



# Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

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APRIL 2021

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A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

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# **RESTORING MY SOUL**

*A Five Day Devotional Guide*

**April 2021**

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## Paul's gospel

The apostle Paul was very clear: there is only one gospel. He said that if anyone preaches a gospel other than what he preached, they are to be accursed. **Gal 1:8-9**. Paul did not receive his gospel from men, nor did he acquire it through scholarship. Rather, he received the gospel of sonship from God through the revelation of Jesus Christ. **Gal 1:11-12**. Significantly, following his encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, Ananias said to Paul, 'The God of our fathers [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.' **Act 22:14-15**.

Paul testified that the Father was pleased to reveal His Son, Jesus Christ, *in him*. The Father did this so that Paul could preach Christ among the Gentiles. **Gal 1:15-16**. The wonder and implications of this revelation staggered Paul. It took him three years to fully appreciate and embrace the implications of this call upon his life. At the end of his three-year individual journey with Christ, Paul went to Jerusalem and conferred with Peter, remaining with him for fifteen days. He also met with James, the Lord's brother. **Gal 1:18-19**. After this, Paul went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia, *preaching the faith* which he had once tried to destroy. The fruit of this ministry was that Paul's hearers glorified God in him. **Gal 1:21-24**.

Writing to the Colossian church, Paul described the stewardship of the gospel that God had given to him. He had exercised this stewardship for their sake, fulfilling what the Father had spoken to him when He said that He would reveal Jesus Christ in him. **Gal 1:15-16**. **Col 1:25**. Paul's work was to proclaim the mystery that had been hidden from ages and generations. This mystery, revealed through the gospel of sonship, is 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'. **Col 1:24-27**.

## A sure hope

The gospel of sonship is proclaimed by messengers of God in whom Jesus Christ is being revealed. As a person hears this word, they receive the faith of the Son of God, enabling them to believe for new birth. **Rom 10:17. 2Co 4:13.** By this faith, Christ, the Seed of the Father, dwells in their heart. **Eph 3:17.** When we receive the Lord Jesus in this way, He becomes the hope of our glory. This is a sure hope; it is the certainty that, through fellowship in the offering of Christ, we are progressively becoming the sons of God whom the Father predestined us to be in Christ. **2Co 3:18. 2Co 5:21.**

Paul's most succinct statement of the gospel was expressed in Antioch when he publicly rebuked the apostle Peter for his hypocrisy. He noted that Peter would normally eat with the Gentiles. However, in the presence of certain men who came from James, Peter withdrew and separated himself from the Gentiles. Peter did this because he feared the Jews, whom Paul described as 'the circumcision'. **Gal 2:11-13.** These men claimed to be the heirs of God's promises to Abraham because of their genealogy and their commitment to the cultural practices of the nation of Israel, including physical circumcision.

The highpoint of Paul's admonition to Peter was a summary of the gospel. He testified, 'I have been co-crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but *Christ lives in me*; and the life which I now live in the flesh *I live by the faith of the Son of God*, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.' **Gal 2:20-21.**

## No other gospel

Having recounted his discussion with Peter to the Galatians, Paul reproved them for seeking to be perfected by keeping God's Law. He called them 'foolish', and described their actions as the works of the flesh. **Gal 3:1-3**. Paul said to them that if they were physically circumcised, Christ would profit them nothing. Moreover, by endeavouring to fulfil this aspect of the Law, they would be obligated to keep the whole Law, bringing them under its judgement. **Gal 5:2-3**.

By pursuing righteousness through the Law, the Galatians demonstrated that they had been deceived by another gospel. As a consequence, they were denying that they had been crucified with Christ. Moreover, they were forsaking the faith of the Son of God as their capacity to believe God's word and live by His life. **Gal 2:20-21**. If a person does not live by the faith of the Son of God, Christ cannot dwell in their heart through faith. **Eph 3:17**. They are not an heir of the salvation proclaimed through Paul's gospel. Paul asserted that Abraham's children, the true heirs of salvation, were not those who kept the Law, but were those who were of the same faith as Abraham. **Gal 3:7**.

Paul then spoke to the Galatians about the gospel that God had preached to Abraham. He showed them that it was the *same* gospel that God had proclaimed to him. Paul understood that it was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who had chosen him to know His will and to see the Just One, Jesus Christ! **Act 22:14-15**. Concerning this gospel, Paul wrote, 'And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham *beforehand*, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham'. **Gal 3:8-9**.

## The prophetic call to Abraham

The gospel was preached to Abraham while he was living in Ur of the Chaldeans, because the Scriptures prophetically foresaw that Abraham would later receive the faith of the Son of God and become the father of all who believe by this same faith. **Gal 3:8-9**. This prophetic call came to pass in due course when the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield [of faith], your exceedingly great reward.' **Gen 15:1**.

The Lord called Abraham to leave his country, to depart from his family and from his father's house, and to enter a land that the Lord would show him. **Gen 12:1**. This call was accompanied by the promise of blessing. The Lord said to Abraham, 'I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' **Gen 12:2-3**.

The Scriptures, which are prophetic, foresaw and foretold that God would justify the Gentiles through faith. *Because of this*, God chose Abraham for the purpose of making him the human father of all the sons of God. These are the sons and daughters of men who are born again as sons of God by hearing and receiving the message of Christ. All the sons and daughters of God, described as the nations of the new heavens and earth, would come from Abraham. In this regard, Abraham was to replace Adam as the head of the nations.

Upon receiving this promised blessing, Abraham went out, not knowing where he was going. **Heb 11:8**. In other words, Abraham received and obeyed the prophetic direction of the Lord, even though he did not fully comprehend what it would mean for him, or how God's word would come to pass.



## Possessor of heaven and earth

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul explained that Abraham understood that the land that he was promised represented an *eternal blessing*. He said that Abraham dwelt in the land of promise, 'for he waited for the [heavenly] city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God'. **Heb 11:9-10,16.**

Following Abraham's defeat of the four kings who had endeavoured to establish dominion over the land that God had given to him, Abraham met Melchizedek, the Priest of God Most High. Melchizedek, whom Paul identified as Jesus, invited Abraham to participate with Him in an *agape* meal, bringing out bread and wine. **Heb 7:1-3. Gen 14:18.** He then blessed Abraham, saying, 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, *possessor* of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' **Gen 14:19-20.**

Significantly, through Melchizedek's blessing, Abraham replaced Adam as the heir of the world. Paul explained this point in his letter to the Romans, writing, 'For the promise that he would be *the heir of the world* was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith'. **Rom 4:13.** The implication of this blessing is that only those who are the children of Abraham will inherit eternal sonship as citizens of the new heavens and earth.

With this momentous understanding in mind, Paul asked the Gentile Christians in Rome, 'What shall we say then that *Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh*, has found?' **Rom 4:1.** Significantly, Paul was identifying these Roman believers as Abraham's children according to the flesh! How could they be the children of Abraham if they were not Jewish or directly connected to his lineage? The answer to this question cannot be understood through natural reasoning, alone. As it did for Abraham, it requires illumination through the word of faith.

## Your exceedingly great reward

The word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield [of faith], your exceedingly great reward.' **Gen 15:1**. Through this word, Abraham received the faith of the Son of God as a gift. He was enabled to believe that God the Son would come in the flesh as his Son and Seed. He was also able to believe that the treasure of the Son's life would become his own life and the life of his children. Abraham understood that this is what the Son meant when He said to him, 'I am ... your exceedingly great reward.'

This is the very understanding that Paul received when the Father was pleased to reveal His Son, Jesus Christ, in him! **Gal 1:15-16**. We recognise that Paul received the same faith that Abraham received so that Christ could dwell in his heart through faith. **Eph 3:17**. This was fundamental to Paul's capacity to proclaim the gospel to others so that they, also, might become children of Abraham.

Affirming to Abraham that his heir would be one who would come from *his own body*, the Lord brought him outside and said to him, 'Look now toward *heaven*, and count the *stars* if you are able to *number* them.' **Gen 15:5**. Through Christ, Abraham's Seed, the multitude of sons would be like the stars of heaven in number and in nature. That is, they would be numerous, and would be full of the light of life. Moreover, they would be the citizens of the new heavens and earth. **Gen 15:4-5**.

The Scriptures record that Abraham, having received the faith of the Son, believed in the Lord, and that the Lord accounted it to him for righteousness. **Gen 15:6**. This was the moment when Abraham was *justified* by faith.

## How shall I know?

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul proclaimed, 'For if Abraham was *justified* by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was *accounted to him for righteousness*". **Rom 4:2-3**. Abraham's justification means that Yahweh accepted Abraham as a participant in His covenant fellowship and dialogue.

Unlike the children of Israel at Mount Sinai, Abraham did not presume to possess the promises of God through his own strength. Instead of saying, as the Israelites did, 'All that You say we will do,' he asked the Lord, 'How shall I know that I will inherit what You are promising?' **Gen 15:8. Exo 19:8**. These questions reveal a fundamental distinction between endeavouring to obtain the blessing of God by the works of the Law, and actually receiving them by the hearing of faith. **Gal 3:2**.

In answer to Abraham's question, the Lord directed him to join, by faith, the fellowship of Christ's offering. This he did, by sacrificing a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon, in obedience to the direction of the Lord. **Gen 15:9-10**. Through his participation in this offering, Abraham was, figuratively, 'co-crucified with Christ'.

Abraham learned to possess the promises of God through offering and illumination. This was signified by the smoking furnace and burning lamp which passed between the pieces of the offering that the Lord called Abraham to make. His offering was ignited by the smoking furnace, revealing his connection to Christ's acceptable offering. The burning lamp brought illumination to Abraham regarding God's Covenant and the means by which he would possess the nations. **Gen 15:17-21**.

## Blamelessness

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'I am Almighty God; *walk before Me and be blameless.*' **Gen 17:1.** Abraham and Sarah were enabled to fulfil this command as they received new names from the Lord. Yahweh placed an element of His own name in their natural names, endowing them with a remnant of His Spirit. **Gen 17:5-6. Gen 17:15-16. Mal 2:15.** Furthermore, Abraham received circumcision as a sign of God's Everlasting Covenant. **Gen 17:10-13.** The birth of Isaac, who was born according to the Spirit, was the fruit of this initiative towards Abraham and Sarah. **Gal 4:29.**

Paul explained that Abraham received circumcision as a *sign of the faith* that he had received as a gift while he was *uncircumcised*. **Rom 4:11.** As we have just considered, Abraham received this faith when the word of the Lord came to him in a vision. **Gen 15:1.** He received the sign of circumcision *so that* he might become the father of *all* who believe, whether they are of 'the circumcision' or not. In other words, the physical circumcision that Abraham received, *signified* living by faith in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Both Jews and Gentiles can become children of Abraham, as long as they walk in the same steps of obedient faith in which he walked while still uncircumcised. **Rom 4:9-12.** This is their participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ.

When Abraham received the sign of circumcision, and Yahweh wrote His name upon him, he became the father of faith. This is the faith through which all men are justified. He was given the capacity, through faith and grace, to walk before God and to be blameless. **Gen 17:1.** With this capacity came the mandate to instruct his children after him in the way of faith-righteousness. **Gen 18:17-19.**

## Living by the same faith

We are the children of Abraham if we walk, by faith, blamelessly before the Lord. **Gal 3:7. Php 2:14-15. 2Pe 3:14.** We demonstrate that we are children of Abraham when we live by the same faith that Abraham received. It is through this faith that Christ dwells in our heart as an exceedingly great reward.

We demonstrate that we believe by this faith through our daily fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. In this fellowship, we are able to walk before the Lord and be blameless. Blamelessness does not refer to our own achievement of sinless perfection. Rather, by grace, we have a daily participation in the sinless perfection that Christ accomplished for us through His offering. Through fellowship in His offering and sufferings, we are able to fulfil the works that belong to our sonship, as we are being delivered from our sin. This is what it means to be *'blessed with believing Abraham'*. **Gal 3:9.**

Understanding what it means to *'walk before the Lord and be blameless'* will be fresh for us all. Previously, we may have endeavoured to fulfil the commands of Christ through our own efforts and application. Many have presumed that the Holy Spirit was given to them to enable their fulfilment of God's Law. No doubt, some people have been less concerned about their inability to keep the Law, claiming God's forgiveness of their sins because of Christ's blood that was shed on their behalf.

The truth is that we can only walk blamelessly before the Lord because we have a daily participation in the finished offering of Christ. In the fellowship of His sufferings, which is *our* death that He made His death, we are being delivered from sin and from *'the other law'* as the principle of our life. As we are conformed to *His* death, we are receiving and living by His life, and are fulfilling the works of sonship that He has perfected for us. **Php 3:10-11.**

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### FURTHER STUDY ROMANS 4

## The Beatitudes

In his Gospel, the apostle Matthew specifically highlighted Christ's ministry of *the blessing of Abraham*, narrating what is commonly referred to as 'the Beatitudes'. Jesus said, '*Blessed* are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *Blessed* are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. *Blessed* are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. *Blessed* are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. *Blessed* are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. *Blessed* are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. *Blessed* are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' **Mat 5:2-10.**

Jesus then described the *culture* of those who were blessed as part of the kingdom of heaven. From a natural perspective, the cultural expectations of the kingdom that Christ was proclaiming, far exceeded those of the Old Covenant. For example, He taught, 'You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' **Mat 5:27-28.** In summary, He said, 'Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.' **Mat 5:20.** Christ's followers are to be perfect, just as the Father in heaven is perfect! **Mat 5:48.**

Attempting to fulfil these words of Jesus is a fundamental error that many Christians make. Some may even believe that the Holy Spirit has been given to them for the purpose of empowering their endeavours to meet these cultural standards. However, the very intention to adhere to Christ's words *disqualifies* a person from the blessing that belongs to the children of Abraham.

## Blessing in the New Covenant

It is important to recognise that if a believer strives to fulfil the commands of the New Covenant, their righteousness is no different from that of the Pharisees, who sought to keep the Law under the Old Covenant. How, then, can a person possibly be blameless in relation to the New Covenant?

The blessing of life that belongs to the New Creation is found only in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Access to this blessing begins with the ministry of the word by those in whom Christ is being revealed. **Gal 1:15-16**. A person receives the faith of the Son of God by hearing the word of the cross. **Rom 10:17**. By this faith, they are able to believe for participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ as a son of God. **2Co 4:13-14**. The Holy Spirit, who is given to them by the Father at the request of the Son, enables their daily participation in this fellowship.

Of course, this is how we walk in the faith that Abraham had before he was circumcised. We recall that, by the faith of the Son that he received when the word of the Lord was revealed to him, Abraham participated in the fellowship of Christ's offering. Notably, in the course of this offering, Abraham fell into a deep sleep, and horror and *great darkness* fell upon him. **Gen 15:12**. He experienced the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, through which the old creation was brought to an end. Yet, in the midst of this darkness, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between the pieces of the offering. **Gen 15:17**. The smoking oven marked Abraham's connection to Christ's death and resurrection. The burning torch was the light of the prophetic word confirming God's Covenant with Abraham. **2Pe 1:19**.

## The source of light

Jesus said, 'Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. For assuredly, I say to you, *till heaven and earth pass away*, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law till all is *fulfilled*.' **Mat 5:17-18**. This is a remarkable statement.

The present heavens and earth passed away when Christ took them out with Him into the eternal judgement of God. This happened between the sixth hour and the ninth hour of Christ's crucifixion. During this phase of His offering, darkness covered the whole earth as the lights of this present creation were extinguished. **Mat 27:45. Mar 15:33. Luk 23:44**. At the conclusion of these three hours of darkness, the whole of the old creation had been taken out into the sea of God's forgetfulness, and Christ, the corporate New Creation, had emerged from the waters of God's judgement. At the conclusion of His offering, the Lord declared, 'It is finished!' as the law and the prophets were completely *fulfilled*. **Joh 19:30**.

Having brought an end to the old creation, God committed the present heavens and earth to the prophetic Scriptures. Every day, until Christ's final judgement as He sits on the great white throne, has been *fixed* by the Scriptures. **Rev 20:11**. In effect, the Scriptures have become the source of light in this present creation for the purpose of granting every person time to repent and to join the offering of Christ as part of the New Creation. **Rom 2:4**. A person receives this opportunity by hearing what the Spirit is saying from the Scriptures through the preaching of Christ's messengers. Making this point, the apostle Peter said, 'And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed *as a light that shines in a dark place*, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.' **2Pe 1:19**.



## Poor in spirit

Our fellowship in the offering of Christ is how we obtain the blessing that God promised to Abraham and his children. The most fundamental condition for joining this offering, through which we are enabled to walk blamelessly before the Lord, is to become poor in spirit. A person who is poor in spirit acknowledges their spiritual *helplessness*. **Psa 34:18**. They recognise that they have no capacity within themselves to obey Christ's word. Jesus said that becoming poor in spirit is the first and most basic attribute of a person who is obtaining the blessing that God promised to Abraham and his children. **Mat 5:3**.

Notably, the Greek word that is translated 'blessed' in the Beatitudes means 'to be fully *satisfied*'. This is not the satisfaction or happiness that results from favourable circumstances in life. Rather, it is the enduring, or everlasting, satisfaction that is only found in the fellowship of Christ's offering. King David testified to the blessing of this satisfaction when he wrote, 'As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness'. **Psa 17:15**.

In the Scriptures, 'sleep' is often used as a euphemism for death. For example, Paul wrote, 'But now Christ is risen from the *dead*, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen *asleep*'. **1Co 15:20**. The blessing of satisfaction that is found by those who awake in the likeness of the Son, belongs to those who, by faith, confess that they have been crucified with Christ. Having been conformed to His death, they live by His life. **Php 3:10-11**. Of course, living by the life of Christ as a son of God is the blessing for which Abraham, the father of faith, believed. We see that the Beatitudes were Christ's explanation of how we obtain the blessing that was promised to Abraham.

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FURTHER STUDY PSALM 51

## The Seed of Abraham

Yahweh said to Abraham that the heirs of salvation, who are the citizens of heaven, would be the sons and daughters who would come from his own body. Gen 15:4-5. This raises some significant questions. How do we become Abraham's children according to the flesh if we are *not* Jews? Why did John the Baptist say to the Jews, who *were* Abraham's natural children, 'Do not think to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father"'? **Mat 3:8-9**.

When the word of the Lord came to Abraham, he received faith to believe that Yahweh the Son would become his Son after the flesh. This happened through incarnation, when Mary, the direct descendant of Abraham through King David, gave birth to Jesus. **Rom 1:1-3**. Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, was sent as a messenger to Mary, proclaiming that she would bear, and bring forth, the incarnate Son of God. **Luk 1:26-38**. Gabriel said to Mary, '*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.*' **Luk 1:30**. This was the same word, or gospel, that the Lord ministered to Abraham. **Gen 15:1**. By the faith that Mary received from the word of the Lord's messenger, she confessed, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! *Let it be to me according to Your word.*' **Luk 1:38**.

The physical body of Jesus was formed in the womb of the virgin Mary once the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High, who is the source of the word, overshadowed her. **Luk 1:35**. **Mat 1:20**. The word, as the seed of God that enabled Yahweh the Son to be born as the Son of God, and formed His heavenly body, is the same word that formed His physical body. The seed of God, in conjunction with the egg of Mary, gave to Christ His human body. **Joh 1:14**. When He was born, He was the natural Seed of Abraham. As the Son of Man, He had received His physical body from the father of faith.

## Aid to the sons of Abraham

The apostle Paul declared that Jesus Christ gives aid *to the sons of Abraham*. **Heb 2:14-16**. The aid that He gives is His own precious life, which He gives to become their life. His 'zoe' life becomes for them an exceedingly great reward. How do we, as sons of Abraham, receive the aid that Christ came to give to us?

In the garden of Gethsemane, the Father made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us. He did this so that we might become sons of God in Christ. **2Co 5:21**. Jesus Christ became sin when the Father made Adam, and all who proceeded from him through natural birth, members of the body of Christ, who is the last Adam. **Rom 5:14. 1Co 15:22,45**. This happened when Jesus drank the cup of cursing that the Father gave to Him. **Luk 22:41-42**. By drinking this cup, Jesus, by the grace of God, began to 'taste' the suffering of death for *everyone*. **Heb 2:9**.

From the prophetic writings of Zechariah, we understand that drinking this cup caused the two-edged sword of God's judgement to be applied to Christ, whose corporate body was the body of sin. **Zec 13:7-9**. The two sides of this sword revealed the two outcomes of Christ's offering journey, which Paul called 'the circumcision of Christ'. **Col 2:11-12**. First, at each stage of His offering journey, Christ was being progressively cursed and cut off from God. As the embodiment of sin, iniquity and transgression, these aspects of the human condition were being ended as He was dying. Significantly, the whole of the old creation, including all the sons and daughters of Adam, were going out with Him into the sea of God's forgetfulness.

At the same time, as His blood was shed through the wounds that He suffered, Christ was being made alive from the death of sin as a corporate New Creation. **Heb 13:20-21**. He was pioneering the pathway of every person's salvation, and He was fulfilling the works of their sonship. **Heb 5:8. Isa 26:12**.

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### FURTHER STUDY HEBREWS 2

## The likeness of His resurrection

The wounds that Jesus Christ experienced from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross caused His blood to be shed and sprinkled upon His physical body. The resurrection life of God, that was in His blood, brought Him back from the death of our sin. Significantly, when His offering journey was complete, the resurrection life of God had attained a full perfection and expression in Him. **Joh 19:30.** His Spirit had gone to the Father, yet His physical body remained on earth. Christ's flesh rested in *hope* as His body lay in the tomb for three days and three nights. **Psa 16:9-11.** The reason why Christ's body did not decay during this time was because the *exanastasis* life of the Father had *already* been perfected in His physical body. On the day of resurrection, three days and three nights following His death, His body did not need to be changed into a spiritual body. It had already become spiritual through the power of *exanastasis*. When He returned to His body, it was as spiritual as it was material.

The word of the cross ministers the faith of the Son of God, enabling us to confess, 'I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live.' **Gal 2:20.** This is the confession of a person who has been joined to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and recognises that they have been taken out with Him into the sea of God's forgetfulness. They no longer live according to the principles of the flesh that were established through the disobedience of Adam. Instead, having been conformed to Christ's death, they are being raised in the likeness of His resurrection. **Php 3:10-11.** Christ lives in them, and they now live His life by the faith of the Son of God. **Gal 2:20.** They are no longer children of Adam; they are now children of Abraham.

## Raised from the dust

Importantly, we are not children of Abraham by association or because of a common system of beliefs. Neither are we his children because of our genetic heritage. Speaking of the resurrection found in the fellowship of Christ's offering, John the Baptist said to the Jews, 'Do not begin 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 [or, the dust of the ground]'. **Luk 3:8.**

We know, of course, that 'the first Adam' was made from the dust. **1Co 15:47.** Following the Fall, the Lord said to him, 'In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.' **Gen 3:19.** When a person dies, their body decays to dust. The dust of their decomposed body has no genetic distinction from the dust that results from the degeneration of any other person's body. In short, their familial connections and heritage are completely lost.

When John the Baptist said that the Father was able to *raise up* children to Abraham from the dust, he was explaining that only those who die in Christ and are raised in the likeness of His resurrection are children of Abraham after the flesh. This happens according to the word of the Lord. At the end of this age, all the dead will be raised from the dust by the word of the Lord, for the purpose of God's final judgement. **Rev 20:13.** Those who belong to Christ as Abraham's seed will be raised incorruptible and clothed with immortality. **1Co 15:51-52.** Those who do not belong to the New Creation will be cast into the lake of fire. The Scriptures call this 'the second death'. **Rev 20:14-15.**

## Our place prepared

Only those who are born of God and baptised into Christ are raised to immortality as children of Abraham. Jesus revealed this implication of the gospel to His disciples prior to the commencement of His offering journey. He said to them, 'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And *where* I go you know, and the *way* you know.' **Joh 14:1-4.**

When Jesus said to His disciples, 'Let not Your heart be troubled', He was addressing them in the same way in which He spoke to Abraham, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.' **Gen 15:1.** When we are born again, and baptised into Christ, we die, and our life is hidden with Christ in God. **Col 3:3.** We now live by a completely different principle of life; we live by the faith of the Son of God as the children of Abraham! **Gal 2:20.** Each day, we progressively participate in the finished offering of Christ, through which He perfected our sonship. Jesus described our perfected sonship as a mansion in the Father's house, which He prepared for us through His offering. It is a heavenly body, in Him, comprising our name, life and glory as a son of God. We progressively attain to this inheritance through our daily participation in His offering and sufferings. **Php 3:11-12.**

As those who are made from the dust, we are raised up from the death of sin with Christ through fellowship in His death and resurrection. This is a process through which we are being progressively changed into the likeness of His image. **2Co 3:18.**

## Our resurrection body

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul testified that he pressed on to know Christ 'and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.' **Php 3:10-11**. Through fellowship in Christ's offering and sufferings, the life by which we live in our mortal bodies is the resurrection life that was in Christ's blood. Paul called this '*exanastasis*' life. **Php 3:11**. However, in the *anastasis*, or resurrection to immortality, we will have a spiritual body that is of the substance of Christ's spiritual body.

Paul addressed this point when he said, 'But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" ' **1Co 15:35**. He then explained that our mortal bodies are sown in dishonour. **1Co 15:43**. By this, he meant that the flesh of all mankind died with Christ under the judgement of God. However, for those who are in Christ, as part of the New Creation, their body is raised in glory and power; that is, they receive a spiritual body when their mortality expires, and they fall asleep in Christ. **1Co 15:44**.

The glory of our spiritual body will reflect the extent to which we have attained the perfection that Christ accomplished for us. We attain this perfection, from glory to glory, through our fellowship in His offering and sufferings. **2Co 3:18**. Summarising the point, Paul said, 'As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.' **1Co 15:48-49**. The image of Christ is not just His nature; it also refers to His spiritual body, the DNA of which comes from Abraham!

## The gospel in our mouths

The Holy Spirit has been restoring to us the gospel of sonship. This is the gospel that the Scriptures preached to Abraham, and now must be in our heart and in our mouth. **Rom 10:6-10**. The Spirit is urging us to proclaim this gospel as a testimony and the expression of our life in every context in which the Father has placed us. **Luk 12:8**. We are to proclaim, and demonstrate, the righteousness of faith that belongs to us as children of Abraham through fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. **Heb 13:7. 1Th 1:6**.

To exemplify and proclaim the gospel, we must be delivered from our sacramental practices and orientations to the word of God. Fundamental to sacramentalism is the belief that we are recipients of blessing through our participation in religious practices that are purported to bestow spiritual grace from God upon us. A life lived in this manner is no different from the foolish endeavours of the Galatians as they sought to obtain the promise of the Spirit through the works of the Law. **Gal 3:1-3**.

We are thankful that the Lord has come among us with eyes like a flame of fire to confront our religious, sacramental practices. This has brought reformation to our communion gatherings, publicly and house to house. However, the Lord is addressing other aspects of sacramentalism, particularly in our families, so that we are able to walk before the Lord 'without spot and blameless'. Although initially confronting, we are rejoicing that the Lord is establishing us in fellowship with Him. This is His love towards us and the confirmation that we are, indeed, the children of Abraham.





Restoring  
my Soul