic lineage as natural children of Abraham, these Jewish religious leaders exemplified 'the grass' and 'the flower of the field'.

Further Study      PSALM 90



## The axe is laid to the root

John proclaimed the message, 'All flesh is as grass,' to the Pharisees and Sadducees when he said, 'Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. *And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.* **Mat 3:7-10.**

John was highlighting that the Old Covenant, which God made with the flesh on Mount Sinai, was coming to an end; the axe was laid to the root of that tree. This Old Covenant, and those who lived according to its basic premise – 'all that you say we will do' – had not produced any good, enduring fruit. **Deu 5:27. Mat 7:19.** The glory of the Old Covenant was like the flower of the field. In the same way that Isaiah proclaimed, 'The grass withers, the flower fades, because the breath of the Lord blows upon it,' John was declaring that any person who was not established according to a new covenant would, likewise, perish; they would be cut down and thrown into the fire. **Isa 40:7. Mat 3:10.**

The problem for the children of Israel was not the Law Covenant, but, rather, their belief in their own capacity to keep the Law. It is important to note that the New Covenant of the Spirit, established by Christ through His offering on the cross, was not a new covenant that was given to the flesh. It is given to those who are new creation. **2Co 5:17.** That is, it belongs to those who are born of God's *zoe* life and who are established on the pathway of glorification that Jesus pioneered for them through His offering and suffering journey. These believers receive the Covenant of the Spirit because they are born of the Spirit. **2Co 3:5-6.**

Further Study      MATTHEW 3

## Jesus was the substance

Speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus clearly distinguished between the flesh and the Spirit. He stated plainly that only that which is born of God, and then born of water and the Spirit, enters the kingdom of God. **Joh 3:3-8**. Inherent in His explanation to Nicodemus was the fleeting nature of the flesh and the need to be born again. Significantly, Jesus said that the Spirit blows where it wishes. That which is not born of the Spirit is taken away by the Spirit; as King David observed, writing, 'Let them be like chaff before the wind [the Spirit]'. **Psa 35:5**. The chaff is taken away as the Spirit blows upon them through the ministry of those who are born of the Spirit; it is burned with unquenchable fire. **Mat 3:12**.

The ministry of Elijah passed from John the Baptist to Christ at His baptism. As John himself testified, '*He must increase, but I must decrease*. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies ... he who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.' **Joh 3:30-36**.

When John said that he must decrease and Christ must increase, he was not just indicating that Christ was replacing him as the proclaimer of the word. Rather, he was highlighting that Christ was, in fact, *the substance of the message*. **Col 2:16-17**. In this regard, Jesus was not merely declaring, 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God'. Rather, He testified, '*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*.' **Joh 14:6. Isa 40:3**.

Further Study      JOHN 3

## The preaching of peace

Following His baptism, Jesus proclaimed the gospel that belonged to the Elijah ministry. The apostle Peter noted this when he spoke to Cornelius and his household. He said to them, 'The word which God sent to the children of Israel, *preaching peace through Jesus Christ – He is Lord of all – that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached*: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.' **Act 10:36-38.**

The preaching of peace is the message that belongs to the Elijah ministry. Peter's point was that this was the content of Jesus' message during His ministry. Unlike John the Baptist's ministry, the declaration of the gospel by Jesus was accompanied by many miracles. **Joh 21:25.**

In his discourse, which he delivered to the household of Cornelius, Peter testified that he had received, and continued to exercise, the mandate of proclaiming the gospel in the spirit and power of Elijah. Specifically, he said, 'And He [Christ] *commanded us to preach to the people*, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living [those born of the Spirit] and the dead [all flesh is as grass]. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.' **Act 10:42-43.**

We note this same focus in Peter's first epistle. He established that a person was born again by the incorruptible Seed (that is, the Spirit), through the word of God which lives and abides forever. **1Pe 1:22-23.** Peter then quoted Isaiah, writing, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever." *Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.* **1Pe 1:24-25.**

Further Study      ACTS 10

## Greater than John

During His earthly ministry, Jesus appointed the twelve, and then the seventy-two, to go before His face into every city and place where He was about to go. **Luk 9:1-2. Luk 10:1.** This was an upgrade to the ministry of Elijah, which was in preparation for the establishment of the church. Commenting on this appointment, and the future ministry of lampstand churches, Jesus said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' **Mat 11:11.** They are greater than John because they are born of the Spirit and are, already, citizens of the heavenly city for which the Old Covenant heroes of faith believed. **Heb 11:8-10.**

The Elijah ministry is now found in the presbyteries of lampstand churches. **Jas 5:14-18.** This is the fellowship of the church. Every person and family who receives and responds to this message is a worthy house. They are part of a network, or fellowship, of houses that comprise a local expression of a lampstand church. That is, they are elect 'ladies' – the expression of the bride of Christ in that locality. **2Jn 1:1.** Accordingly, they have a participation in the proclamation of the gospel in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Accompanying the Elijah ministry, which prepares the way for Christ, is the capacity to compel people to turn in repentance from their sin and to prepare themselves for the kingdom of heaven, which is at hand. The capacity to compel people in this manner was acutely observable in the ministry of John the Baptist. Even though he worked no miracles, the Scripture accounted that 'Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptised by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins'. **Mat 3:5-6.** Significantly, as the people did this, they were forsaking the Old Covenant temple, with its regime of offerings, as the means of obtaining peace with God in relation to their sin.

Further Study      MATTHEW 11

## Peace to this house

The capacity to compel people to turn in repentance from their sin is the dimension of peace that is given to a messenger who ministers in the spirit and power of Elijah. Jesus emphasised this point when He commissioned the seventy-two, who were sent two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. **Luk 10:1**. Significantly, Jesus said to them, 'But whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house." And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you.' **Luk 10:5-6**.

From Christ's instruction, we see that a messenger is to first proclaim, 'Peace to this house'. This is the gospel message that they have been given to proclaim as part of the Elijah ministry – 'All flesh is as grass ... but the word of the Lord endures forever'. The compulsion to respond reveals the prevenient grace that belongs to the peace ministered through the proclamation of the gospel. For this reason, Peter opened his second letter, writing, 'Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord'. **2Pe 1:2**.

A person is only able to proclaim this message if they are, themselves, a son of peace. That is, they are forsaking the way of the flesh and are being established in the culture of faith that belongs to the sons of God who are walking after the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **Rom 8:1**. Their confession is that they are a person 'of like passions' with their hearers, and they are obtaining peace as they turn from their carnality and find reformation in their lives, marriages, and families. **Jas 5:17**. Their ministry is able to cause the hearts of the fathers to turn to the children, and the children to turn to the fathers, because this grace is apparent within their own household.

Further Study      MATTHEW 10

## Looking for sons of peace

Jesus said to the seventy-two concerning each house, 'If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it'. **Luk 10:6**. He was explaining that a hearer, who is compelled to respond with repentance and faith to the gospel of peace, is joining themselves to the same fellowship as the messenger. **1Jn 1:1-3**. Having opened their heart to the messengers who have opened their hearts to them, they are now in each other's hearts to die together and to live together. **2Co 7:3**.

Those who reject the gospel of peace, which includes the invitation to receive the New Covenant of the Spirit, are left with their carnality. Jesus was clear that we are not to pursue or embrace those who *choose* the glory of the flower of the field – be it in the world, or in the church – over sonship, once the kingdom has come near to them. To this end, He said, 'But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, "The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you"'. **Luk 10:10-11**.

As we receive the gospel of God ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah, there is grace available for our establishment in the kingdom of God. We are able to forsake our religious idolatry as we take account for its fruit in our lives, our marriages and families. We are then able to testify within our families, including to prodigal children, of this reformation, proclaiming 'peace to this house'. By prevenient grace, each person is dignified with the choice, to either let our peace rest on them or to continue in the way of the flesh. At this point, we no longer have any obligation to them, for they have chosen the way of the flesh. **Rom 8:12**.

Further Study      ROMANS 14

## The Spirit of *exanastasis* within us

The apostle Paul wrote, 'But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.' **Rom 8:11**. This is the life by which we are to live as we forsake the way of the flesh and walk according to the Spirit.

The Law Covenant, which was given to the flesh on Mount Sinai, has been taken away and nailed to the cross. **Col 2:13-14**. This covenant is now finished and ended, forever. Of course, the Law itself is still holy, just and good. **Rom 7:12**. However, its righteousness is being fulfilled in us as we live and walk by the Spirit. **Rom 8:3-4**.

Our mortal flesh is like the grass of the field. It grows old and will perish, like the grass and flower of the field, unless it is changed from mortality to immortality; that is, unless it is made new.

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John recounted hearing God the Father declare, 'Behold, I make all things new.' **Rev 21:5**. The implications of this statement were first manifest in the incarnation, when the Son of God became flesh. Christ was the first Son of God in the flesh of mankind. He was also Yahweh Son, 'God with us', in the flesh. **Mat 1:23**.

Through Christ's offering journey for us, His flesh was changed from mortality to immortality. This happened through the process of *exanastasis*. In this process, the strength of God rested upon Christ in His weakness. Moreover, through His suffering, His body remained a temple of the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus suffered at each wounding event, causing His blood to be shed, the Holy Spirit was active within Him by the power of Eternal Spirit, making His blood effective as an atonement for all mankind. The life of Yahweh *Elohim* was in His blood, and it brought Him back from the death of each killing event that He suffered as He progressed to immortality. **Heb 9:14**.

Further Study      PHILIPPIANS 3

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## The love of God breaks our heart

As the word of the cross is proclaimed to us by the Spirit, we are able to meet Christ eye to eye and heart to heart. In this fellowship, the love of God breaks our heart, enabling us to become bankrupt in spirit. Note that God is not interested in, nor sympathetic toward, the emotions that belong to our unfulfilled expectations of life and others. This grief and broken-heartedness is not the bankruptcy of spirit that belongs to those who are forsaking the flesh and obtaining their citizenship in the kingdom of heaven. **Mat 5:3**. Rather, it is the emotions of sin.

We observe this distinction in the responses of Jacob and Esau. The outcome of Jacob's protracted suffering and grief at the hands of Laban was the confession, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant.' **Gen 32:10**. This was the testimony of a man who had learnt the fear of Isaac. **Gen 31:42**. Evidently, Jacob was not the victim of his circumstances. He walked in mercy and illumination, believing for the inheritance that had been promised to him in the gospel. His testimony was the expression of a man who, by faith, had joined the broken heart of Christ. It was the confession of a man who was poor in spirit.

In contrast, Esau's grief was completely self-centred. **Gen 27:36**. He viewed himself as the victim of Jacob's deception. In doing so, he rejected the word of his predestination. He was broken-hearted at the loss of his blessing, but this was not a connection to the broken heart of Christ. Esau's expression was full of misgivings and queries as to why this had happened to him. As Paul reminded us, 'For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.' **Heb 12:17. Mal 1:2-3**.

Further Study      DANIEL 10



## His grace in our weakness

The love of God inspires us to respect and fear Him. Like Jacob, our confession in prayer is, 'We are not worthy of Your mercy or illumination which reveals Your love for us and who You want us to be in relation to You.' This same attitude was demonstrated by the centurion who entreated Jesus to heal his servant. He said to Jesus, 'Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.' **Mat 8:8.** Jesus described this attitude as 'great faith'. **Mat 8:10.**

This same attitude, informed by a fear of the Lord, was demonstrated by Peter when Jesus called him to be a fisher of men. After putting the boat out at the direction of Jesus, and bringing in a catch that was so large that the net was compromised, Peter fell down at Jesus' knees and said to Him, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!' **Luk 5:8.** Jesus responded to Peter, saying, 'Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.' **Luk 5:10.** In this interaction, Jesus began to proclaim to Peter the faith for new creation.

The new creation of God is now available to us in our mortality, as we walk each day with Christ. The old creation is passing away as our outward man is perishing and our inward man is being renewed and changed. It is for this reason that we do not lose heart in the context of our sufferings, particularly those associated with the weakness of mortality. **2Co 4:16-18.**

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul testified that *exanastasis* in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings was the means by which he lived and also ministered as an apostle to the Gentiles. For example, he said to the Corinthians, 'For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.' **2Co 13:4. Php 3:10-11.**

Further Study      2 CORINTHIANS 12

## The New Covenant of the Spirit

In the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit dwells *with* us and *in* us, making our body a temple of the Holy Spirit. **2Co 3:5-6. Joh 14:15-17. 1Co 6:19.** As a temple for the Holy Spirit, we are not to 'self-worship'. Rather, we are to sanctify the Lord God in our heart and let Him be our 'dread'. Isa 8:13. We also must sanctify ourselves to do the works of the Father, which the Holy Spirit initiates and enables. Fulfilling these works by the Spirit, in Christ, is the implication of sanctifying the Lord God in our heart.

The world does not know us, because it does not know the Father. **1Jn 3:1.** Yet, we are the face of God to the world, through the Holy Spirit. We are in the world as men and women who are of 'like passions' with those to whom we speak. **Act 14:15-16.** However, because we have the ministry of Elijah, given to us by the Holy Spirit, we have become a sign and a wonder to them.

The sign of the prophet Jonah has been given to us to reveal. As Jesus Himself declared, 'This is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it *except the sign of Jonah, the prophet.* For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation.' **Luk 11:29-30.** That is, our work, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is to show forth Christ's death and life until He comes. **1Co 11:26.** This we do as members of Christ's body.

We reveal Christ's life in the same way that the branches on a vine reveal the life and identity of a vine, the life of which is contained in its root. Noting this principle, Jesus said, '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.**

Further Study      2 CORINTHIANS 3

## Shining like the sun

Under the Old Covenant, the Elijah ministry operated through the disposition of angels. **Act 7:52-53**. In the New Covenant, this ministry operates directly through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. We hear and receive the word of God through messengers who are sent to us by Christ, as they preach the gospel by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. **1Pe 1:12**. The Holy Spirit germinates the life of God that is in the word of God, when it is planted as a seed in our heart. **Luk 8:11. 1Pe 1:22-23**. By this means, we are born again of the Father's life as it becomes flesh and spirit within us. The Spirit then anoints us with power, enabling us to do the works that Christ accomplished for us when He completed our pilgrimage on earth, and in the age to come, on His offering journey from Gethsemane to the cross.

We are being given a double portion of the oil of the Spirit so that we can become messengers who belong to the Father's kingdom when He comes and takes His seat to rule the world. Through Christ and His church, the Father will gather into His kingdom, a multitude from the nations to become His sons and daughters.

Our work as sons and daughters of the Father is to shine forth as the light of God among the nations, as the sun shines its light upon the earth, bringing life to the natural world. As Jesus proclaimed, 'Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' **Mat 13:43**.

The double portion of oil that the virgin churches receive is so that their lamps, which are a symbol of their ministry and overcoming testimony, may be revealed to the world as they are manifest as sons of God in mortality. This work is described to us by the apostle John in Chapter 12 of the book of Revelation.

Further Study      MATTHEW 13

## A great multitude of sons

The woman portrayed in Revelation Chapter 12 is the church, the bride of Christ, shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of her Father. We note that she is still in travail and in pain to give birth, revealing that she is in mortality. **Rev 12:1-2.** Through her testimony, she brings forth a numberless multitude who are born again as sons of God. These sons are caught up to God and His throne, where they find protection and deliverance from the mouth of Satan, the dragon, who rules the seventh world order, or kingdom. **Rev 12:4-5.**

When the Father takes His seat, His tabernacle will be with mankind. And the Father will protect this great multitude by spreading His tabernacle over them. Describing this event, John wrote, 'Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne *will dwell among them* [equally translated, 'will spread His tabernacle over them']. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.' **Rev 7:15-17.**

Evidently, Christ is still their offering Lamb. He feeds and nourishes them as He leads them to the river of life that proceeds from the throne of God and Christ. **Rev 22:1.** The tree of life becomes their food, and they hunger no more, and thirst no more, for they have entered into God's rest. **Rev 22:2. Rev 7:16-17.**

When the Father takes His seat, the time will have come for the manifestation of the sons of God in mortality. This is made possible by the Holy Spirit, for each son of God is a temple of the Holy Spirit. **1Co 6:19.** As a temple of the Holy Spirit, our work is to reveal Him as He reveals us to the world as sons of God.

Further Study      REVELATION 19

## We have come to Mount Zion

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul declared, 'For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire.' **Heb 12:18-19**. Paul was referring to Mount Sinai, the place where the Law **Covenant** was given to the children of Israel. Identified as 'the mountain of God', this is where Moses was set in the cleft of the rock and was covered with the hand of God while the glory of God passed by him. **Exo 33:18-23. Exo 34:2-9**. It was also the cave where the prophet Elijah responded to the still small voice of God, who said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' **1Ki 19:8-12**. From that place, their ministry was to bring Israel to Christ. **Gal 3:24**.

In the age of the New Covenant, we have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. **Heb 12:22-24**. We receive greater blessings from the New Covenant. However, we also receive more-sore chastisements, with judgement. Paul noted this reality, warning, 'See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, *much more shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven.' **Heb 12:25**.

As it was for Moses and Elijah, our ministry, as part of the heavenly Jerusalem, is to bring people to Christ. We are to make them His disciples so that they, themselves, can be built into the heavenly Jerusalem. The Scriptures identify this work as the ministry of Elijah. **Mal 4:5. Luk 1:17**. The Elijah ministry is to prepare the way of the Lord. **Mar 1:2-3. Luk 1:17**. This was the work of John the Baptist, who ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah. He was the final Old Covenant prophet, of whom Jesus said, 'Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' **Mat 11:11**.

Further Study      HEBREWS 12

## The ministry of John the Baptist

John's ministry prepared the way of the Lord so that Christ could come to the nation of the Jews. John taught and ministered the forgiveness of sin through **repentance** and baptism. **Mar 1:4**. The majority of the nation came out to him, heard his word, and found repentance through baptism. John's ministry began to make the temple of Herod, with its priesthood and sacrifices, redundant. It consequently provoked a notable reaction from the leaders of the nation.

John the Baptist's ministry opened the door for Christ after He was baptised by John. Jesus was not baptised for repentance. Rather, He was baptised to fulfil all righteousness, and to receive the Holy Spirit in order to begin the age of the New Covenant that belongs to the church. **Mat 3:13-17**. Significantly, His baptism with the Holy Spirit established His body as the temple of God that would replace Herod's temple.

Affirming this point, the apostle John recounted that following the commencement of Christ's ministry, 'The Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body.' **Joh 2:18-21**.

When Jesus began His ministry, John proclaimed that Christ was the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. **Joh 1:29,36**. All who had heard John's word, and had repented through baptism, were urged to turn to Christ and be joined to His baptism. John said that his ministry must decrease, and Christ's ministry must increase. **Joh 3:30**.

The disciples of Jesus who were, at this time, the least in the kingdom of God, began to baptise for repentance into the name of Jesus. This was during the early phase of Jesus' ministry, before He sent out the twelve to proclaim the kingdom of God.

Further Study      LUKE 3

## A network of worthy houses

John the Baptist was pursued and killed by the wife of Herod, who was the 'Jezebel' of her day. **Mar 6:17-18**. Through her, the Elijah ministry that belonged to the Old Covenant was brought to its conclusion. Jesus said that the Elijah ministry of the Old Covenant age, which was finalised in John the Baptist, would be given to each citizen who belonged to the kingdom of God, and their ministry would become greater than the ministry of John the Baptist. **Mat 11:11**.

The Elijah ministry was upgraded by Jesus in preparation for the establishment of the church. He did this when He called and sent out the twelve, and then the seventy-two, before His face. **Luk 9:1-2. Luk 10:1**. Their work was to seek out worthy houses, which would later become a network for evangelism. This network was to bring men and women into the kingdom of God; a harvest that Jesus likened to many fish gathered in a net. **Mat 13:47-50**. The first elements of the message that the seventy-two were to proclaim to a worthy house, was the necessity for repentance and reformation in their home.

After Christ rose from the dead, He instructed His disciples, who comprised the eleven apostles, the seventy-two, and at least 500 other brethren who were heads of worthy houses. **1Co 15:5-7**. This company was the fruit of the ministry of Jesus, the twelve apostles, and then the seventy-two disciples, plus others whom He sent to preach the word concerning the kingdom of God. These people were now to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. **Mat 28:19-20**. They were to seek out other worthy houses and bring to them the word of the kingdom of God.

In the same way that Christ had taught and disciplined these witnesses, so they were to teach and disciple others. The households whom they taught would hold a common faith. Accordingly, they would fellowship with other individuals and families, living together as a community within cities and villages throughout the world.

Further Study      ACTS 1

## The ministry of lampstand churches

Peter and John described the communities of believers, who had been scattered among the nations, as 'lampstand churches' and 'elect ladies'. **1Pe 1:1-2. 2Jn 1:1. Rev 1:20.** Jesus, when speaking of the churches as the kingdom of God on earth, likened these elect communities, or churches, to wise or foolish virgins. **Mat 25:1-13.** Together, throughout the world, the whole community of the church is called 'the bride of Christ'.

The bride of Christ is described as a virgin church in relation to her marriage to Christ. **2Co 11:2.** However, in her relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as a community of believing families, the children who are conceived by procreation through human seed are also reborn, by the work of the Holy Spirit, as sons of God. **Jer 1:5.** The life and names of these children are then caught up to the throne of God and are hidden with Christ in God. **Col 3:3.** This all happens before they are brought into the world by their mothers. This reality explains how the church is spoken of as 'a virgin', yet is the mother of us all. **Gal 4:26.**

The procreative and evangelistic work of the bride, while she is still being formed from Christ's body, flesh and bones on the earth, is bringing forth sons of God as fruit for God in all the world. We are doing this, day to day, from Yahweh's fellowship in time and space, choosing the obedience of Christ. Fruit is being produced, because it is being manifest in our relationships, marriages, and families, and in our children who are receiving the fruit of the divine nature.

This fruitfulness is the initiative and work of the Holy Spirit. **Gal 5:22-23.** His work is to order and sanctify the new creation. **1Pe 1:2.** Everything of the new creation is coming through and from Christ. However, the formation and begetting work is by the Holy Spirit and His power.

Further Study      1 CORINTHIANS 12





Restoring  
my Soul