

Our common salvation

Jude testified in his letter, 'Beloved, while I was making every effort to write about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints'. The first thing we notice in this verse is that Jude was writing to those whom he called 'beloved'. They were his 'beloved brethren'. He was not questioning the validity of their salvation. He was addressing those who were already members of the body of Christ. He wanted to write to them about being stewards of the divine nature which they had received as slaves in the house of the Son. This is the focus of our common salvation. Our common salvation is the salvation which we have together in the fellowship of the body of Christ.

However, we notice an interesting interplay in this verse. We notice that while Jude was intent on writing about one subject, he was compelled by necessity to write on another subject! While he was writing about our common salvation, he realised that he needed to write to them about contending for the faith which had been handed down to all the saints. He needed to address some basic human issues among them because certain people had crept in unnoticed. They were ungodly people who were turning the grace of God into licentiousness. There were evidently some among them who had not yet been born again from the death of sin by the washing of regeneration, or if they had, they had regressed to a fallen and sinful way of living. We will find that there are two essential elements of the gospel. The first addresses our humanity and how we are regenerated or born again from the death of sin. The second addresses how we are born from above to become a son of God in the many-membered body of Christ.

References:

2Pe 1:1, 4
Act 4:12
1Ti 6:12

Gal 2:4-5
Act 20:29-31
1Jn 4:1

Further Study:

Jude 1

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 30

There are three that bear witness

The apostle John declared that Jesus Christ is 'the One who came by water and blood ... not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth'. He then continued, 'For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement'. So there are three that 'testify' or 'bear witness'. What is the meaning of 'witness'? It is a 'message'. There are three different and distinct messages, but they all agree as one. We need all three messages to be a son of God.

The message of the water is the word of the Father. The word of the Father calls us to repentance so that we can become who we were truly meant to be. It is recovering our predestination. The word is a fountain of life or living water. It is regenerating our human spirit, causing us to be reborn or born again from the death of sin.

The blood of Christ is redeeming and cleansing our conscience from dead works. It is restoring us to fellowship and to the image of God. The blood is enabling us to serve God as priests who are committed to righteousness; that is, as slaves of righteousness. The Son joins us to God by redemption and shares the divine nature with us as members of His body within the church.

The Spirit of God, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, is enabling us to live and grow up as sons of God. As we live by the Spirit, we are maturing as sons of God who manifest the life of God that has been given to us. For this reason, the apostle Paul declared, 'For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God'.

References:

1Jn 5:6-8

Rom 8:13-14

1Jn 1:7

Rom 3:25

Gal 5:22-25

2Co 6:18

Further Study:

1 John 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 31

Our fallen condition

There are many passages in the New Testament which explain the pathway of salvation for all believers. One of the most helpful frameworks for understanding the steps of salvation is found in Paul's letter to Titus. He began by saying that 'we were once foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another'. Writing in the past tense, it is evident that Paul was describing the fallen condition of mankind to those who had already been saved.

We were 'dead in trespasses and sins' and alienated from the life of God. We were lost and without hope in this world. We were enemies of God. Our heart was evil and desperately wicked. We were unable to believe the word of God because of our corruption and self-determination. It is important to recognise that the whole human race is a slave to something. We became slaves of sin in Adam and were taken captive to become slaves of Satan through the fear of death. In our fallen condition, we were also slaves to *self*; that is, we were enslaved to various lusts and pleasures. There are many examples of this in the Scripture.

Having established the fallen condition of mankind, Paul continued, 'But when the kindness of God our Saviour and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy'. The kindness and love of God was manifest when the Son of Man appeared. But more specifically, the kindness and love of God appears to every person when the word of the Father is preached to them by a messenger who is an ambassador of Christ with the ministry of reconciliation.

References:

Rom 6:17 2Co 5:18
Heb 2:14-15 Jer 17:9
Gal 5:17 Eph 2:1

Further Study:

Titus 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1

A messenger and their word

As a messenger of Christ, the apostle Paul prefaced the book of Romans with a statement about his attitude to the gospel. He said that he was not ashamed of the gospel because it is an instrument of God's power which brings salvation to all who receive it. A messenger will not be ashamed of their message. They will know what the gospel is and they will believe in its power and effectiveness. The word comes to every person with abundant and prevenient grace, enabling them to make a response, even though they are dead in trespasses and sins. When the word is proclaimed, there is power in the word itself, which is active toward a person who receives it.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul said that a righteousness which comes from God is revealed by the gospel and is given to men. Righteousness becomes the possession of those who hear, believe, and receive the word. This righteousness then increases and grows within them as they proceed forward in faith and progress from faith to faith. By this process, they receive the power of God that is in His word and manifest the life that it gives to them. The word delivers them from sin and enables them to do the works of righteousness.

When a person receives the word, their testimony is the fruit of their genuine experience. Because they have received, believed and obeyed the word, they have been set free from their slavery to sin and have become righteous slaves of Christ. They have been made alive to God through faith. Their capacity to believe came from the power that was in the word of God. The apostle Paul called this process which enables a person to believe, the 'washing of regeneration'.

References:

Rom 1:16-17 1Th 2:13
1Co 1:18 Gal 3:11
2Ti 1:12 Tit 3:5

Further Study:

Psalm 71

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 2

The mercy of God

The pathway of salvation began for us because we were saved by the mercy of God. The Lord said, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion'. The mercy of God was not simply a passive action where we did not receive the penalty of judgement that we deserved. It was much more than that. It was an active initiative of God toward us that brought us back from the death of sin. The mercy of God was expressed toward us by the washing of regeneration. We know that God was merciful because of the fruit of regeneration that is evident in our lives. Paul proclaimed, 'According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit'.

The word 'regeneration' could equally be translated 'rebirth'. Regeneration is the *first element* of our recovery from the death of sin and restoration toward the image of God. It is the recovery of our humanity. This is what it means to be 'made alive'. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul said that 'God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, *made us alive* together with Christ'.

The washing of the water of the word activated the process of regeneration in our lives, *before* we came into Christ to become a partaker of the divine nature. We were born again from the death of sin *before* we were born from above by receiving the Spirit of Christ. We could only be born from above within the context of the body of Christ. It is important to understand the difference between these two distinct elements of the new birth.

References:

Rom 9:15 Eph 5:26
Tit 3:5 Rom 8:2
Eph 2:4-5 1Co 15:45

Further Study: John 3:1-21

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 3

A new heart and a new spirit

The washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Spirit is the process through which we receive a new heart and a new spirit. The Lord declared through the prophet Ezekiel, 'I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a *new heart* and put a *new spirit* within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.' The new heart and the new spirit belong to our humanity.

Our heart describes our whole inner person, including our will and motivations. Our conscience is the deepest part of our heart. In our fallen condition, we know that our heart was deceitfully wicked. Our conscience was evil because it functioned according to our own knowledge of good and evil. We received a new heart when the blood of Christ cleansed our conscience and the love of God was poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. A new heart is a heart that is motivated by the love of God.

A new spirit does not refer to the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ. Our spirit is our God-given identity. When God the Son breathed into Adam the 'breath of lives', he received spiritual identity and became a living being. We received our spiritual identity in the womb of our mother through the process of procreation. The spirit of every man is eternal. However, in our fallen condition, our spirit was weak and continually wasting away. Our spirit needed to be renewed and strengthened by the Spirit of God, through the Holy Spirit. A new spirit is a *renewed* spirit that has been recovered and restored to fellowship with God.

References:

Eze 36:25-26 Gen 2:7
Rom 5:5 Jer 1:5
Heb 10:22 Psa 51:10

Further Study:

Romans 5

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 6

Faith works by love

Once we receive a new heart and a new spirit, we are able to believe and obey the word of God. We are motivated by the love of God because it has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. And further to this, we are able to believe for sonship because the faith of God has been given to us as a gift. No one can believe unless they receive the faith of God. Abraham was able to believe God because the faith of God was given to him as a gift. Faith did not originate in him and nor does it originate in us. Paul said concerning faith that it is 'not of yourselves, it is the gift of God'. It is the process of regeneration which recovers us to be sons of Abraham who are able to believe God and be justified by faith.

When faith is working by love in our heart, we *want* to become a son of God, and we *believe* that we can become a son of God. The apostle Paul called this motivation and faith toward sonship, in his letter to the Romans, a 'spirit of adoption'. He was not, in the first case, referring to the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Christ. He was referring to the attitude, virtue, and motivation which grips us when the love of God has been poured into our heart. The spirit of adoption is such a strong motivation, it could be described as a compulsion. It compels us to plant ourselves into the likeness of Christ's death, by baptism. We will eagerly want to be baptised into Christ. We witness this kind of motivation and compulsion in the heart of the Ethiopian. Having received the word spoken by Philip, he exclaimed, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptised?'

References:

Gal 5:6 Eph 2:8
Rom 8:15 Rom 5:5
Act 8:36 1Th 1:3

Further Study: James 2:14-26

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 7

The parable of the sower

The parable of the sower is the first, or the foremost, of all the parables. It focuses on the relationship between the word of God and our humanity. Jesus explained to His disciples that if we do not understand this parable, we will not be able to understand any of the parables. The parable of the sower clearly identifies that the word of God has power to illuminate and regenerate our human heart. The seed is the word of God. The four soils represent the condition of our heart. In this parable, Jesus was focusing on the need for our heart to be regenerated. He was not discussing the context of the seed to bring forth fruit; that is, the kingdom. And nor was He discussing how the seed will bring forth fruit; that is, by stewarding the talents that we receive as slaves in the house of the Son.

The word that is proclaimed to us is Christ and *the seed of our sonship*. It is bringing illumination and it is bringing life. It is regenerating our hearts and quickening our mortal bodies, but we do not possess this seed until we have come into Christ to be *born of it*. It is only once we are born of the Spirit of Christ that the word has a root and can bring forth the fruit of sonship in our heart – thirty, sixty, and one hundredfold. The good ground represents the person who has received a new heart and a new spirit. But more than this, they have evidently come into the body of Christ and been born from above by the Spirit of Christ. They have stewarded the talent of the divine nature which has been given to them by Christ, and produced increase and multiplication. This fruit belongs to God, but it will be given to them as their inheritance for the new heavens and new earth.

References:

Mar4:13 Heb 4:12
 1Pe 1:3,23 Jas 1:18
 Joh 6:63 Mat 25:15

Further Study: Mar 4:1-25

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 8

No fruit to maturity

The parable of the sower teaches us that the seed of sonship was unable to bring forth 'fruit to maturity' in three out of the four grounds. The wayside ground represents the person who receives the word into their heart, but it is immediately snatched away by the devil before it begins bringing illumination. A person who has a heart like wayside ground will not understand the word. The word will not profit them. It will not begin to regenerate their heart or heal them in any way. In the days of Jesus, the wayside ground firstly represented the hearts of the Jewish people.

The devil devours the seed which is sown on the wayside ground by bringing 'alternate theologies'. He promotes 'other teachings' which destroy the validity of the proceeding word of Christ. The devil promotes religious argument, knowing that such 'wrangling about words' only leads to the 'ruin of the hearers'. The seed germinates in the stony ground. The person receives the word with joy, but they only believe for a while. As soon as tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, they fall away. The stony ground person will be offended by the need to join the offering of Christ and the fellowship of His sufferings. They will not embrace the substance of baptism into Christ.

The seed is able to take root in the thorny ground and begin to produce the fruit of sonship. However, it is choked by the thorns which are the fruit of an alternate seed. They represent the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things. The thorny ground represents the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. In his letter to the Romans, Paul said, 'If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live'.

References:

Mat 13:15,19,21 Mar 4:19
2Ti 2:14 Joh 15:2
Rom 8:13 Mat 12:33

Further Study:

Matthew 7

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 9

What did Abraham find?

In his letter to the Romans, Paul asked the question, ‘What shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?’ It is important to consider what Abraham our father found according to the flesh, so that we can identify what the gospel achieves for our humanity as well. What did Abraham find in his humanity? We will conclude that it was *regeneration* and *adoption*. These are the two elements which we have in common with the Old Testament saints, as we follow in the steps of Abraham our father.

We know that Abraham did not receive the promise of the divine nature because Christ had not yet come in his flesh; but he did receive a new heart so that he could believe God and be justified by faith. And further to this, Abraham did receive the promise of the adoption. He became a joint heir with Christ of the divine nature. We read in the book of Hebrews that ‘having patiently waited, he obtained the promise’.

Shortly after Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek, the word of the Lord came to him in a vision. Yahweh the Son said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward’. The Lord declared that He would be Abraham’s ‘exceedingly great reward’ because, at the appointed time, He was going to be born in his flesh. He explained to Abraham that ‘one who will come from your own body shall be your heir’. Abraham believed that Christ would be his Seed according to the flesh. Further to this, the Lord promised that his descendants would become as numerous as the stars of heaven. In response to these promises, Abraham believed that in his Seed, Christ, all the nations of the earth would be blessed with the inheritance of the divine nature.

References:

Rom 4:1 Gen 22:18
Heb 6:15 2Pe 1:4
Gen 15:4-5 Gen 49:10

Further Study:

Romans 4

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 10

The circumcision of the heart

Abraham received the word and the capacity to believe and obey it, *before* he was circumcised in the flesh. He believed while uncircumcised, and his faith was imputed to him as righteousness. He was able to believe because his heart had been regenerated by the word of the Lord which had come to him. Circumcision was the sign of his faith and obedience which had come from the regeneration of his heart by the word.

Once Abraham had received and obeyed the word, it was given to him and his descendants as a covenant. Abraham was given the covenant of circumcision. What was the significance of the covenant of circumcision? It signified that the hearts of men could be circumcised and regenerated by the word of the covenant.

In the same way, the word of the law was given as a covenant to Moses. The children of Israel were supposed to hear God deliver the law to Moses so they would obey his word. However, they became so terrified that they refused to remain at the foot of the mountain. They retreated to stand at a distance. Moses said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin'.

The Lord constantly promised the saints of old a new heart and a new spirit so they could believe and be justified by faith. As the nation of Israel prepared to enter the promised land, Moses declared to them, 'The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your descendants to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live'.

References:

Gen 15:6

Rom 4:11

Exo 20:20

Deu 30:6

Exo 19:5

Rom 2:28-29

Further Study: Colossians 2

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 13

The believers of old had a new heart

Under the Old Covenant, the nation of Israel could have received a new heart, and the power within the word could have enabled them to fulfil the law. We know that most of them resisted the word and its power. It is evident that the grace and power of the word is not irresistible. However, there was always a remnant, who we often call the 'heroes of faith', who did receive the word. They did not resist it, so they received a new heart and a new spirit.

It was in this faith that King David prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.' The Lord testified that David was a man after His own heart. He was certainly not born with this kind of heart. This testimony was only possible because David had received a new heart.

The fact that the believers of old could receive a new heart is supported by Jeremiah's vision of the two baskets of figs. One basket was full of 'good' figs, and the other basket was full of 'bad' figs which could not be eaten because of their rottenness. The Lord explained to him that the good figs represented the people who had been taken captive by the Babylonians. The Lord would set His eyes upon them for good. He promised to bring them back from their captivity, and most significantly, He declared, 'I will give them a heart to know Me'. This was the promise of the new heart. The Lord continued, 'They will be My people and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their *whole heart*'.

References:

Psa 51:10-12 Eze 36:25-27
Zec 7:11-12 IKi 15:3
Jer 32:39 Psa 78:8

Further Study: Jeremiah 24

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 14

What advantage did the Jews have?

We can ask the question, like the apostle Paul, ‘What advantage did the Jew have?’ The answer is ‘much in every way’. If the Jews had received the word, they would have had the power to keep the covenant. The Old Testament believer could receive a new heart by regeneration, and find capacity to serve the living God. When they received the word, there was an anointing which came with the word. An anointing came upon them, enabling them to live a righteous and godly life. They were able to accomplish great deeds of faith. For this reason, we read about the great heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven.

We have the same advantage that Abraham and the Israelites had if we allow the word to regenerate our heart. Like the believers of old, the power of the word will be working in our flesh if we believe it. With this in view, it also means that we are under the same condemnation as the nation of Israel if we reject the word and do not allow it to circumcise our hearts.

When the word first comes to us, it regenerates our heart. A spirit of adoption is given to us which makes us ‘willing’ to believe and obey. This is the significance of the parable of the seed and the sower. The word can make our heart ‘willing’ if we receive it. However, although our heart is made ‘willing’ when it is regenerated by the word, it is still ‘weak’.

The coming of the word of the covenant to circumcise and regenerate our heart is the first element of salvation. However, finally, the circumcision of our heart is not enough. Our heart needs the life of the blood of Christ to enable it and the power that comes from Christ’s circumcision. This is resurrection life and power, which is ministered to us by the Holy Spirit.

References:

Rom 3:1 ICh 29:17
Rom 8:15 Psa 51:12
ICh 28:9 IJn 5:11-12

Further Study:

Hebrews 11

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 15

Our added advantages

It is important to recognise that we have many *added advantages* under the New Covenant. The circumcision of Christ gives ‘much more’ than the covenant of circumcision delivered to Abraham. What did Abraham’s circumcision give his descendants? It delivered the word, and the power of the word, which was able to circumcise the heart so that they could believe and obey it. However, the flesh of the saints of old was still mortal and weak. Their major hindrance was the weakness of their flesh. We are reminded of the words of Paul, ‘God has provided something better for us’.

What are our added advantages? The new elements of the New Covenant are the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and the Person of the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Jesus said to His disciples, ‘I tell you the truth, *it is to your advantage* that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you’.

We have received the divine nature, which means that Christ dwells in our heart by faith. However, further to this, the power flowing from *His* resurrection has been made available to us by the Person of the Holy Spirit. The power that comes to us from Christ’s resurrection gives life to our spirits while we are still in our weakness and mortality. In the New Covenant, we have been placed in a unique context. We are members of the body of Christ so that even though we are still mortal, we have been connected to Jesus Christ who is immortal. We are partakers of His immortality. All of the gifts of the Spirit are operative within the body of Christ because the power of His resurrection life is available to us.

References:

Rom 8:3 2Co 4:10-12
Mat 26:41 Col 2:11-12
Heb 11:40 Joh 16:7

Further Study: 2 Peter 1

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 16

Baptism into Christ

What is the meaning and purpose of baptism? In the first case, baptism is our entry *into* Christ. When the apostle Paul met with the believers in Ephesus, he asked them, '*Into what* were you baptised?' It is important to recognise that baptism is not firstly a *washing*. The focus of baptism is not the removal of dirt from the flesh. It is the answer of a good conscience where we *clothe* ourselves with Christ. Paul declared, 'For all of you who were baptised *into Christ* have *clothed yourselves* with Christ'.

When we are baptised, we are clothed with Christ's sonship and we become joint heirs with Him. We have received the adoption as sons with the privilege of sharing His eternal inheritance. This is the meaning of adoption. It is the *right to an inheritance*. When we clothe ourselves with Christ through baptism, we are made joint heirs of all that the Father has given Christ. We are reminded that 'the Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand'. Within the fellowship of His body, Christ shares the life, which He has received from God the Father, with us.

The fundamental definition of adoption is that, by baptism, our flesh has come into Christ and is *guaranteed* a resurrection. When a Christian dies, it is said that they fall asleep *in Jesus*. At the point of our physical death, God *loosens* all the parts that belong to our earthly tent. Our earthly tent will be loosened so that we are absent from our physical body and present with our Lord Jesus. In heaven, Christ will be our house. We will still be members of the body of Christ because we have clothed ourselves with Him by baptism. Then, in the resurrection at the last day, we will receive our incorruptible and immortal resurrection body for the new heavens and new earth.

References:

Act 19:3 Joh 3:35
IPe 3:21 Rom 8:23
Gal 3:27 1Th 4:14-15

Further Study: Galatians 3

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 17

Receiving the Spirit of Christ

Once we have come into Christ by baptism to become joint heirs with Christ, we can receive the divine nature. The divine nature is the inheritance of those who have received adoption as sons. The apostle Paul explained this in great detail in his letter to the Galatians. He said that if we have been baptised into Christ, we have been clothed with Christ. We belong to Christ and have become children of Abraham; that is, heirs according to the promise. The promise is the inheritance of the divine nature. Because we are sons of God by adoption, the Father sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying out, 'Abba Father'.

This was fulfilled for the disciples on the day of resurrection. We recall that Christ spoke with the women who visited the tomb and commissioned them as His first messengers. He said, 'Go to My brethren and say to them, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God".' Christ ascended to the Father, and was then sent by Him to the disciples so that they could be born from above as sons of God.

We recall that Jesus stood among the disciples in the upper room. He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. There were two distinct actions here. Jesus breathed 'His life' upon His disciples. He then gave them the Person of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were born from above by receiving the life of Christ, through the Holy Spirit. In this way, Jesus Christ is the 'life-giving Spirit'. The Father sends forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, causing us to be born of God and enabling us to call God our *Father*. The Spirit of Christ is given to us *from* the Father, *by* Christ, and *through* the Holy Spirit.

References:

Gal 3:27,29 1Co 15:45
Gal 4:6 Col 3:4
Joh 20:17,22 Rom 5:17

Further Study: Galatians 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 20

The life of the One Seed

Jesus Christ died as a singular Seed. He was the only Son of God who had the divine nature. However, as He died, the life of the divine nature was multiplied and made available to a multitude of sons *in Him*, and ultimately, *with Him* in the resurrection at the last day. This process of multiplication by offering is called the 'operation of God'. We are reminded of His own testimony, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain'.

When Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, He was raised as the 'corporate Seed' and the 'Sheaf of Firstfruits'. We were raised in Him as seeds in His sheaf, but we do not receive our own body until the day of resurrection. In the resurrection at the last day, God will give 'to each of the seeds a body of its own'. In this lifetime, we partake of the divine nature, not as individual seeds, but as sharers in the life of the 'one Seed'. The Spirit of Christ is His *personal possession*. Paul was careful to show that all the promises given to Abraham do not belong to 'many seeds'. They belong to 'one Seed'; that is, Christ.

The 'one Seed' is now a 'corporate Seed' because the Father has given Christ a corporate body. There is 'one body' of Christ with many members. The Father has placed us in the corporate body of Christ just as He desires. The Spirit of Christ is now the possession of a corporate Seed; that is, the many-membered body of Christ. However, the corporate Seed is still Christ. We must be clear that the Spirit of Christ cannot be possessed apart from Christ Himself.

References:

Col 2:12

Joh 12:24

1Co 15:38

Gal 3:16

1Co 10:17

Ecc 4:9-12

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 12

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 21

Members of Christ

The apostle Paul declared, 'Even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so *also is Christ*'. Jesus Christ has been raised, seated and glorified as the Head of His many-membered body. The body of Christ is not a mystical or theoretical group of believers. It is a real and tangible fellowship of those who have received the Spirit of Christ. Paul was clear that only those who have the Spirit of Christ are members of Christ. He wrote to the Romans, 'If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him'. Equally, it is only those who belong to Christ as members of His body, who have the Spirit of Christ.

What is the implication of this? It is impossible to be born from above by receiving the Spirit of Christ apart from a tangible membership of the body of Christ. We cannot partake of the divine nature outside of Christ. We cannot say that we are born of God and possess eternal life on our own. Nor can we maintain divisions in the church or animosity towards others in the body of Christ. The apostle John declared, 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God'. And likewise, 'Whoever loves the Father, loves the child born of Him'.

If we are members of the body of Christ, it means that we are members of one another. When the Father places us in the body of Christ, just as He desires, He joins us to particular members. We hold fast our connection to the Head of the body, Christ, by holding fast to these specific relationships within His body. If we violate and forsake these relationships, then we lose our connection to Christ Himself.

References:

Rom 8:9

1Jn 4:7

1Co 12:12

1Jn 5:1

Rom 12:4-5

Eph 4:25

Further Study:

Romans 12

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 22

Children in a Christian house

There are many implications of these things for children who are born into a Christian house. They have been conceived as sons of God in the womb and are sanctified because of their parents' faith. They are conceived as part of the corporate Seed, and in that sense, they are born into the process of the covenant and are already receiving the life of the covenant. However, they are still born carnal and need their heart to be regenerated and their spirit to be renewed. In this regard, the children who are born in a Christian house will be participants within the corporate Seed, the body of Christ, before they begin to touch regeneration.

It is the faith of the parent which sanctifies the child within the body of Christ, which is the context of receiving eternal life, and sanctifies the child to the process of regeneration in the family. A child will be subject to the process of regeneration while they are being disciplined and trained by their Christian parents in the home. The chastening hand of the head of the household is the hand of the heavenly Father toward each child. This is the mandate and responsibility which has been given by God to the head of every house. The regeneration of his children will be completely dependent upon his faith and accountability in this God-given mandate. The wise man said, 'Train up a child in the way he should go and even when he is old he will not depart from it'. The church can support the head of the household in this mandate, but it cannot compensate for him, or remove it from him. If a church presumes to remove this mandate from the head of a house, it has removed the context for the regeneration of his children.

References:

Eph 6:4 Rom 11:16
Pro 22:6 Deu 6:7
Heb 12:9-10 Pro 29:17

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 23

The faith of a child

Why do we baptise the children of Christian parents in the church? In one sense, a Christian parent took all of their children into the waters of baptism with them, even if those children were yet to be conceived. For this reason, when their children are conceived, they are already part of the covenant. However, as the child is subject to their parents in the home and participates in the communion of the church, there will come a time when they are personally gripped by a spirit of adoption. They may be as young as six or seven, or even younger in some cases, when this begins to happen. They will want to be personally clothed with Christ, even though they are already part of the fellowship of the covenant within their family. This is a legitimate expression of the faith of a child.

As a child grows and matures within the family and the community of the church, they will progressively understand what it means to be in their heavenly Father's house while they are still subject to their parents in the home. We recall that Jesus was twelve years old when His parents found Him in the temple, and He said to them, 'Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?' We know that there are significant emotional and physical changes which happen in a child's life around the age of twelve as they move into their early teenage years. This can often be a period of insecurity. However, it can and should be a time when a young person is becoming more aware of the Father's love and their place in His house. Then, when they come of age in their late teenage years, they will be ready to stand in their own faith and commitment to be a disciple of Christ apart from the faith of their parents.

References:

Luk 2:49-52

Gal 3:27

2Ki 5:3

Act 16:15, 33-34

Act 2:39

2Ti 3:15

Further Study:

1 Samuel 3

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 24

Partakers of His immortality

When Christ was raised, seated, and glorified at the right hand of the Father, He received the name which is above every name. This name is the full expression of Yahweh the Son with the glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world. The Day of Pentecost clearly shows that it is Yahweh the Son who is the Head of the church. The body of Christ is the full expression of Yahweh the Son, who has also become the Son of Yahweh.

Yahweh the Son is the *immortal* Head of the body of Christ. We are still *mortal*, but we have become members of His *immortal* body. He has enabled us in our mortality to partake of His *immortal* life that flows to us from His resurrection. In this way, we know the power of His resurrection. The same Spirit which raised Him from the dead dwells in us and is quickening our mortal bodies. The power that comes from His immortality is made available to the members of His body by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit takes this power and distributes it in various manifestations. This is the source of all the gifts of the Spirit.

As mortal members of His body, partaking of His immortality, we are quickened in our mortal bodies, but it does not yet appear what we shall be. However, we know that if we have been united with Christ in His death, then we will also be raised with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. We will never become Yahweh the Son, but we will be glorified with Him as sons of God the Father. This is our faith. In the resurrection at the last day, we will receive our own incorruptible and immortal body which will be composed from the substance of His resurrection body.

References:

Php 2:9 Eph 1:22-23
Joh 17:5 Php 3:10
Act 2:36 Rom 8:11

Further Study: 2 Corinthians 5

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 27

Slaves with a stewardship

Jesus Christ spoke of slaves in His house, in the same way that Paul referred to members of the body of Christ. Christ as the Head of His body, the church, is also Master of His house. We are slaves in His house. Likewise, we are slaves as members of His body because our commands come from Christ who is the Head. As a slave of Christ in His house and as a member of Christ in His body, we serve Him as a steward of the Seed of the divine nature. We are stewards of the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is our talent. The sum of the talents is the total possession of Jesus Christ who has gone away to the Father to receive an eternal kingdom. The parable of the talents tells us that Christ entrusted all of His 'possessions' to His slaves.

We labour with the talents which have been given to us as slaves of Christ, in His house and as members of His body. The fruit we generate belongs to Christ, but it becomes our personal possession once we are revealed as sons of God for the age to come. In the resurrection at the last day, we will be raised to stand before the judgement seat of Christ to receive our eternal reward. Our individual sonship will not be fully revealed until this time. Until then, we serve within the one body of Christ with the talent of the divine nature. We hold the talent of the divine nature in trust until it is multiplied within us as a harvest of the life of God. And then, once multiplied, at the end of our service as good and faithful slaves, it is given to us by God as our own possession and inheritance for the new heavens and earth.

References:

Mat 25:14,23 1Pe 4:10
Rev 22:12 1Co 3:10
Luk 12:42 1Co 15:10

Further Study: 1 Corinthians 4

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 28

According to ability

We know that Christ gives talents to His slaves according to their *ability*. To understand this, it is important to distinguish between three different kinds of ability. Firstly, there are the natural abilities which belong to sons and daughters of men in the world. These abilities will be developed over the course of a person's lifetime. Many of these abilities will not have any relationship to a person's predestination as a son of God. They will simply be the fruit of how a person has directed their energy in a futile world. The parable of the talents is not referring to these kinds of abilities.

Secondly, there are the natural abilities which have been given to a person according to their predestination as a son of God. Some of these abilities may be evident in a person's life from their youngest years, but these abilities will be misappropriated and wasted until that person has responded to the gospel. Many of a person's abilities will not begin to be seen until the word has begun its regenerating work in their lives. When a person is regenerated and released from their bondage to sin, they regain the proper use of all their human faculties and abilities. A regenerated believer is able to present themselves to God as one who is 'alive from the dead', and able to present their members (all of their abilities) as 'instruments of righteousness to God'. We receive the divine nature according to these abilities; that is, according to our unique predestination as a son of God.

Thirdly, there are the abilities we have as members of the body of Christ. These are not our own abilities as a son of God. They are the abilities of Christ which are expressed by the various members of His body. For example, the hand has a different ability to function within the body from an eye.

References:

Mat 25:15 Eph 4:7
 Rom 6:13 Rom 12:6-8
 1Co 12:5-10 Act 5:14-15

Further Study:

Daily Proverb:

1 Peter 4

Proverbs 29

It is possible to lose the talent

The parable of the talents teaches us that it is possible to lose the divine nature. This is a sobering thought. The slave who had received the one talent had evidently received the Spirit of Christ. He had been born of God, but then regressed. He buried the talent in the ground; that is, in his flesh. This slave had misappropriated the life of Christ which he had received. He was unable to render any fruit to the Master in the day of His visitation and, as a consequence, 'even what he had was removed from him'.

A person who has buried their talent in the ground will be violating the fellowship of the body of Christ and refusing to submit to the authority that Christ has established in His house. This is the meaning of lawlessness. In His mercy, the Lord gives time for repentance, but if a person does not want to repent, then ultimately, the judgement of God will be invoked upon them. The Master will require them to give an account. Jesus was clear that He will use His messengers to gather 'out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practise *lawlessness*'.

When a person receives the divine nature and then loses it, their condition will be worse than it was before they heard the gospel and came into Christ. The apostle Peter said, 'The last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.' A person who has regressed in this way will be tormented forever with their regret and their unresolvable anger and bitterness. This is the meaning of 'weeping and gnashing of teeth'.

References:

2Pe 2:20-21

Rev 2:21

Mat 25:25, 29-30

Jer 8:4-6

Mat 13:41

Mat 8:10-12

Further Study: Matthew 25

Daily Proverb: Proverbs 30

The work of the Holy Spirit

It is important to understand the distinction between the work of the Holy Spirit when the word is first proclaimed to us, receiving the Person of the Holy Spirit when we are born of God, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the first case, the Holy Spirit has been sent into all the world to convict of sin, righteousness, and judgement. If we do not resist the conviction of the Holy Spirit when the word is proclaimed to us, then He begins to be poured out upon us as an anointing. However, He is not in us at this point. He is motivating our spirit with a 'spirit of adoption', and leading us into Christ.

It is only when we come into Christ that the Holy Spirit is given to us by the Father, in Christ's name, to dwell with us forever. He is given to us as a personal possession once we are in the house of the Son. We cannot be born of God and possess the divine nature without the work of the Holy Spirit. The Father sends the Spirit of the Son into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

Further to this, we receive power from on high when we are baptised in the Holy Spirit. We recall that Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received power to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and even to the remotest parts of the earth. This is more than the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the sevenfold Spirit of God which is brought to us by the Person of the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the Spirit of God which enables us to participate in the sufferings of Christ and be His witnesses in the world

References:

Joh 16:8

1Pe 1:12

Tit 3:6

Luk 24:49

Act 1:5, 8

Act 2:33

Further Study:

John 14

Daily Proverb:

Proverbs 1