

Restoration Teaching – Series II

STEWARDS of the MYSTERIES

Ministers of the Mystery

Great is the Mystery of Godliness!

The Transformation of the Saints

Four Parts Grace – Two Parts Truth

Comfort one another with these Words

The Kingdom of God, Coming of the Lord, Message of Sonship

The Apostolic Revelation

Why Sonship?

Experiencing the Grace of God

Aspects of the Doctrine of Sonship

Five-fold Blessing of the Father

The Great Intercession

This Manual of Restoration Teachings is Series II [of a two-part series] and is a compilation and editing of our monthly newsletters from March 2005 to October 2007. Such an idea had been suggested in the past but we believe the Lord crystallised this project in our minds recently as we sought Him for curriculum material for the third year discipleship course [Year I and Year II are already in print and being taught in discipleship courses in a number of countries].

Stewards of the Mystery

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REVIVAL MINISTRIES AUSTRALIA

REVIVAL MINISTRIES AUSTRALIA

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Bringing the church to maturity by fathering sons Gal.4:19 & 1Cor.4:14-17

The restoration of the five-fold ministry, Eph.4:11

Receiving again grace and apostleship, Rom.1:5

Making known the revelation of the mystery, Eph.3:2-11

Understanding & entering into the Spirit of sonship, Rom.8:15

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All Scripture quotations are from New King James Version unless otherwise annotated. Occasionally an English word in *italics* is left out of the quotation. This is because the words in *italics* have been added by the translators and do not appear in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Sometimes I have changed **LORD** in Old Testament quotes to **YAHWEH**, which is an attempt to translate the Hebrew revealed name of God.

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The session "Great is the Mystery of Godliness" was written by Nicholas Jackson,
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With acknowledgement of Janet Barton for transcription and editorial assistance.

Revival Ministries Australia Ltd. ACN 082081098 is a registered church ministry in the Commonwealth of Australia with a mandate to conduct international ministry, and to commission & ordain ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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INTRODUCTION

The knowledge of the mystery

“Let a man so consider us as servants of Messiah and stewards of the mysteries of God” 1Cor.4:1. What an awesome statement this is! And who will dare to accept this awesome privilege and responsibility to be a **servant of Messiah** and a **steward of the mysteries of God**?

Jesus told His disciples that *“it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” Matt.13:11.* He further said *“blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear: for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see” v.16-17.*

The first apostles and prophets were given knowledge of the mystery, firstly by Jesus to the twelve and then by the Holy Spirit to those who followed after (**Eph.3:5**). The first church was built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets (**Eph.2:20**) who had knowledge of the mystery.

However this knowledge of the mystery was lost as the church historically rejected firstly the apostles and then the prophets. In these last days as God completes His great work of restoration, we again welcome apostles and prophets to minister among us to make known the *“deeper wisdom”* of God. This wisdom is for the mature (**1Cor.2:6-7**).

Bringing the saints into the inheritance

Paul tells us that the knowledge of the mystery *“has been hidden in God from the beginning of the ages” Eph.3:9.* This knowledge of the mystery is *“the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory” 1Cor.2:7.* Paul said *“that by revelation He made known to me the mystery” Eph.3:3.* Paul also says that this revelation came to him because of *“the dispensation of the grace of God, which was given to me for you” v2.*

Paul is clear that his ability to minister was according to the gift of grace he had received (**Eph.3:7**). In **Colossians**, again Paul refers to the stewardship or dispensation that he had received whereby he was able to *“fulfil the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory” Col.1:25-27.*

The mystery is first revealed to the apostles and prophets, but for the very purpose of it then being made known to the **saints**! The knowledge of the mystery is the **inheritance of all the saints** and, without the knowledge of the mystery, we cannot inherit and come into the maturity/completeness that God intends.

The fellowship of sonship

When the saints have received the knowledge of the mystery, the saints then are able to share that knowledge. Paul puts it in another way in **Ephesians**: *“to preach the unsearchable riches of Messiah among the Gentiles and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery” Eph.3:8-9.*

When we come to know the mystery we enter in to a deeper fellowship {Gr. *koinonia*}. This is the fellowship of knowing we are **sons**, having received the *“predestined adoption as sons” (Eph.1:5)*, having received *“the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, ... no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Messiah” Gal.4:6-7.* Jesus is to be *“the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom.8:29)* and through Him God is *“bringing many sons to glory” (Heb.2:10).*

God’s goal is for the **brethren** to grow up into maturity, able to receive the **deeper wisdom** as sons, who are to become manifest in the earth showing forth the glory of God (**Col.1:27, Rom. 8:19**).

The oracles of God

Peter instructs all of us to be “*good stewards of the manifold grace of God*” (1Pet.4:10), ministering to one another according to the gift given. When the saints are properly disciplined and then taught the **deeper wisdom**, then every saint becomes a minister and the way of ministry is through grace. The gift that Christ gives each one is ministered in one of two ways: “*If anyone speaks let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, do it with the ability which God supplies*” 1Pet.4:11.

The speaking **as the oracles of God** is referring to ‘making known the mystery’. The **oracle** of God is the actual word of God. The origin of this word *oracle*, in the Hebrew, refers to God speaking forth from the Holy of Holies (Ex.25:21-22, SC #1687 Heb.). Therefore it is referring to the **deeper wisdom**, the **mystery**.

Remember that it was Peter’s confession, “*You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Living God*”, that is the foundational revelation of the mystery of ‘Who Jesus is?’ Upon this revelation the church is built (Matt.16:16-18).

Every disciple being able to preach

Philip, one of the seven (Acts 6), grew up under the first apostles and was one of the disciples “*scattered*” when the persecution arose at the time of Stephen’s martyrdom (Acts 8:1-4). The Scripture says they “*went everywhere preaching the word*”. Philip went to Samaria and he “*preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus the Messiah*” Acts 8:12. How different was Philip’s message to the ‘normal’ preaching of the gospel in the 20th/ 21st century! Philip had knowledge of the mystery: he knew ‘Who Jesus Is’!

Ministering to one another

Peter also said “*if anyone ministers, do it with the ability that God supplies*” (1Pet.4:11). Paul shows us that God enables us to be ministers “*by the Spirit of the living God*”, that we are ministers “*of the heart*” (2Cor.3:3). The Scripture says “*not that we are sufficient [able] of ourselves to think anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency [ability] is from God, who has made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant*” (v.5-6).

The ministry Peter is referring to is serving one another in the body:

- there is the ministry of the word [the oracles of God]
- there is the ministry of serving which refers to the relational aspect of body ministry.

Once we have the revelation of the mystery, we are not only able to share the **deeper wisdom** with the brethren but we are able to enter into the **fellowship** of the mystery, and we do this by ministering to one another as “*good stewards of the manifold grace of God*”.

The manifold grace of God

There is no doubt that God in His grace wants His church to receive His **manifold** [numerous and varied] **grace**. Grace has been the missing element in our ministries and in our lifestyle. Humans always find it easier to live by rules and so each church [denomination/movement] prescribes what they believe and how their members are to act. However such a church keeps the saints in permanent immaturity, not being fed the **deeper wisdom** and not being ministered to in the **manifold grace**. It seems easier for leaders to set the rules and then expect people to measure up.

However there is a different way and it is through grace. Both the ministry of the word and the relational ministering to one another in the body is enabled and made effective and freeing and edifying by the grace of God as we all become “*good stewards of the manifold grace of God*”.

MINISTERS OF THE MYSTERY

In **Colossians 1:24-29** Paul gives us deep insight into his calling to be a minister. From this we learn what are the key components of a genuine minister of Christ.

A Call to Suffer

“I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church” Col.1:24.

The first thing Paul says about his ministry is the degree of suffering he experienced in fulfilling his calling to be a minister to the church. This suffering affects Paul’s flesh. It is a real experience that he went through. Some are drawn to the ministry for career or income or position but a true minister of Christ is firstly called and the calling involves suffering.

Jesus said, ***“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep” Jn.10:11.*** A true minister is one who **‘lays his life down for the brethren’**. It is a call to suffer.

Some ministers are hirelings

The person who seeks to go into ministry for some self-seeking reason is actually a hireling. Jesus said when ***“the wolf comes, the hireling leaves the sheep and flees. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep” Jn.10:13.***

Concern for the churches

The suffering comes by carrying the burden of responsibility for the body. In listing his afflictions experienced in the conduct of his ministry, Paul says that what came upon him daily was ***“my deep concern for all the churches” (2Cor.11:28)***. Paul is saying that his greatest burden is not the difficult things he had suffered physically even, but his concern for the churches.

It is an intercessory burden

Paul says that his sufferings were actually ***“the afflictions of Christ”***. We know that Jesus was ***“stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted” (Isa.53:4)*** and we know that His suffering and death was the full propitiation for our sins. Paul is not referring to the afflictions that Jesus literally bore for us, but there is truly a sense whereby a minister can enter into the sufferings of Christ in prayer and intercession, identifying with the heart of the Lord for His body. Remember what Jesus suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane was not physical but was perhaps harder for him to bear than the physical suffering of the cross.

Every true disciple and certainly every true minister must come to the place of persevering even when there is pressure, perplexity, persecution and physical affliction, ***“always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body” (2Cor.4:8-10)***. We are called to go through such things for the sake of the body to release grace to the body (v15).

A Stewardship of Grace

Ministry is the effect of an enablement of grace. God by His spirit gives us the ability to minister (2Cor.3:5-6). Paul says that he ***“became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to him” (Col.1:25)***. This stewardship is a stewardship of grace. Paul says in **Ephesians 3:2-3** that it was a ***“dispensation/stewardship of the grace of God given”*** to Paul for the church, enabling him to be a minister of the word to make known the revelation of the mystery.

The call to ministry can only be fulfilled *“according to the gift of the grace of God”* which enables the minister to do the work of the ministry – it is *“the effective working of His power”* (Eph. 3:7).

The Ministry of the Word

The stewardship from God is *“to fulfil the word of God”* (Col.1:25). The ministry we are speaking of is not the ministry of the deacon which is a ministry of service, but the **ministry of the word**. The apostle Peter made a clear distinguishment between the calling to minister the word and the calling to practical service.

In Acts 6:1-7 a practical problem had arisen in the Jerusalem church and the apostles’ answer was to raise up more ministers, *“whom we may appoint over this business [practical service]; but we [the apostles] will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”* The result of this proper division in the work of the ministry was *“the word of God spread, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly.”*

TO KNOW AND PREACH THE MYSTERY

The revelation of the mystery

According to the Scripture the ministry of the word is only fulfilled when the minister can make known the *“mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations”* (Col.1:26). Scripturally a fundamental part of the ministry gifts of apostle and prophet is to receive from the Holy Spirit the revelation of the mystery (Eph.3:5) and make it known to the saints. For many centuries the ministries of apostle and prophet have not been in existence or if they existed they were not received by the church. Therefore the church has been ignorant of the knowledge of the mystery.

The deeper wisdom

The mystery is the deeper wisdom of God and is for the mature (1Cor.2:6-7). It can only be known by the mature. The mystery is made known by the effective ministry of the word, bringing to the saints the revelation of the mystery by the Spirit. The knowledge of the mystery is the means by which God gives to the saints the inheritance.

The inheritance

The inheritance is *“incorruptible and undefiled and does not fade away, reserved in heaven ... ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1Pet.1:4-5). The knowledge of the mystery comes by revelation and that revelation is first given by the Spirit to apostles and prophets. That is why the restoration of apostles and prophets is essential in these days for the church to come to perfection.

The riches of the glory

The knowledge of the mystery makes *“known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: Christ in you the hope of glory”* (Col.1:27). It is the knowledge of the mystery that makes known by revelation the glory of God. *“God ordained this mystery, the hidden wisdom, before the ages for our glory”* (1Cor.2:7).

The fellowship of the mystery

Paul was graced to *“preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ”* Eph.3:8-9.

The result of the saints coming into the revelation of the mystery, which is a deeper fellowship, is that *“now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places”* (v10).

The victory of the church

Therefore the victory of the church over the spiritual enemies of God is dependent upon the church coming to the knowledge of the mystery and therefore we need ministers who are able *“to fulfil the word of God, the mystery”* (Col.1:25-26), bringing the revelation to the saints, enabling the whole church to walk in maturity. The walk in maturity is the walk in the glory and this is all dependent upon the church knowing the mystery. As the church comes to know the mystery and walk in the inheritance, *“the knowledge of the glory of YAHWEH will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea”* Hab.2:14. The principalities and powers will be overcome and Babylon will fall! (Isa.2:2-4, Mic.4:1-4)

HOW DO WE MINISTER?

“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” Col.1:28.

Preaching

The first expression of the ministry of the word is:

- to preach Christ;
- to proclaim the word of God;
- to preach *“the unsearchable riches of Christ”* (Eph.3:8);
- *“to declare the whole counsel of God”* (Acts 20:27);
- to *“go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mk.16:15);
- to *“preach the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ”* (Acts 8:12)

Warning

This word ‘*noutheteo*’ SC Gr.# 3560 means: *to put in mind, to caution or reprove gently* and is translated ‘warn, or admonish’.

The second expression of the ministry of the word is:

- to warn everyone;
- *“to admonish one another”* having been filled with all knowledge (Rom.15:14);
- the ministers are to admonish the saints as part of their oversight (1Thess.5:12);
- those who do not obey the word are to be admonished as a brother (2Thess.3:15);
- when the word of God abides in the saints they are able to *“admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”* (Col.3:16);
- the Scriptures are written for our admonition (1Cor.10:11)

Teaching

The third expression of the ministry of the word is:

- teaching every man;
- *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”* (Matt.28:20);
- teaching *“the first principles of the oracles of God”* (Heb.5:12);
- teaching the doctrines of the faith (Jude 3);
- teaching the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42);
- *“teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ”* (Acts 28:31);
- *“they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus the Christ”* (Acts 5:42)

In all Wisdom

The fourth expression of the ministry of the word is:

- in all wisdom;
- Christ is for us *“the wisdom of God”* (1Cor.1:24);
- Christ *“who became for us wisdom from God”* (1Cor.1:30);
- *“Wisdom is the principal thing”* (Prov.4:7);
- it is the wisdom from above (James 3:17);

The Goal is Perfection

“That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” Col.1:28.

The goal of the ministry work of every five-fold minister (Eph.4:11) is *“the perfecting of the saints, building up the [whole] body till we all come ... to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Eph.4:12-13).

The minister is responsible through the ministry of the word to bring the saints from being children (Eph.4:14) to being mature saints, who are able to *“speak the truth in love”* (v15) and function effectively being *“joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causing the growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love”* Eph.4:16.

The goal is perfection: *“let us go on to perfection”*, having laid the foundational principles *“of the oracles of God”* (Heb.6:1). The saints are to become skilled *“in the word of righteousness”* (Heb.5:13). This will be the result of effective ministry of the word.

Ministry is *“according to His working”*

“To this end I also labour, striving according to His working which works in me mightily” Col.1:29.

The minister is called to *“labour”* and strive in the work of the ministry. The minister is to *“be diligent [study] to present oneself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* 2Tim.2:15.

However the key to ministry is to know *“His working”* in us; it is the working of God, **His operative power** working in us and through us. Effective ministry is God acting through us by His power bringing forth tangible results.

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” Eph.3:20. The answer to Paul’s awesome prayer for us that we be *“strengthened with might”* (v16); that our hearts be filled with faith and that we comprehend His love and be filled *“with all the fullness of God”* (v17-19) is only possible because we are the children of God – His power is already at work in us.

It is this same power that works in the minister, enabling the minister to *“present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”*.

GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS!

1 Timothy 3:15 says that the “*church of the living God [is] the pillar and ground of truth.*” An essential pillar of truth that needs to be understood and strengthened in the church is the truth concerning the mystery of godliness.

***“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world, Received up in glory” 1 Tim 3:16.***

The mystery of godliness is without controversy. ‘Without controversy’ is the Greek word *homologoumenos*, SC #3672; it means ‘confessedly’ and comes from the word *homologeō* SC #3670 meaning ‘confession’ or literally to ‘speak the same thing’. This mystery is to be confessed in truth with utmost confidence in its verity and there is no argument that can stand against it. Our confession is to agree with the truth of this mystery as revealed in the word of God.

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

God was manifested in the flesh

God became a man! “*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*” Jn.1:1. “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled] among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*” v14. Jesus is the **Word of God**; that is one of His names in **Revelation 19:13**.

Jesus was God manifested in the flesh!

In **1 John 1:1-3**, Jesus is described as “*That which was from the beginning*” and “*the Word of Life*”, and three natural senses are used in the description: hearing, “*that which we have heard*”; seeing, “*that which our eyes have seen*”; touch, “*our hands have handled*”. John declares to us that “*the Life was manifested*” (v2). God was manifested in the flesh and eyewitnesses had physically heard, seen and touched Him!

Paul writing to the **Philippians** concerning Christ Jesus says of Him, “*who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man...*” (2:6-8a). God came in the likeness of men and was found in appearance as a man! Paul writes, “*The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second man is the Lord from heaven*” (1Cor.15:47).

God was Justified in the Spirit

God, who was manifested in flesh was also **justified** in the Spirit. This word *dikaioō* SC #1344 means ‘to render just or innocent’. God manifest in the flesh was witnessed to, or rendered right and just, by the Holy Spirit.

John teaches on testing the spirits. He says, “*By this you know the Spirit of God: every Spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist*” (1Jn4:2-3a). The confession of God being manifest in the flesh is **justified in the Spirit!**

The Holy Spirit justifies Jesus as the Son of God

- At His conception. The angel speaking to Mary said, *“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you, therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God”* Lu.1:35.
- At Jesus’ baptism, the Holy Spirit **justified** Him to be the **Son of God**, *“When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’”* Mt.3:16-17.
- Through His resurrection, *“concerning His [God’s] Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead”* Rom.1:3-4.

Who is the Son of God?

The **Son** is described as, *“the brightness of His [God’s] glory and the express image of His person”* (Heb.1:3); *“the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation”* (Col.1:15); Christ is *“the image of God”* and *“the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ”* (2Cor.4:4,6).

**The Son of God is God manifested in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.
Jesus was justified in the Spirit as the Son of God!**

Seen by angels

Jesus on many occasions was **seen by angels**:

- Angels heralded Jesus as the Son of God at His conception. *“And the angel answered and said to her...that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God”* Lu.1:35.
- Angels gathered at His birth, *“And behold an angel of the Lord stood before them [shepherds]...Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid...For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord”* Lu.2:9-13.
- Angels ministered to Him after His temptation in the wilderness, *“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him”* Mt4:11.
- An angel also ministered to Him in the garden of Gethsemane when He submitted to the will of the Father, *“Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him”* Lu.22:43.
- Angels confirmed His resurrection to certain women who came to the tomb and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, *“And it happened as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead?’”* Lu.24:4-6.

- Angels were with the disciples to witness Jesus' ascension to heaven, "*And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go up into heaven"*" Acts 1:9-11.

Preached among the Gentiles/Nations

God, who was manifest in the flesh in Jesus, has also been preached among the Gentiles. Mark testifies that the apostles "*went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs*" (Mk.16:20); "*Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word*" (Acts 8:4).

Paul testifies of himself to Timothy that he was "*appointed a preacher and an apostle...a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth*" (1Tim2:7). Paul preached the mystery of godliness as he was given grace to "*preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*" (Eph.3:8). Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal.2:7-8) and was instrumental in this mystery being **preached among the Gentiles**.

Paul, in Ephesus was "*reasoning daily*" in the School of Tyrannus for two years. The result of this was that "*all who dwelt in Asia [Turkey and surrounding regions] heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*" (Acts 19:9-10).

Paul, writing to the **Thessalonians** testifies of them that, "*from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth...in every place*" (1Thess1:8). To the **Colossians** he says that "*the word of the truth of the gospel...has come to you, as it has also in all the world*" (1:5b-6).

**This mystery of godliness, that God was manifested in the flesh,
has assuredly been preached among the Gentiles/Nations!**

Believed on in the world

In Acts 8:35-37 Philip is "*preaching Jesus*" to an Ethiopian eunuch. After hearing the preaching, this man's confession was, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*" (v.37).

As Cornelius and other Gentiles who had gathered in his house, heard the word preached by Peter, "*whoever believes in Him [Jesus] will receive remission of sins*", upon them "*the Holy Spirit fell*" (Acts 10:43-44).

The Ephesians believed what Paul preached, "*In Him [Jesus] you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*" (Eph.1:13).

The Philippian jailer and his household were saved by "*believing on the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Acts 16:31-32).

To this day people are believing on the Lord Jesus Christ and being saved.

Received up in glory

The awesome event of Jesus being **received up in glory** was witnessed by the apostles, "*while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight*" (Acts1:9).

Jesus said, "*Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*" Matt.24:30. Jesus was received up in glory and will come again in like manner!

Stephen had a revelation of Jesus being **received up in glory** when he exclaimed ***“Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”*** (Acts7:56).

Jesus ***“when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”*** (Heb.1:3). Jesus ***“has entered as the forerunner for us behind the veil”*** (Heb.6:19-20).

Confessedly, without controversy, this Jesus, who is the Christ, is God revealed in the flesh and was received up in glory!

This is a great mystery that is to be confessed with certainty:

- **God was manifested in flesh,**
- **Justified in the Spirit,**
- **Seen by angels,**
- **Preached among the Gentiles,**
- **Believed on in the world,**
- **Received up in glory!**

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SAINTS

The Transformation

“I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed [changed, transfigured, Gr. SC. # 3339 ‘metamorphoo’] by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” Rom. 12:1-2.

Notice that the word ‘transformed’ is the same Greek word that is translated ‘transfigured’ (**Matt.17:2**). Jesus was transfigured before three of the disciples. His appearance including His clothing was transformed, that is, changed into another form, being changed by, and into, the glory of God. God’s goal for the saints is to become like Jesus: transfigured from a natural body to a glorious state.

This Greek word *metamorphoo* is only used in three places in the New Testament: in **Romans 12:2** above, in the Scriptures that refer to Jesus’ transfiguration in the Gospels and in **2Corinthians 3:18** *“but we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

The renewing of the mind

In **Romans 12:2** we are **transformed by the renewing of our minds**. Our minds are renewed through repentance, the original ‘changing of our minds’ to believe the gospel and the ongoing *“repentance from dead works”*, not getting caught in religious mindsets.

Our minds are renewed by the revelational knowledge of the word, by having *“the eyes of our understanding enlightened” Eph.1:18*. To be transformed into the place where we know and can do the will of God requires that we *“be renewed in the spirit of our mind and that we put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” Eph.4:23-24.*

Worship in spirit and truth

The transformation referred to in **2 Corinthians 3:18** is *“by the Spirit of the Lord.”* This is referring to a spiritual transformation that happens as we worship the Lord in and by the Spirit. Jesus said that true worship is *“in Spirit and truth” (Jn.4:24)*. Worship in the Spirit is simply that: the Spirit enables us to behold God and to be caught up in His glory in worship. Worship in truth is the result of receiving the word by revelation through having the spirit of our mind renewed so that we can receive the word by revelation.

God’s goal is for us to be *“conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom.8:29)*, that is, to be like Jesus. Jesus came to the place in His maturity whereby He was able to be **transfigured**. Through transformation we will come to the same place as we walk in maturity.

Brethren, this transformation is happening. The last days revival that will prepare us to be *“a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but ... holy and without blemish (Eph.5:27)* that Jesus will present to Himself when He comes, has begun. It is the release and experience of His grace that is taking place!

By Grace released through redemption

This grace has been given to us in Christ Jesus before time began but is now becoming real in our experience (**2Tim.1:9-10**). As we know, Jesus completed the work of redemption fully through the cross and His subsequent entry into heaven with His own blood. Through Him we have been justified but we have also been glorified (**Rom.8:30**) and it is this entry into the glory that God is making possible today through the revelation of the mystery *“Christ*

in you the hope of glory” (Col.1:27) and by making known the deeper wisdom of His word “which God ordained before the ages for our glory” (1Cor.2:7).

Grace

- **Justifies us** - *“We have been justified by His grace that we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” Titus 3:7.*
- **Enables us to function in the body** – we have been given gifts according to this grace to enable us to function in the body in prophecy, teaching, ministry, exhortation, leadership, giving and in showing mercy (**Rom.12:6-8**).
- **Is ministered through the five-fold gift** – *“to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift” Eph.4:7.* The gift is five-fold. *“When He ascended on high He gave gifts to men – He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers” Eph.4:8,11.* These ministry gifts work through grace for the *“perfecting of the saints”* [equipping – setting the body in order so that every member can function freely and fully]. As these ministry gifts are raised up, released and received by the body then the whole body will be built up until we all come to maturity (**Eph.4:12-13**).

We are members of His body

It is time for the saints to perceive and understand that there is ONE BODY and God has appointed a place for each one of us in His body and that God has made us individually members of His body, appointing the various ministry gifts for leadership (**1Cor.12:18,28**), and all the other gifts that build up and enable the church to fully function in the love of God, demonstrating that love to the world (**1Cor.13:4-8**).

The Inheritance

The revival has begun and individual saints including many ministers are

- a) receiving a greater grace that brings them into the reality of adoption,
- b) understanding the ‘placement’ God gives to His children who have grown up to be His servants,
- c) fully functioning as sons,
- d) walking in the inheritance.

God has provided for us *“an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” 1Pet.1:3-5.*

The inheritance is reserved in heaven but is to be received in the earth in the last time. ‘Time’ here is *‘kairos’* meaning a time of grace in which God is doing a special work in His people; *‘kairos’* refers to what is happening in a specific chronological time; Peter is referring to the time from now until the return of the Lord.

It is according to predestination

We have been predestined to this adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself:

- it is according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace (**Eph.1:5-6**)
- to be *“conformed to the image of His Son” Rom.8:29* – this comes about by adoption, whereby we are placed as sons
- we grow up as sons, now graced to walk in maturity, knowing the Father more intimately than ever before
- being led by the Spirit as sons (**Rom.8:14**)

- God is bringing many sons to glory having made the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings (**Heb.2:10**)
- All of creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons (**Rom.8:19**)

Who can enter into this revival?

The revival is receiving the spirit of sonship. All of God's children are predestined to grow up to become sons.

How do we qualify for sonship?

The whole generation of people whom God delivered from Egypt were destined to enter the Promised Land. It was God who delivered them by parting the waters of the Red Sea; it was God who brought them through the wilderness journey to come to Mt Sinai. The Scripture says, "**He bore us on eagles' wings**" (**Ex.19:4**). He brought the people to Mt Sinai, to the holy mountain, to give them the Law – the first Pentecost.

He saved us out of the world by the blood of Jesus and brought us into Christ through baptism, pouring out His Spirit on us – the second Pentecost and the fulfilment of it; but now He wants us to come into the land of inheritance, to finally come before Him in Zion and live before Him fully. This is the result of receiving the spirit of sonship [adoption]; the receiving of the spirit of sonship is the transforming experience that ushers us into the glory of the Father, enabling us to walk as sons, renewed in the spirit of our minds.

We enter by faith

He has covenanted with us even as He covenanted with Moses and the children of Israel. When they crossed the wilderness and came to Kadesh Barnea, they were not a perfect people; they were a mixed bunch – their children were with them. They are the same ones who had Aaron build the golden calf and yet **had they dared believe God, they could have entered the land right there, right then**. It was their unbelief that led to their rebellion and they refused to enter – they refused the promised inheritance.

But forty years later their children [their sons] inherited. So it is for the people of God today: it is by faith that we enter into the inheritance God has for us. And faith comes by hearing (**Rom.10:17**). It is as we hear the word concerning sonship, concerning adoption, concerning the release of grace, that we are enabled to walk in our inheritance. We enter into our inheritance by faith. It is never by works and it is at the Father's appointed time (**Gal.4:2**).

The Goal is the Glory

In **Colossians** Paul summarises the 'mystery': "**Christ in you, the hope of glory.**" God intends to reveal His glory in the earth through His people. It is because of grace that Paul was able to "**preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies**" **Eph.3:8-10**.

- i. It is through the church that God reveals the full victory of Christ in the earth;
- ii. it is through a church that has grown to maturity;
- iii. it is through the Holy Spirit raising apostles and prophets who are able to bring forth the knowledge of the mystery;
- iv. it is through a church that has stood firm in the faith in times of suffering when all kinds of opposition, including direct persecution, are encountered.

**God promises that He, the God of all grace, will
"perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you." 1Pet.5:10.**

FOUR PARTS GRACE – TWO PARTS TRUTH

The Word became flesh

Grace and Truth

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” Jn.1:14.

The revelation of the glory of God is **grace** and **truth**! This is a revelation! Many have put off the glory to the coming of Christ, or when we go to heaven. Others have thought that the glory is some manifestation of ‘gold dust’ appearing on people’s bodies.

Jesus is the Eternal One

However the revelation of the glory is in Jesus the Messiah and that revelation is *“full of grace and truth.”* In verse 15 John said that Jesus *“who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.”* John is referring to the eternal One, who became flesh. Jesus said *“most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” Jn.8:58.* When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus at the Garden He asked them *“whom are you seeking?” And they said, ‘Jesus of Nazareth’. Jesus answered ‘I have told you that I AM’” Jn.18:4-5.* Note that Jesus said *“I AM”*, the *“he”* has been added by the translators. As a result of Jesus confessing who He was, His glory and power was momentarily manifest and *“they drew back and fell to the ground” v6.*

Grace upon Grace

“And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for [upon] grace” Jn.1:16. This is an amazing Scripture and most of us have missed the revelation of the grace of God in Jesus the Messiah. **Grace upon grace**, grace twice! Grace multiplied! There is always more grace available.

A Throne of Grace

In fact God’s throne is a **THRONE OF GRACE (Heb.4:16)**. At the throne of grace we receive *“mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

- we need mercy to cover our past
- we need grace for today and tomorrow.

The Spirit of Grace

God’s Spirit is the **SPIRIT OF GRACE (Heb.10:29, Zech.12:10)**. The Spirit of grace is also called the Spirit of supplication and it is the Spirit who helps us to pray and intercede (**Rom.8:26-27**). It is the Spirit of grace who brings us into the knowledge of our Saviour and His death and resurrection.

We live by Grace

“For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus the Messiah” Jn.1:17. Jesus came to fulfil the law and the fulfilment of the law is the release/manifestation of **grace** and **truth**. We are no longer *“under law but under grace” (Rom.6:14)* and have been *“justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Messiah Jesus” Rom.3:24.*

Grace even above Truth

In **John 1:14,16 & 17**, **GRACE** is mentioned four times and **TRUTH** is mentioned twice: four parts **grace**, two parts **truth**. When God became a man in Jesus who is *“the only begotten of the Father” (v.14)*, that is, Jesus the manifestation of God in the flesh, He was

revealed in grace and in truth, but grace is emphasised even above truth. This is an amazing revelation that God is bringing to His church in these days.

The Spirit of Sonship releases Grace

The Charismatic movement was named 'charismatic' and this specifically refers to the 'grace gifts'. *Charis* is the Greek word for grace. We thank God for the Charismatic movement that restored the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the release of the nine gifts of the Spirit (**1Cor.12:6-11**) to countless millions of believers across the world and broke into many traditional Christian denominations with renewal and revival. However, the emphasis in the Charismatic movement was very much on gifts, anointings and power ministry and yes that is all very legitimate but the reality of God's grace was generally not known. It is actually the current work of the Holy Spirit in bringing the church into the reality of sonship by the Spirit of sonship [adoption] that we come to know the reality of the grace of God.

The reality of Grace

1) Accessed by faith

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" **Eph.2:8**. Grace has been given by God *"in Christ Jesus before time began"* (**2Tim.1:9**), but is first made known to us when we come to faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Therefore the key to grace is **faith**. Grace has been given by God because grace is the outpouring or manifestation of the very nature of God – His glory is *"full of grace"*, and His glory is revealed in the man Christ Jesus. We access the unlimited, freely given grace of God by faith, by believing in Jesus the Messiah and that He died for our sins and rose again according to the Scriptures.

2) We are able to grow in grace

Peter says to *"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* **2Pet.3:18**. We are *"predestined to adoption [becoming] as sons ... to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the beloved"* **Eph.1:5-6**. Receiving the spirit of sonship enables us to grow much in the grace of our Lord and Saviour, and to be redeemed *"according to the riches of His grace"* **Eph.1:7**. The inheritance that we receive as sons is a greater grace that enables us to walk in the Spirit and therefore to be *"led by the Spirit of God"* as His sons (**Rom.8:14**).

3) Grace enables us to stand

"Through Jesus Christ we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" **Rom.5:2**. Once again faith is the doorway to grace and through faith in Jesus Christ we come into a standing in grace. Grace enables us to *"rejoice in the hope of the glory of God"* but also to *"glory in tribulations"* v.3. The modern church has been debilitated by the false teaching of dispensationalism and the promise that Christians will be 'raptured' out of the earth before any serious tribulation takes place. Such teaching is so implausible given the history of Nazism and Communism in the twentieth century plus incredible catastrophes such as the Rwandan genocide of 1994. However the main lack that has been in the teaching of the church has been ignorance of the grace of God, that it is actually grace that enables us to *"glory in tribulation"*.

4) Grace is seen

"When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" **Acts 11:23**. Barnabas could see the **grace of God** on the new church in Antioch. This grace had enabled the disciples from Jerusalem to bring Jews and Greeks together in the church for the first time in history: what a great grace! The Scripture says of the early church in Jerusalem, *"great grace*

was upon them all” (Acts 4:33). The apostles exhorted the new believers in Antioch of Pisidia, persuading them *“to continue in the grace of God”* (Acts 13:43). Grace is seen as it spreads through many by causing *“thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God”* (2Cor.4:15). The leading apostles in Jerusalem *“perceived the grace that had been given”* to Paul and Barnabas (Gal.2:9). The mark of the apostle and all the five-fold ministers should be that grace is seen upon their lives and ministered through them.

Humility – the Key to Grace

“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1Pet.5:5 & Ja.4:6). Humility is expressed through submission, firstly submission to God and secondly submission to one another. A truly humble person will receive much grace. The context in which we receive grace through humility is by being a submitted member of the body of Christ.

In previous times submission was wrongly taught as being submission to authority. The true submission that is a work of grace in our lives is much more than submission to authority; it is actually mutual submission in the body *“in the fear of God”* (Eph.5:21), and such submission is a mark of the Spirit-filled life (Eph.5:18-21).

Submission to God and to one another in the Body is the mark of a humble person and therefore a great work of grace in that person’s life. The body will never function properly until we are all accessing a much greater grace that is manifest in true submission to God and to one another as we walk in humility.

Grace – the Key to Ministry

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” 1Pet.4:10. All of the gifts listed in **Romans 12:6-8**, **1Corinthians 12:8-10** and in **Ephesians 4:11** are in the context of grace and so can be called **grace gifts**. However in the pursuit of gifts and the exercise of gifts, this vital dimension of grace has often been overlooked.

We are to be **good stewards** of the grace of God. Paul says that it was *“the dispensation of the grace of God”* (Eph.3:2) that enabled him to minister, especially to make known the mystery. He says that he became *“a minister according to the gift of the grace of God”* (v.7) and that *“this grace was given that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”* v.8.

Each ministry gift is enabled and exercised by grace and is meant to be an expression of the **manifold grace** of God. As we minister in grace there will be thanksgiving abounding to God, giving Him the glory in Messiah Jesus.

Speaking the word and ministering in relationships

“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God [utterances – the oracle actually refers to the ‘speaking place of God’ and refers to God speaking from the Holy of Holies, Ex.25:22]. If anyone ministers, do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen” 1Pet.4:11.

The **gift** is expressed in two ways: **speaking** and **ministering**. Speaking obviously refers to the ministry of the word, but ministering means to act as a deacon, to wait on tables, to be an attendant. The **ministering** refers to the way we serve one another and is the key to building healthy, wholesome, godly relationships in the body of Christ – by serving one another.

Grace and apostleship

The two key components of the apostolic restoration are: the revelation of the mystery [= the ministry of the word] and the building of relationships in the body. Both of these

components are only viable through the release and experience of grace. Paul says **“through Christ we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name” Rom.1:5**. Apostleship in this context refers to the commission given by Jesus in **Matthew 28:19-20** for His apostles to make disciples of all nations. The key component of apostleship is the ministry of the word (**Acts 6:4**) but without grace, the ministry of the word easily becomes demanding [legalistic] bringing condemnation and bondage rather than releasing the saints into the freedom of Messiah.

I believe that God desires us to get this revelation of grace. Without grace, apostles soon become leaders of another sectarian group. The grace is what enables ‘apostleship’ and all the ministry gifts to actually benefit and build the body into **“a perfect man” (Eph.4:13)**.

The New Covenant

Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant and that covenant is given to us through His death and resurrection. Through Jesus the glory of God is now to be made manifest in the earth through the church. By God becoming a man in the Son, Jesus, the glory of God is revealed to be **full of grace and truth**. In the revelation of God in Christ, God is revealed to be **four parts GRACE and two parts TRUTH**.

We have been in imbalance for centuries. Since the reformation of the 16th century there has been a growing emphasis on the **truth** [**“Thy word is truth” Jn.17:17**] and the word has been preached strongly but often without much grace. Therefore the word becomes more of **“the letter that kills” (2Cor.3:6)**.

There are countless numbers of ministers and believers going around expounding ‘the word’ according to their own understanding and interpretation. But the fruit of this has been division and often isolation, rather than a grace-filled body functioning together and going onto perfection.

The New Covenant is four parts grace and two parts truth!

It is time to **grow in grace** and the knowledge [**truth**] of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! It is time to receive the **grace** that enables the apostleship [preaching of the **truth**] to go forth that will bring obedience to faith among all nations.

It is **grace** that enables the ministry of the word [**truth**] and it is **grace** that enables the ministering to [serving] one another in humility, the mark of which is submission to God and to one another, that will build meaningful relationships by which the body is built together into Christ.

through GRACE	→	(that GOD)	←	through TRUTH
enabling Relationships	→	(may be)	←	bringing Revelation
by Ministering to one another	→	(glorified)	←	by Speaking the word

This covenant of grace and truth that has been revealed through Jesus Christ only works when we have the right mix: four parts grace and two parts truth. Let our prayer be:

‘God, show us how to access the throne of grace that we may grow in grace so that our ministry of the word is building your body and not our own sectarian group or denomination.’

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER WITH THESE WORDS

Translation of the saints

One of the mysteries of the word of God is ‘the translation of the saints’ from earthly bodies to glorified bodies and we understand that this happens when *“the Lord Himself will descend from heaven”* (1 Thess.4:16). Paul calls it a mystery, *“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed”* 1Cor.15:51-52. Paul explains this mystery a little more, *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself”* Phil.3:20-21.

Those who have died

The apostle tells us that he does not want us to be *“ignorant concerning those who have fallen asleep [have died] ... those who sleep in Jesus”* (1Thess.4:13-14). Paul is speaking about Christians who have died or as we say ‘have gone to be with the Lord’, because that is where they are. People often ask ‘Where do you go when you die if you are a believer?’ Paul says *“While we are home in the body we are absent from the Lord”* (2Cor.5:6). Because Jesus died and rose again, those who have died in faith have gone to be with the Lord. *“We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord”* (2Cor.5:8).

Shall be raised

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the linchpin of our faith and because Christ has been raised from the dead we look forward to the resurrection of the dead. *“But Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”* 1Cor.15:12-20.

By the Word of the Lord

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15 Paul is emphatic, *“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord.”* Paul is wanting us to know that the mystery he is about to unfold is a revelation brought to him by the ‘word of the Lord’. Something is going to happen at *“the coming of the Lord”*; and it will involve the dead in Christ and those believers on the earth who are looking for His coming. There is going to be a generation of believers [saints] who will be alive when the Lord Jesus comes. But His coming includes the coming *“with Him of those who sleep in Jesus”* (v14). God will bring with Jesus all those Christians who have died and have been with Him in the heavenly realm.

The resurrection of the body

The dead in Christ are not sleeping in the graves as some erroneously teach; they are already with Christ in heaven in their spirit bodies. We have a physical body and a spiritual body and our soul is attached to [or part of] our spirit body. When a person dies it is only the physical body that dies. The soul of man which is attached to the spiritual part of man is created for eternity. Paul makes it clear in these verses in 1Thessalonians 4 and 1Corinthians 15 that the dead in Christ are with the Lord now and that there is a future resurrection of their bodies.

Jesus will Descend from Heaven

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven” 1Thess.4:16; Jesus is coming down from heaven. Jesus is retained in heaven *“until the times of restoration of all things” (Acts 3:20-21)* but at His coming He will descend to this earth *“coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matt.27:64,Mk.14:62,Matt.24:30)*.

The angels told the disciples *“This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven” Acts 1:11. “He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” v 9.*

The Shout

The descent of the Lord from heaven will be announced *“with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God” (1Thess.4:16)*. In the Old Testament the people of God were told to *“Shout to God with a voice of triumph” (Ps.47:1)*. The Shout was a powerful expression of praise.

In the taking of Jericho both the sound of the trumpet and a *“great shout”* were instrumental in bringing down the walls (**Josh.6:20**). *“God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet” Ps.47:5*. Some say that this is a prophetic reference to the ascension of Jesus in **Acts 1:9-11**. Certainly it is a reference to the shout of God! One can only wonder at the power and authority of that shout.

The Voice of the Archangel

The *“voice of the archangel”* is an unknown reality. In the Bible only Michael is referred to as an archangel (**Jude 9**). Michael is also referred to as a *“prince” (Dan.10:21)* and the *“great prince” (Dan.12:1)*. So the voice of the archangel can be understood to be the voice of Michael! Michael as the archangel obviously has enormous authority and power.

There are various references to angels in **Revelation**, for example, *“The angel standing on the sea and the land ..” (10:5)*; *“Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice” (19:17)*. We do not know in our current experience the stature and awesomeness of God’s mighty angels but we can begin to imagine **the voice of the archangel**.

The Trumpet of God

“Behold I tell you a mystery we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed – in a moment [Greek ‘atomos’ from which we get the word atom; this moment is like an atomic second], in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet of God will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” 1Cor.15:51-52.

There is another reference to the ‘trumpet’ in **Matthew 24:31** which tells us that *“His angels will gather together His elect from the four winds”* with *“the sound of a great trumpet.”*

The Shophar

In recent years the biblical *shophar* [pronounced *shoh-fahr* SC#7782 – a trumpet made from a curved animal horn] has been given to the church to make the church aware of the trumpet. The trumpet sounded at Mt Sinai, heralding the Lord’s descent (**Ex.19:16,19-20**). This is significant because the trumpet will be heard again when the Lord descends from heaven.

The trumpet was also blown in **Joshua 6:1-20** as a necessary weapon in the walls of Jericho coming down. The trumpet was used to sound a warning (**Ezek.33:2-9**). The trumpet heralded the Day of Atonement, the Year of Jubilee (**Lev.25:9**) and the return of the Ark (**2Sam.6:15**).

An atomic moment

The Scripture says that the descent of Jesus from heaven will be heralded by the **shout**, the **voice**, and the **trumpet**. We cannot imagine the awesomeness of this ‘nuclear moment’ when the Lord descends from heaven, accompanied by the spirits of all the dead in Christ and probably by many angels. Enoch prophesied **“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints” Jude 14.**

Meeting the Lord in the Air

“And the dead in Christ will rise first” 1Thess.4:16. “The spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb.12:23) are the saints already in heaven, but they are coming back to the earth with Jesus to receive their resurrection [glorified] bodies. In some indescribable way their bodies will rise out of the earth!

“Then we who are alive and remain [the saints on the earth at the time of His coming] **shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air” (v17).** This is the moment when **“the corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal body puts on immortality” 1Cor.15:53.**

Jesus is coming from heaven ONCE

There is only one coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to the earth: **He will descend!** Jesus is coming into the earth realm. We are to meet Him in **“the air”**:

- when we are caught up to meet Him, it will be in the air
- where we are caught up to meet Him, it will be in the air.

In the clouds

We are actually caught up **“in the clouds”**. We have referred to His coming in the clouds above and now want to mention **Hebrews 12:1** which refers to the people of faith from the Old Testament who are in heaven with Jesus as **“so great a cloud of witnesses”**. Maybe the ‘clouds of power’ that Jesus is coming on as prophesied in **Daniel** and by Jesus Himself in the Gospels are actually **“the ten thousands of His saints”**.

There is no evidence in **1Thessalonians 4** and the cross references we have given, that Jesus is coming two more times, firstly to take a church away somewhere and then later to come to the earth to judge the ungodly.

And we shall always be with the Lord

The apostle then says **“And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1Thess.4:17).** Whatever understanding we have of the coming of the Lord, the most important thing is to be ready to be caught up to meet Him in the air so that we can be always with the Lord.

Persecution and Tribulation

In **2 Thessalonians 1&2** there is further discussion and instruction concerning the coming of the Lord. In **1:4-5** the church is experiencing persecution and tribulations [afflictions] and the word of God promises that the persecutors of the church will be repaid by God **“with tribulation” (v6).**

God will give **“you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels” (v7).** The obvious reading of these verses is that the church will experience tribulation if it has not already done so [as in China where the church has experienced much tribulation over the last 55 years] and will only be delivered from that tribulation **“when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven”**. He is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels **“in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” v8.**

Coming in Judgment

The coming of the Lord is firstly manifest to the saints on the earth. The dead in Christ are coming with Jesus from heaven, sent by God, and their glorious bodies are going to be resurrected from the earth and we are going to be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Then many teach that the church made up of the saints who are alive at His coming and the dead in Christ who come with Him are taken away into heavenly places for a period of time. However such teaching does not fit into the clear Scriptural record of **1&2 Thessalonians**.

In times of persecution and tribulation

2Thessalonians 1 clearly depicts the church in times of persecution and tribulation that are only alleviated by the coming of the Lord who is coming in judgment for those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel.

“These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence [lit. ‘the face’] of the Lord and from the glory of His power”.

There are two categories of people facing judgment:

- ‘those who do not know God’. These are the ones who worship idols – gods made with human hands or ones who worship nothing but their own selfish desires and ideas,
- ‘those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ’: these are the ones who have heard the gospel but have failed to believe.

The word ‘obey’ literally means *to listen, attend to*. The word of the gospel is to be listened to and attended to: that is what obedience is. Jesus has commanded the church to *“preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mk.16:15). He then says that those who do not believe the gospel will be condemned [judged] (v16).

With His saints

Earlier we mentioned the prophecy of Enoch in **Jude 14** as referring to the dead in Christ accompanying Jesus from heaven. However when we look at this prophecy in the context of the passage, the Lord is coming with His saints *“to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him”* **Jude 15**.

This means that the saints who are coming with Jesus to execute judgment include the dead in Christ who have received their resurrected bodies and the saints who are alive on the earth and rise to meet the Lord in the air having also received their glorified bodies. Jesus Christ is coming in judgment and His true, believing, sanctified saints who have been glorified in Him and joined together with Him in the air, come with Him to rule and reign in the earth for a thousand years.

Glorified in His Saints

When will the unbelieving and disobedient be judged? *“When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among those who believe”* **1Thess.1:10**. The coming of the Lord brings about two important things: the glorification of the saints and the judgment of the wicked. His coming in judgment is on the same Day as when He is glorified in His saints. He is glorified in His saints when they receive their glorified bodies and that happens when *“we see Him as He is, when He is revealed, we shall be like Him”* (**1Jn.3:2**);

when we “*shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*” (1Thess.4:17).

1Thessalonians 1:10 suggests that there are two categories of people who receive the Lord back to the earth:

- the **saints in whom Christ is glorified**,
- “*all those who believe*”, the believers.

Maybe there will be multitudes of people on the earth who will happily accept the returning King but who are not numbered among the saints who have prepared themselves for the coming and have been rewarded by being “*with the Lord forever*” in a glorified state.

There is much further teaching on the coming of the Lord. We have not time or even a clear understanding of **2Thessalonians 2** which speaks of the revealing of the man of sin “*the son of perdition*”, to teach on those verses now.

But what we can say is that “*the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming*”. Again **it is the coming of the Lord that finally deals with the lawless one.**

As we have shown in this study **there is only one coming of the Lord** and it is time for the church to get ready for the coming. This includes toughening up and coming to know the depths of His grace to enable us to stand in times of persecution and tribulation, declaring the word of the Lord and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THE COMING OF THE LORD, THE MESSAGE OF SONSHIP

On a trip overseas in early 2007 I was preaching the gospel of the kingdom and teaching the word of God every day for fourteen days and then I returned home.

The core messages were:

- **the kingdom of God** – entering into it and receiving the kingdom as the promised inheritance;
- **the coming of the Lord** – being prepared and ready for the coming as opposed to looking for an imminent rapture, and that means being perfected;
- **the message of sonship** – coming to maturity, receiving the grace to walk in maturity, which is the way to be perfected.

As the two weeks unfolded one thing became very clear to me! There is no doubt that the word for 2007 was **‘it is time to receive the kingdom’ (Lu.12:32)**. However without the grace of sonship operating in our lives in Christ we will not be equipped to receive the kingdom nor be ready for the coming of the Lord, the ultimate fulfilment of the kingdom on the earth.

The inheritance is the kingdom

Pastor Peter De Bressac returned from a teaching trip into East and Central Africa in December '06 and shared two key words that the Lord had impressed upon him. As he shared these words with us the Lord was preparing our hearts and enlightening our minds to be able to enter more fully into the inheritance in 2007. **The inheritance is actually the kingdom.**

The first word was ‘the weapons of our warfare are not carnal’

Peter has been sharing with us that so much of our personal ‘warfare’ is nothing more than a personal striving in the flesh, seeking to lay hold of the promises of God by strident confession etc. In this context Peter shared three keys that God had given him to walking in victory: **repentance, humility and holiness.**

Repentance

This is the key to having our minds changed, leading to the renewal of the mind which is the way of transformation, coming fully into the will of God (**Rom.12:2**). Repentance is also the way of entering the kingdom. Jesus said **“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel” Mk.1:15**. Repentance is the primary foundational principle of Christ: **“Repentance from dead works” (Heb.6:1)**.

So much of our warfare has actually been dead works. True repentance actually leads to **“having the mind of Christ” (1 Cor.2:16)**. If our attitude is one of being willing to change our minds [the Greek word for ‘repentance’ is *metanoia* and means ‘a change of mind’] then the Lord is able to bring us into full revelational knowledge of the deeper wisdom of God.

Humility

This is the key to grace, **“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1Pet.5:5b)**. It is as we humble ourselves that God is able to exalt us, showing forth His glory through us (**1Pet.5:6**). The key to walking in His glory is His grace and it is only as we come into the deeper and fuller grace that is poured out on us as we receive the spirit of sonship that we will be able to prepare for His coming.

Grace came through our Lord Jesus Christ: **“And of His fullness we have all received and grace upon grace” (NASB Jn.1:16)**. The apostles who wrote the epistles always minister grace to us at the beginning of their letters and Paul often concludes his letters with another

administration of grace. Paul is clear that his revelation of the mystery came to him through a special dispensation of grace (**Eph.3:2-3**), and likewise for us to come to know the mystery we need a special dispensation of grace. This is the grace that is released when we receive the spirit of sonship, bringing us to a mature relationship with the Lord as Father and being able to receive the deeper wisdom of God (**1 Cor.2:6-8**).

Holiness

This means separation and we are to be separated fully unto Him *“looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”* **Heb.12:2**. It was the LORD Himself who *“separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and to bless in His name”* **Deut.10:8**.

If we will but surrender to the Lord in all of our lives we will find that He will supply an entrance to us *“abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”* (**2Pet.1:11**). The wonderful reality is that God does the work in us. It is not according to our works or the works of the law, but it is *“through faith in Christ”*, it is *“the righteousness which is from God by faith”* (**Phil. 3:9**). God is holy and as we come to Him, He will make us holy. The reward of being separated unto God is that the inheritance is given to us by God. This was so for the Levites (**Deut.10:9**) and it is so for us today.

The second word was ‘the corporate calling to sonship’

Peter shared with us that God was calling the church corporately to come into maturity, to receive the spirit of sonship, to become that corporate son spoken of in **Revelation 21:7** *“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”*

Up until recently we had been calling the saints into sonship individually and yes every experience in Christ is given to the individual, but the change that has come in our understanding is that **God is now calling His church corporately into sonship.**

The time for sonship is *“the time appointed by the father”* (**Gal.4:2**). It is not the time when we think we are mature enough because it is not according to our works but it is according to grace.

Even as we are saved by grace through faith, so it is, that now we can enter into sonship by grace through faith and that faith comes by hearing the word (**Rom. 10:17**). Up until recently the church has not heard the word concerning the ‘adoption’ or more correctly ‘sonship’. As the word is preached, faith comes. As faith comes the door to grace opens and we are enabled by grace to walk in that which we have believed.

To inherit the kingdom

God’s goal is for His corporate ‘son’ to come forth in the earth: this is the company of those whose lives *“are hidden with Christ in God. When Christ our life appears, then we also will appear with Him in glory”* **Col.3:3-4**. These are the ones who have heard God’s call to come to maturity; these are the ones who have received the kingdom of God as the inheritance in which we walk in the earth. This kingdom is *“righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”* (**Rom.14:17**). This kingdom does not come by observation nor by observance of religious rules. This kingdom is first and only entered into through the new birth. *“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit”* (**Jn.3:6**).

The kingdom is now and the kingdom is to be inherited.

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

Let us look briefly at the parable of the tares in **Matthew 13:24-30**, and explained by Jesus in verses **36-43**. This parable gives us deep understanding of what it means to inherit the kingdom and how that relates to the coming of the Lord. Jesus tells us clearly that the sower of the *good seed* is the *Son of man* and He sows the good seed in the world, *the field*. ***“The good seeds are the sons of the kingdom”***. The sons of the kingdom must be the saints walking in the spirit of adoption as sons.

Judgement takes the wicked out of the earth

“The tares are the sons of the wicked one” who are also in the world and they are the sons of the devil, ***“The enemy who sowed them is the devil”***. Jesus then tells us that ***“the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.”***

Who are the angels? The Greek word *angelos* SC#32 from *angelo* ‘to deliver a message, to bring tidings’; means ‘a messenger’ and generally translated ‘angel’. In the King James NT this word is translated ‘angel(s)’ 179 times and ‘messenger(s)’ 7 times. It is a decision of the translators as to which translation is best in the context of the passage. In the case of Jesus’ explanation of the parable it may be more sensible to translate *angelos* as ‘messengers’ as God has not appointed the gospel to angels but to men. It was the apostles that Jesus was training and sending out to reap the souls and to bring up the saints in the kingdom of God, not angels.

At the end of the age the tares [those who offend and practice lawlessness] will be ***“gathered out of His kingdom”*** by the angels/messengers. They are taken out of the world and ***“cast into the furnace of fire”*** (v42).

Please note that it is the ‘wicked ones’ who are gathered out or taken away to judgement. This is confirmed when Jesus compares the day of His coming to the days of Noah, ***“the flood came and took them all away”*** (Matt.24:39). The wicked were taken away by the flood which was a judgement by water.

Then Jesus spoke of ***“two in the field: one taken the other left. Two grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left”*** (Matt.24:40-41). Many have told us that the one taken here was the righteous being taken to heaven. However Jesus said that it will be ***‘as in the days of Noah’*** and clearly it was the wicked who were taken away by the flood and the righteous who were left, that is, **saved by water and preserved in the earth.**

The kingdom is inherited in the earth

The end of Jesus explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares shows us that the kingdom of God is to be inherited in the earth. ***“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”*** Matt.13:43. These are the saints, *sons of the kingdom*, who inherit the kingdom of God in the earth! They will ***shine forth as the sun!***

When Jesus was transfigured, ***“His face shone like the sun”*** (Matt.17:2). The transfiguration happened in the earth while Jesus was in His human body. The transfiguration of Jesus is the example of the fullness that we are predestined to inherit when we come into the fullness of the adoption, which is ***“the redemption of our body”*** (Rom.8:23).

It is the sons of the kingdom who inherit the kingdom at the end of the age. The kingdom of God is to be established in the earth, ready for the return of the King.

He is seated

- *“The LORD said to My Lord, ‘sit at My right hand till I make My enemies Your footstool’” Ps.110:1,*
- *“He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet” 1Cor.15:25.*

In summary, we need to receive the spirit of sonship [adoption] to qualify for the inheritance which is the kingdom of God and as we walk in this awesome inheritance we will be well prepared and ready for the coming of King Jesus.

The Apostolic Revelation

Saved, baptised and the gift of the Spirit

I am rejoicing in the Lord and giving thanks to His name for the wonderful grace that He has made known to us through the apostolic revelation that He has been unfolding to His church. **I have been saved, water baptised and Spirit filled since mid 1974. Salvation for me was an enormous life changing experience.** From the day I was saved, I knew I was; I knew I had met Jesus Christ; I had been born again of the Spirit of God.

It was amazing! It was the Lord who led me to water baptism as nobody was speaking of water baptism in the charismatic group through which I was saved (**Mk 16:16**). It was the Lord Jesus who appeared to me some weeks later and released His Spirit within me, manifest in the release of a heavenly language, enabling me to pray in the Spirit to God ever since, building myself up (**1 Cor.14:2,4**).

Discipleship, servanthood and leadership

From the moment I was saved I desired to be a preacher and I willingly entered into every opportunity to be **discipled in the word**. I sought out people who would share the word with me. I desired to go to Bible College but there were no open doors in those days.

As I grew up in Christ I quickly took every opportunity to **serve in the local fellowship**, initially doing all the practical jobs in the building and helping out with ushering type duties. Very quickly I was drawn into leadership and began **to lead a cell group in my home**. At the time that was very challenging as I was largely untrained. We had young pastors at the time and no fathers, no apostles, no one really to mentor and train us for the ministry.

The empowerment of the Holy Spirit

In late 1994, I was serving on the staff of a successful denominational church in our city and a few of us involved in the ministry became very **challenged by the testimony of the church in the book of Acts**. Even though we were ‘charismatic’ in our ministry, we knew that we had only a very small portion of the **“power”** of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised in **Acts 1:8**. We began to diligently seek God and in January 1995, I called some meetings wherein we simply worshiped and waited upon the Lord.

The Holy Spirit came upon us in a mighty way and many of us had life changing experiences. It is probably true that most of us were speaking in tongues and ministering in other gifts of the Spirit for many years previously but in this season **we received an empowerment and began to walk in the Spirit in a remarkable way**. Along with others, I often did not sleep at night but would be **caught up in the Spirit, receiving revelations, living in a realm that was more heavenly than earthly**. I would go to work the next day fully refreshed and energetic.

As a result of this awesome experience, we began to host many meetings at this local church centre and then travelled out around Australia, holding revival meetings and **witnessing salvation, healings, the infilling of the Holy Spirit and amazing signs and wonders**. This season lasted for four years, including the first year of Revival Ministries Australia [RMA began ministry in January 1998].

The grace of a true apostle

In August 2001, I had the privilege of meeting another apostle and he came to SHILOH [our centre in Toowoomba] to teach us. I knew I had been called to be an apostle

and had begun to function in that ministry. [The Lord Jesus had appeared to me in January 1998, commissioning me to the ministry of apostle.]

The apostle who came among us **spoke about grace in an amazing and tangible way; he released the grace of God to us.** We all knew we had been saved by grace; we knew that the charismatic gifts of the Spirit are gifts of grace at work [‘charis’ is the Greek word for grace] but now we were experiencing grace in a new and profound way. We recognised that **one of the delineating features of an apostle is the grace that the apostle walks in, ministers out of, and is able to impart.**

It is important to receive an apostle as an apostle. Jesus said in commissioning the first apostles, **“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me” Matt.10:40.** We knew to receive the brother who came as an apostle and we all received more grace than ever before because we received an apostle of Jesus Christ.

The apostolic revelation

This term, the apostolic revelation, captures in essence what God has given to the last days church. It is the apostolic revelation that brings us into a **profound, life-changing, transforming experience** that continues to unfold day by day and is able to be ministered to others far and wide. As a result of receiving the grace of God to believe the apostolic revelation, which is the grace-filled and anointed ministry of the word, we have been empowered to release that grace to many and witness them receive profound, life-changing, transforming experiences.

Adoption as sons

Every day we are thanking God for His grace. We know from the word that this is **‘walking in sonship’**, having received the predestined **“adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph.1:5).** It is at the end of the age that the Lord is calling His church to walk in maturity. The children of God are heirs and joint heirs with Christ (Rom.8:17) but **“a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father” Gal.4:1-2.**

The church throughout this age has not yet grown up into maturity. We may have graduated from childhood to become servants, that is, ministers, but we have not walked in our inheritance as sons. But now God is restoring fathers and it is the fathers [apostles] that God is raising, who at the appointed time are releasing the children who have become servants into sonship to God.

I testify that the Lord has brought me into a revelation of His grace and has made known to me the **spirit of adoption**, revealing to me the **reality of becoming a son of God.** [Jn 1:12, Heb.2:10, Rom.8:19] This grace enables me and the brethren who are with me in SHILOH apostolic company and many brethren across the nations to walk in maturity.

We now know that God’s word is going to be fulfilled. We understand that Jesus will **“present to Himself a glorious church” (Eph.5:27).** We bear witness that the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4:11-13 is being raised up to do **“the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come ... to a perfect man.”**

Being led by the Spirit

The effect of this greater grace working in our lives is experienced in walking in the Spirit with the fruit of the Spirit evident in our lives. Furthermore, many ministers who have received the grace and revelation of sonship are reporting demonstrable change in their ministries. A number have reported a much greater release of the power of the Holy Spirit; others have experienced being Spirit-led in powerful ways (**Rom.8:14**), going through doors to minister even to kings and ambassadors and being recognised and received by government officials.

Sons become fathers

The amazing thing about the apostolic revelation and this ministry of grace and anointing that brings the servants of God into sonship is that it is able to be ministered by anyone who has become a son. In the days of the Charismatic movement and to this time, any saint who is baptised in the Holy Spirit is able to minister that baptism through the laying on of hands to others. Likewise, any born again believer can lead another person to Christ. So it is in these days that **God is raising up sons who then become ‘fathers’, releasing the grace and anointing through the word** for others to come into sonship.

Revelation brings change

I personally experienced this life-changing grace of sonship coming into my own life on October 31st 2002. Since then my personal life has changed dramatically. I am so blessed to be ‘out of the wilderness’ and living in ‘the land of inheritance’.

The wilderness years

The wilderness years for the Christian are those years in which life is not easy despite the knowledge of God that we have had and the gifts of the Spirit operating in our ministry. It is a time of longing for maturity in Christ; of longing for victory in areas of the soul that seem to remain the same year after year.

Coming home

When the grace of sonship was first released in my heart by the Holy Spirit, the immediate response was one of feeling secure deep in my soul and the way that I described the experience was ‘I have come home’. I now understand that becoming a son is coming home to the Father’s house and it can be understood powerfully from **Luke 15:18-23** when the prodigal son came home.

The inheritance

While this son had lost his natural inheritance, his father now bestowed upon him his spiritual inheritance. The father said **“bring out the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet”** (v22). The robe is the robe of righteousness [being in right standing with the Father through Jesus] and speaks of the full covering of Christ enabling us to walk in His anointing and in His grace.

- The robe identifies the son with the father.
- The ring is the authority of Christ which is the Father’s authority now given to the son.
- The sandals are put on the feet, enabling the son to walk in the inheritance.
- The inheritance is **“His inheritance”** (**Eph.1:18**), and it is walking in the glory: **“Christ in you, the hope of glory”** Col.1:27.

WHY SONSHIP?

The message is **SONSHIP**, whereby we experience and walk in the grace of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in a much fuller measure. Yes, everything in God's word is available to us *"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us"* (2 Cor:1:20), and when at any point we line up with the word in Christ, we can say **'Yes and Amen'**.

However the experience of us all as we grow up in Christ is generally as follows: we have various deep and strong experiences that begin to root and ground us in the love of Christ, but despite such 'mountain top' experiences, we still have to go through the necessary stages of growth to come to maturity. Coming into sonship is coming into that walk in maturity.

Why Sonship?

1. **God's purpose is to bring many sons to glory through Jesus Christ:** *"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."* Heb.2:10. We are the children of God by the new birth, but God's goal is 'sons'. Sons are the mature ones, able to walk in His glory.
2. **We are born again to become the sons of God:** *"But as many as receive Him, to them He gave the power to become the sons of God, to those who believe on His name: who were born ... of God."* Jn. 1:12-13. When we are born again we are babes, but the seed of God is within us to grow up into maturity, becoming sons. There are three main stages of growth in our walk with the Lord. John writes to *"little children, young men and fathers"* 1Jn.2:12-14. The fathers are those who have come to maturity as sons, now able to have spiritual children.
3. **The release of the spirit of sonship is a sign that we are at the end of the age:** *"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse"* Mal. 4:5-6. The spirit and power of Elijah is being restored to the church to prepare for the coming of the Lord. The Lord is coming for a *"glorious church"*, that is, *"many sons"* having been brought to glory. Through the restoration of apostles, fathers have been restored with true hearts for the children of God. Thereby the children receive the spirit of sonship and the church begins to enter her inheritance.
4. **We are "predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son"** Rom.8:29, and when we reach the age of maturity we receive the *"adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself"* (Eph.1:5). It is as we walk as mature sons in the inheritance that God has reserved for us that we begin to reflect His glory. Many have put off inheriting the glory until after Jesus returns but in fact God has predestined us to walk in ever-increasing glory now (2 Cor.3:7-11, 18).
5. **Children do not inherit** even though they are *"joint heirs with Christ"* (Rom.8:17). *"The heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave"* (Gal.4:1). God is waiting for the children to grow up *"to receive the adoption as sons, no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ"* (Gal.4:5,7). This happens when we receive the spirit of sonship or *"the Spirit of His Son into our hearts"* (v.6). Even as Jesus was always the Son of God but He did not walk in the

Spirit of sonship until after His baptism, so we also must grow from being a little child to a young man to a mature son, ready to inherit.

6. **All of creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God** so that creation *“itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God”* **Rom. 8:19-21**. All of creation is waiting: this is an amazing reality! All of God’s creation was subjected to a curse because of the failure of the first man. But now **all of creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God** to be delivered from that curse.
7. **The finality of the adoption as sons is “the redemption of our body”** (**Rom.8:23**), and this is confirmed in **Ephesians 1:13-14** *“the Holy Spirit of promise is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession”*. Even now the same Spirit *“that raised Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies”* (**Rom.8:11**), but finally we *“eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body”* **Phil.3:20-21**.

We are all heirs of God in Christ. That means there is an inheritance to be received in the earth in these days of fulfilment and restoration. The work of redemption [the payment of the required price to redeem man and creation] has been completed by Jesus Christ through His suffering, death and resurrection. He has done it all! God has *“accomplished His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (**Eph.3:11**).

- It is time to receive our spiritual inheritance!
- It is time to become secure in Christ as a son!
- It is time to fulfil the part He has for us in the body!
- We are no longer to be children (**Eph.4:14**).
- The foundations must have been laid properly for us to go onto perfection (**Heb.6:1-3**).
- There will be pain [suffering] because *“the Father chastens every son who comes to Him”* (**Heb.12:3-11**).

EXPERIENCING THE GRACE OF GOD

Martin Luther - Reformation

When **Martin Luther** [early 16th century] **discovered the saving grace of God through faith in the Word of God**, he became a Protestant, no longer subscribing to practices and works of the Roman Catholic Church of his day. The work of restoration and reformation had begun and it was the reformation of theology.

John Wesley – New Birth

When **John Wesley** [18th century] was ‘**strangely warmed**’ by the **Spirit-led preaching** of a Moravian brother in Aldersgate Court, he no longer relied on his ‘method’ of holiness which he had developed while at university, but now **preached freely the grace of God and saw tens of thousands experience the new birth**. This was the restoration and reformation of intimacy with God.

Reverend Seymour – Pentecostal Revival

When **Rev. Seymour** and others gathered in Asuza Street, Los Angeles, **in 1906, to wait [tarry] upon the Lord for the infilling of the Holy Spirit**, they were mightily blessed with the empowering of the Spirit, with powerful signs, especially tongues. From there **the Pentecostal revival has touched millions worldwide** and for a long time has been the fastest growing part of the church.

Charismatic Movement

From the early **1960’s** through to the early 1980’s God released another wave of the Spirit’s mighty power and **millions were filled with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands**. The so-called Charismatic Movement brought many believers further on in the journey of restoration and reformation.

Spirit of Adoption

In our day the Lord is pouring out His Spirit again but in a different and very specific way: He is pouring out the **Spirit of Adoption** whereby we become the sons of God through Jesus Christ (**Eph.1:5**). This is “*to the praise of the glory of His grace*” (**Eph.1:6**). This is an experience of coming into a dimension and reality of the grace of God, previously unknown to the believer, even unknown to the Charismatic minister who is demonstrating powerful gifts but still not knowing the intimacy and internal change that is brought about by the experience of God’s grace in sonship. This is an impartation of the Spirit, releasing grace [enabling power] to walk in a mature relationship with God as Father and now being able to receive the inheritance which has been stored up in heaven but “*ready to be revealed in the last time*” (**1Pet.1:4-5**).

Huiiothesia = adoption

The word ‘**adoption**’ appears five times in the New Testament, only in Paul’s writings:

Romans 8:15,23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5.

‘*huiiothesia*’ SC #5206, means ‘*the placing of a son, i.e., adoption; sonship in respect to God*’.

Vines Expository Dictionary says:

- this word ‘*signifies the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong;*
- *the Holy Spirit produces in them [the children of God] the realisation of sonship and the attitude belonging to sons.*’

- ‘sonship is bestowed in distinction from a relationship consequent merely upon birth’ (Gal.4:1)
- There is a contrast between ‘the sonship of the believer and the unoriginated Sonship of Christ.’
- ‘God does not adopt believers as children; they are begotten as such by His Holy Spirit through faith.’
- ‘Adoption is a term involving the dignity of the relationship of believers as sons;
- It is not a putting into the family by spiritual birth, but a putting into the position as sons.’

[Vines Expository Dictionary, Unabridged edition, Riverside Book and Bible House, page 34].

I have shared these thoughts of Vines because they bring clarity of understanding. Every born again child of God is an heir and yes, many would say, already a ‘son’. However sonship is something we grow up into and there comes a time to receive the spirit of adoption, now walking in a fullness.

A third experience

We are speaking of ‘**a third experience**’ which is the fulfilment of the third Feast, the Feast of Tabernacles. A key understanding of the Feast of Tabernacles is that ‘tabernacles’ means ‘dwelling places’. The fulfilment of the Feast points to the saints becoming ‘**the tabernacles [dwelling places]**’ of God. This speaks of the saints walking in the revelation of the mystery “*which is Christ in you [Christ dwelling/tabernacling in you] the hope of glory*” (Col.1:27).

God tabernacled in human form

John 1:14 says “*the Word was made flesh and dwelt [tabernacled] among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” Jesus clothed Himself with frail humanity but even in so doing, **the glory of the Father was revealed in human form and seen in the earth**. This was the beginning of the fulfilment of God’s purpose.

Jesus has prepared us to be tabernacles

In **John 14:2** Jesus said “*In My Father’s house are many mansions [dwellings, tabernacles]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place [somewhere to dwell] for you.*” While many believe that Jesus is referring to some future dwelling place in heaven, the reality is that Jesus was going to the cross to deal with sin once and for all and through the awesome provision of His shed blood, cleansing the believers from all sin, thus making them fit dwelling places for God in the Spirit.

The Father and the Son will indwell us

Jesus goes further in **John 14:23** when He promises “*If anyone loves me He will keep My word [logos]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home [mansion, dwelling place, tabernacle] with him.*”

The word used for ‘mansion’ {SC#3438 *mone* means a staying, i.e., residence [the act of residing or the place of residence] translated ‘mansion’ in **John 14:2** and the same word is used in v.23 and translated ‘home’ or ‘abode’}. It is not primarily referring to a heavenly home but to God’s intention to totally infill the believer, to tabernacle with, or dwell in, the believer.

God's goal is clearly repeated in many parts of the New Testament and clearly referred to in the Old Testament:

His goal is to reveal His glory in the earth through His people.

The Feasts of Israel teach us of God's unfolding purpose

Even as the church age began through Jesus Christ fulfilling Passover and thus providing for our salvation, and then sending the Holy Spirit in fulfilment of Pentecost, thus giving us power for Christian witness, so now at the end of the church age Jesus Christ is bringing His church into the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles. Through Passover we are saved by faith in the word of God and through Pentecost we are empowered for ministry. Both of these experiences bring us into a growing relationship with God and His word, and the second experience builds upon the first.

So now God is bringing His children, His servants, to **the third experience** which is a greater experience of being indwelt, of knowing a deeper and fuller relationship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ – the fulfilment of **John 14:23**, and the reality of apostolic fellowship which truly is *“fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1Jn.1:3)*.

ASPECTS OF THE DOCTRINE OF SONSHIP

Scripture Alone

Today God is restoring the reality of sonship. As in all times of restoration the word goes forth in many different ways heralding the new thing that God is doing. Therefore many are teaching of sonship, fathers and sons, the father's heart etc. We need to be discerning and know what the Scripture teaches concerning sonship. It is an unfolding revelation and I am seeking to share some things that have become clear in the five years that I have been graced to walk in sonship since October 31st, 2002.

There is a profound saying that came out of the Reformation, originally written in Latin, which says '*Scripture alone*'. This saying expanded says '*Scripture is our only authority for faith and practice*'. Therefore whatever we are teaching must be clearly in the context of the Scriptures as written. **2Timothy 3:16** testifies to the Divine inspiration of all Scripture and tells us that the Scripture is "*profitable for teaching/doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness.*"

If we teach and preach according to the Scripture then we are able to be judged by those who hear us because they have access to the Scriptures; but if we share authoritatively out of dreams, visions, prophetic words and our own developed conceptual understanding then not everyone is able to judge the veracity and faithfulness of our teaching. Even if we have a strong anointing that is able to be imparted, that does not prove or confirm that our word is scripturally sound.

THE REALITY OF SONSHIP

Jesus prayed for the Apostles

The prayer of Jesus in **John 17** is used by many as the mandate for 'pastors unity movements' in cities, and yet in **verses 4-18**, Jesus is clearly speaking about the raising and training of the apostles to the place where He had "*finished the work*" and was now ready to send the ones He trained as apostles "*into the world*".

Then the verses following which speak of the oneness of all believers make ultimate sense: it is as apostles go forth, having been trained and raised by the Lord, making disciples and thereby raising the church, that there will be the oneness that our Lord prayed for.

Apostolic council

Therefore it is incumbent upon apostles to come together in apostolic council whether it is an informal gathering such as Paul had with the leading apostles in Jerusalem that he reports on in **Galatians 2:1-10**, or the large council of **Acts 15** that included all the apostles and elders to consider a widespread problem in the churches. It is in the apostolic council that the biblical understanding of sonship and other important biblical doctrines can be clarified in agreement. This will enable the full preaching of the gospel to go forth and fulfil God's purpose of 'many sons to glory'.

Many Sons to Glory

In our day the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ [Yeshua Messiah] is doing an awesome work. **Hebrews 2:10** tells us that "*it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*" Jesus the Messiah is already perfected: "*having been*

perfected” (Heb.5:9). Now God is bringing to fulfilment His great goal: *“many sons to glory.”*

The Age of Inheritance

When is God *“bringing many sons to glory”*? Is it when Jesus returns and we receive the finality of our inheritance, *“the redemption of our body”*? (Rom.8:23b) No! The redemption of the body is the final fulfilment of the inheritance promised to sons. Sonship, in simple terms, is referring to a walk in maturity.

Our walk begins at the new birth (Jn.1:12-13 & 3:3-6) but we begin the walk as babes, becoming children, then growing into adolescence leading to young adulthood (1Jn.2:12-14). But the expected goal is to reach the age of maturity, the age of being placed [adopted] into sonship. There is an age of inheritance when *“that which is stored up for me”* (Lu.15:12), that which is *“reserved in heaven ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1Pet.1:4-5), is given to us; is revealed in us! It is an unfolding revelation; it is a walk unto perfection! Unto glory!

The First Works of the Spirit

We are heirs from the time of the new birth but the *“heir as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards, until the time appointed by the father”* Gal.4:1-2. We have been redeemed from under the law by God’s Son, that we might receive the adoption as sons (v.5). Because we are heirs of God (v.7), we are predestined to adoption.

When we first receive God’s Spirit we are born again and according to the testimony of Scripture, we can receive the infilling of the Spirit immediately, as in Acts 8:14-17 and Acts 19:6. The infilling of the Spirit is the gift Peter promised to those who received the word gladly and were baptised (Acts 2:38,41), and the same gift that the circumcised believers with Peter recognised in Acts 10:45. But neither the new birth [an operation of the Spirit] nor the receiving of the gift of the Spirit to be filled [another operation of the Spirit] equal the adoption as sons.

Adoption into Sonship

The adoption as sons is a further work [or third operation] and manifestation of the Spirit in the life of the believers. It is the adoption by the Spirit that brings the believer into the inheritance, into the walk in maturity, the goal being *“walking unto and into the glory of God”*, which is *“Christ in us”* fully manifest (Col.1:27 & Jn.14:21-23).

In real spiritual terms coming into sonship is not coming into relationship with an apostolic father but it is receiving an apostle who is ministering the message and impartation of sonship. However even as anyone who is born again is able to minister to others bringing them into the born again experience, and even as anyone who is Spirit-filled is able to bring another believer into the Spirit-filled experience, so it is that a believer who has experienced the adoption into sonship is then able to minister sonship to others because it is an operation and impartation of the Spirit.

Apostles are Fathers

In recent years God has restored apostles and apostles are fathers to the body of Christ. But in the restoration, the apostles are often fathers specifically to ministry leaders and elders [elders according to Scripture are the pastoral leaders of local churches]. However one of the errors promulgated and practised by some apostles is that the apostolic father sets himself up

in an exalted position, requiring all others to come into a sonship relationship with him. The teaching on sonship that such apostles are giving is that sonship is something entered into by finding an apostolic father and that the revelation of sonship is tied up with and restricted to having a father/son relationship with that apostle.

There is no Scriptural foundation for such teaching. Yes, clearly Paul calls Timothy his *“beloved and faithful son in the Lord”* (1Cor.4:17), and Paul calls Titus *“a true son”* (Titus 1:4), and Paul says of Onesimus *“my son whom I have begotten in my chains”* (Philemon 10). As well Paul reveals that he is a father to the Corinthian church having *“begotten”* them through the Gospel (1 Cor.4:15) and he calls the Galatians *“my little children”* (Gal.4:19).

However in all of his epistles Paul does not use such relationship-based language when teaching the doctrine of sonship by adoption. Sonship by adoption is for all believers, whether they are Paul’s sons or not. For example, Paul wrote to the Romans not as their father in the faith but he teaches on sonship in **Romans 8:14-17**. Again in **Ephesians** Paul tells us all that we are *“predestined to adoption as sons [sonship]”* (1:5), but nowhere in the book does he refer to himself as the ‘father’, or to the saints in Ephesus as his children [Paul was the apostolic father of the Ephesian church but in his letter he is clearly not teaching sonship in terms of them being his apostolic children].

Paul is clear: all saints are predestined to be sons – sons of God, not sons of an apostle.

I am an apostolic father by the grace of God and His calling and gifting. I have many spiritual children; I am raising sons in the ministry; I have mature sons who have now become fathers. In SHILOH Apostolic Company we enjoy such apostolic relationships. But the key to all of this is that **we have received the spirit of adoption** [sonship] from God by His Spirit through Jesus Christ, and we are all sons of God *“by faith in Jesus Christ”* (Gal.3:26).

We are Called to Walk in Maturity

None of the apostles that Christ has raised in these last days is yet perfect and none has the full revelation of God’s eternal purpose, otherwise called the mystery or the hidden wisdom. Even Paul made such a disclaimer in **Philippians 3:12**. At the same time Paul is calling the church to walk in maturity, to receive *“the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory”* 1 Cor.2:7. It is the *“mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ”* Eph.3:9.

Paul tells us in **Philippians 3:15-16** that there is a *“mind”* that the mature should have; [in modern understanding this ‘mind’ is a paradigm or a positive mindset based on revelation]. If we will accept this walk in maturity and commit ourselves to *“walk by the same rule”* and *“be of the same mind”* then Paul says that *“if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.”* This is a promise: God will do this for us; He will enable us to walk together in a mature mind.

It is a Walk in Grace

One of the awesome aspects and key components of the inheritance is the supply of grace to us in Christ Jesus. Paul says this grace was made available to us before time began (2Tim.1:9) and again he says in **Romans 1:5** that *“through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name.”* It is the grace of God given to us freely in Christ Jesus that enables us to walk in maturity.

This grace is ministered through apostles that Christ has raised in the last days to bring the church to maturity, even perfection, **“to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”** (Eph.4:13b). In **Ephesians 1:5-6** Paul says that the predestined adoption as sons is **“to the praise of the glory of His grace”**. It is only by the grace of God that we can walk in maturity. Our adoption [placement] as sons is a work of the Spirit that brings us into an unlimited enabling grace.

A Profound Spiritual Blessing

One of the **“spiritual blessings”** that **“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us with”** is **“having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will”** Eph.1:3&5. God has chosen us **“in Christ before the foundation of the world”** (v.4) for this purpose.

We are predestined to the adoption as sons by Jesus Christ unto Himself. **This is the entry to, the beginning of, the walk to perfection, unto glory.** This is the placement by the Spirit to receive the promised inheritance. This passage in **Ephesians** makes it abundantly clear that God in Jesus Christ is receiving us as sons. It is by adoption but the normal understanding of the word adoption is not the Biblical meaning of the word. The Biblical word means ‘the placement of a son’.

It is God who receives us as sons. This is confirmed in **Romans 8:15** which says we **“received the Spirit of adoption”**; the NIV actually says **“the Spirit of sonship”**. God’s goal is for the Father to have many sons and He has made that possible through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Entering into sonship is a work of grace by the Spirit

We cannot labour to enter sonship, even as we cannot labour to receive our initial salvation (**Eph.2:8**). Everything we receive from God is by grace through faith; it is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. It is not of works, lest we should boast. It is time for all of God’s church to hear His calling to come home to the Father’s house.

Finally there is only one house [the church] and it is the Father’s house. God has raised apostles in these last days to lead His church home. The work of the Spirit in these last days is to bring the children of God, the servants of God, into the awesome relationship of sonship to the Father. Such a relationship brings the individual saints and ministers into a wonderful reality of security, courage, discipline and identity through the Spirit of sonship or as Paul says in Galatians, **“the Spirit of the Son Himself”** (4:6).

Oneness is the goal

As we come home and find our place in the Father’s house, then we become one with all other believers because we have come into maturity; we have attained **“the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God”**; we have grown into **“a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”** (Eph.4:13). This coming into oneness will only be achieved when the apostles who are called by Christ to father and lead the church are of **one mind**, following the **same rule** and **becoming a pattern** for the saints to follow (Phil.3:16-17).

A Pattern People

Paul speaks of a company walking in maturity in **Philippians 3:15-17**. In **verse 15** Paul says **“as many as are mature, have this mind”**; there is an agreement to enter into as mature followers of Jesus. Then Paul says **“if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you”**; once we accept and enter into maturity, there will still be some

things that we do not understand or agree on, but Paul assures us that God will give us revelation so that we can ***“walk by the same rule and be of the same mind”*** (v.16).

Then Paul says ***“follow my example”*** and to ***“note those who so walk, for you have us for a pattern”*** (v17). In these days God is raising up a 'pattern people', who will demonstrate the way of the Lord, in and through whom the Lord will manifest Himself, and through whom the proper functioning of the Body of Christ will be seen.

THE FIVE-FOLD BLESSING OF THE FATHER

Some years ago, an apostolic father teaching at SHILOH [our teaching/training centre in Toowoomba, Australia] mentioned in passing five blessings that a father can give his son/children. The Lord spoke to us powerfully through this and we have made it our own. Since then we have purposefully prayed and imparted this five-fold blessing in many places, wherever we have ministered the grace of sonship, with powerful results. This five-fold blessing is what a natural father can give his son/children to some extent and it is the fullness of this blessing that the Father God wants to give His sons. This is reflected in the spiritual as brethren enter into the grace of sonship.

The five-fold blessing is: courage, security, discipline, identity, success

Courage

This is the **boldness to stand in Christ** in any place and declare His name, being faithful to His word. An example of a father giving courage to his son is as follows: a small boy at Primary school has been bullied in the play ground. However one day his father comes to the school and the little boy, with his hand in Dad's, confronts the bullies full of courage. Why? Because his dad is standing with him; he is no longer afraid and has courage to face them.

When the Lord appeared to me in January 1998, just prior to our launching the ministry we are working in today, He imparted to me 'courage'. I was feeling afraid in my heart because we were stepping out from denominational/institutional church for the first time and I was to be the leader. I received a tangible impartation of courage from Jesus. He confirmed this in **Joshua 1:1-9** where courage and strength are mentioned three times. The key verse was **verse 6** *"Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."* Ever since, like the boy in the play ground, I have been full of courage by the Spirit of the Lord because I know my Father is standing with me.

Security

This is, **knowing that 'I belong'**. People everywhere are searching for security and traditionally people have found security in family, in culture, in a profession or the company they work for, etc. but that security does not provide substantial personal security. Many pastors and leaders who have been in ministry for years are not secure. This is reflected in the way they conduct themselves and this is often in a controlling way. In my own experience I was consciously insecure until I was 51 years of age. When I experienced the Spirit of adoption whereby I came into the reality of sonship unto God, the feeling I had immediately was 'I am secure for the first time in my life'; I described this as 'I have come home'. I had come home to Father's house.

A key aspect of security is acceptance and God uses apostolic fathers to show that acceptance to His children. No longer is there that sense of striving or having to compete with others or prove oneself. Security comes from the inside and brings a freedom to be who you are meant to be. We belong in the house of God, our Father's house, and as sons we come to know that we do belong: we are sons to the Father.

"And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him"
Lu.15:20.

Discipline

In the Christian family we expect the father to take the primary responsibility for discipline. When this is exercised properly, the children grow up in a disciplined manner and will embrace that discipline as their own when they are mature. **Hebrews 12:3-11** speaks of the chastening of sons. God as our Father is gentle with His children but is strict with His sons, those who have grown into maturity.

The result of the Father's discipline will bring us to the place where we are among ***“those that are led by the Spirit of God. They are the sons of God” (Rom.8:14)***. The reality of godly discipline is to live and walk by the Spirit. Therefore the Scripture says ***“Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live” Heb.12:9b***. Once we are walking in sonship, we are able to hear the voice of the Father much more readily and become more like Jesus, only doing ***“what He sees the Father do” (Jn.5:19)***.

The father desires his children to be disciplined in their lives. Our Father desires for us to be disciplined in studying His word, in spending time with Him in prayer, in being diligent to grow in the exercise of gifts, but most of all the Father desires for us to walk in the inheritance He has ***“reserved in heaven for you, ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Pet.1:4-5)***. As we receive the Spirit of adoption this blessing of discipline will come into our lives and enable us to go on to 'perfection' in a walk of maturity.

Identity

This is, **knowing 'who you are'**. People hide under all sorts of false identities, sometimes as superficial as a particular hairstyle or the latest fashion in dress. **Our identity is in reality 'our destiny unfolding'**. The Bible makes it clear that God has predestined us: ***“to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself” (Eph.1:5)***; ***“for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph.2:10)***; and that there is ***“a race that is set before us” (Heb.12:1)***. This race is best understood as 'a course for our lives already mapped out by God'.

Even as a wife takes her husband's name and has identity as a wife, and even as children are called by their father's name, thus identifying them, so it is with the children of God. We derive our identity from our Father, but the full reality of identity only becomes known to us when we come into sonship.

A key part of sonship is the sense of 'ownership'. We are no longer servants in the house but sons by inheritance. This changes our heart attitude toward ministry, no longer serving in the house as a servant but able to take ownership and responsibility as a son.

There is great power and authority released in knowing who you are and being able to stand and declare 'I am an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God'! [or whatever the ministry calling is, that God has bestowed upon you.]

Success

This is the final fruit of the Father's blessing. **When a father blesses his son, he is imparting approval and grace for the son to succeed**. A true father's heart is to see his sons become even more successful than the father.

Most of us have never been blessed by our natural fathers to go out in life and succeed and unfortunately most of us in the ministry of the church have never been blessed by an apostolic father. [Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, **Gen.48:1-20**. This was both a natural and a spiritual father blessing the sons.]

Praise God, He is raising apostolic fathers today and empowering them to release the blessing to sons in ministry. Such fathers are fully satisfied when their sons are able act independently of the father, doing the work that the father would have liked to have done but is unable to do. This is beginning to happen today.

It has been our experience that many, who have a ministry call in their heart, need the 'blessing' of being told 'you can do it; you will succeed in what the Lord has given you to do'. The blessing of the Father is not just to sons in ministry but it is the blessing that every child of God needs when they have grown up and have reached the age of inheritance.

Prayer:

Father in heaven, I ask You to lead me by Your grace and Your Holy Spirit to understand and to enter into sonship.

I acknowledge that it is time for me to grow up, to accept that I am of age to receive the inheritance from my Heavenly Father through Christ Jesus.

Lord I thank You that You called me to be Your disciple and I have diligently learnt Your word.

Lord I thank You that You have called me to be Your minister and I have sought to serve You in every way.

I now know it is time for me to become a son. I ask for your grace to understand; I ask for revelation to know; I ask for Your anointing to be transformed.

*Lord I want to become your son.
I want to receive courage into my heart so I can boldly stand for You.*

I yearn to be totally secure as Your child and now, as Your son; to no longer feel I have to strive or prove myself; that I can be secure in You and in Your body.

I submit to the 'chastening of the Lord' as a son, knowing that as my Father You will bring me to perfection through Your godly discipline.

Lord, reveal my identity to me as I walk in sonship, receiving my inheritance and fulfilling the call of God that is on my life.

Lord I ask Your blessing on my life to enable me to be successful in my life.

Father, 'give to me that which You have stored up for me', since before time began.

AMEN

THE GREAT INTERCESSION

All of creation and the Spirit-born saints

“For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” Rom.8:22-23. This speaks of the great intercession that all of creation and the Spirit-born saints are involved in. It is a groaning and labouring with **birth pangs**: something is to be born; a new life is to come forth, which will not only affect creation and deliver it from the curse but will release the saints into the fullness of sonship – **the redemption of the body**.

Jesus is the Great Intercessor

Jesus, the Son of God, is the great intercessor and He *“is risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” (v.34)*. When Jesus died on the cross He was *“put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison” (1 Pet.3:18-19)*. Jesus is now the great High Priest *“able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” Heb.7:25*.

Jesus interceded in the bowels of the earth

Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost gave a marvellous biographical picture of Jesus the man in **Acts 2:22-24**:

- **verse 22** He refers to the supernatural ministry of Jesus, *“a Man attested by God to you by miracles and signs”*
- **verse 23**, he refers to His death by crucifixion
- **verse 24** he speaks of His resurrection.

The New King James says that God raised Jesus, *“having loosed the pains of death”*; NAS Bible says *“agony of death”*. However the Greek word literally means ‘birth pangs’.

Birth pangs

When Jesus the Son of God was in the grave for three days and three nights, He was not resting, nor was He being tortured by the demons of hell. He was in the Spirit and He was further accomplishing the awesome work that only God incarnate [in the flesh] could do. Peter says he was going through **birth pangs**, that is, **a great intercession**, to bring forth life out of death, for *“this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality” (1Cor.15:53)*.

The fruit of His intercession

- i. Jesus is the firstfruits of them who will rise from the dead (**1Cor.15:20**).
- ii. Jesus was birthing a whole new creation!
- iii. Jesus was overcoming death in the flesh - doing away with the penalty of man’s sin.
- iv. Through Jesus’ resurrection we receive eternal life when we are born again

The glorious liberty yet to be revealed

According to **Romans 8:20-21**, *“creation was subjected to futility, but ... in hope.”* The creation will be *“delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”* What is this ‘glorious liberty’? How can the creation be delivered into something that is not yet experienced by the children of God? **Verse 19** has told us that *“the*

earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing [manifestation, disclosure] of the sons of God.”

Earlier the Scripture tells us that through Christ we have received the spirit of adoption [sonship] (Rom.8:15) and that *“we are the children of God”* (v16). If we are children of God, then we are *“heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ”* (v17). However *“the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father”* Gal.4:1-2.

Paul the apostle understood this great intercession

What is the great intercession? Jesus has already risen from the dead and that fact and reality is the linchpin of our faith. It was through His intercession in the Spirit - the *‘birth pangs of death’* that the new creation became a reality. What is more, Jesus *“always lives to make intercession for them* [those who are saved] (Heb.7:25).

But something more has to happen, that is, *“the revealing of the sons of God”* (Rom.8:19). Paul says to the Galatians *“My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you”* Gal.4:19. Paul is speaking to Christians but Christians who are still children in their understanding. Paul is imitating Jesus in this great intercession, labouring in birth pangs until *‘Christ is formed’* – sons are manifest! The children have grown up into maturity!

Bringing many sons to glory

What is the great intercession? It is the forming of *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Col.1:27). While that is done through preaching Christ *“warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”* (v28), the preaching will be effectual because of the deep intercession that the saints and of course the ministers are entering into to see the full adoption realised.

The goal is *“bringing many sons to glory”* and this is possible because Jesus Christ has already become *“the captain of our salvation”*, having been made *“perfect through sufferings”* (Heb.2:10). [I have already shared the deeper meaning of ‘birth pangs’ Acts 2:24].

Even as Jesus was perfected through the things which He suffered so also we must embrace and endure the sufferings that are in fact the doorway and pathway to perfection. The inheritance is the glory! But as joint heirs with Jesus we must also *“suffer with Him”* (Rom.8:17).

The whole of creation *“groans and labours with birth pangs”*. The creation was cursed because of man’s fall, but *“in hope”*. We do not understand it but there is an intercession going on all around us in creation and creation is crying for deliverance. This intercession is to be shared in by the children of God, *“those who have the firstfruits of the Spirit”*. The goal is many sons walking in the glory of God. God has intended from the beginning that the earth be filled with His glory.

Further study:

The following Scriptures give a brief summary of God’s eternal purpose in the creation of man: **Genesis 1:26-28, Numbers 14:21, Isaiah 40:5, Habakkuk 2:14, Colossians 1:27, Ephesians 5:27.** *Please study these Scriptures.*

There are many other Scriptures: search for them and discuss them in your study.

It is time for inheritance

It is time for the glory! For the last 100 years the church has been coming to know the power and anointing of the Lord. Prior to that even from the days of Luther and through the great awakening of the Wesleyan revival, the church came to know the saving presence of the Lord. But now it is time for the glory of the Lord to be revealed in the earth, and **it is the sons who are to be brought to glory.**

God's goal for his children who are already heirs via the new birth is for them to come to the time of maturity, "*the time appointed by the Father*". This time is now! It is the Father's time for His church to receive the promised inheritance "*incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" **1Pet.1:4-5.**

The whole body is to come to perfection

The great intercession is this calling upon those who already understand the mystery, the hidden wisdom of God which is for the mature and which "*God ordained before the ages for our glory*" (**1Cor.2:6-7**) to enter into the groaning and travailing that will bring to birth the maturity of the body of saints. While sonship is entered into individually it is the corporate calling upon the church now.

The five-fold ministries of **Ephesians 4:11** are to do the work of the ministry, which is the perfecting of the saints [being properly set in order to function in the body] and the building up of the body of Christ until we all come "*to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man* [a corporate man, the whole body], *to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*" **Eph.4:12-13**. The result will be a mature body of Christ in the earth functioning powerfully in *agape* love, demonstrating to all that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah] the Son of the living God.

We need to be sealed by the Holy Spirit

It is the glory of God that is known through the revelation of the mystery that enables the saints walking in maturity [having experienced the adoption, that is, being placed by the Holy Spirit into a mature reality and relationship with God as Father, walking in the inheritance] to demonstrate the nature and government of the kingdom of God in the earth. The spirit of sonship [adoption] has already been put in our hearts but most have not yet acknowledged this fullness. We need to receive the **sealing** by the Spirit to receive and walk in the promised inheritance (**Eph.1:14, 2Cor.1:22**).

For the redemption of the body

We the saints are eagerly waiting for the adoption "*the redemption of the body*" (**Rom.8:23**). [Redemption SC#629 *apolutrosis* meaning a releasing, deliverance, the act of ransom in full. This word comes from the word '*to loose*'. Jesus has paid the full ransom through His blood so that we can attain to full adoption, the redemption of the body.]

What is the redemption of the body that we are eagerly waiting for? In the context of the verse the redemption of the body is part of the adoption. Therefore it refers to our full redemption which is to be "*sanctified entirely: your whole spirit, soul and body being preserved blameless*" (**1Thess.5:23**).

By receiving the spirit of sonship

The spirit of sonship [adoption] is an enablement by grace to walk in a mature relationship with God based on receiving the deeper wisdom (**1Cor.2:7**). As we walk in sonship the "*Spirit of wisdom and revelation*" (**Eph.1:17**), leads us into an unfolding revelation of the mystery. **Ephesians 3:9** says there is "*a fellowship of the mystery*"; in

Colossians 1:25-27, Paul says that the revelation of the mystery is to bring forth the fulfilment of the word of God in the saints which is finally *“Christ in you the hope of glory”*.

The full ransom has been paid

As we give ourselves to this great intercession we will be calling the whole body of Christ into the revelation that the full **‘ransom’** for our deliverance has been paid by Christ through His redemptive sacrifice. The fuller understanding of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice is linked to understanding that the church needs to come into the full reality of the Day of Atonement.

Now through His resurrection we join with Him in the great intercession so that redemption will be experienced in the body. The body refers to this earthly tent that Paul says is needing to be more fully clothed (**2Cor.5:4**). This is a deep revelation that the Lord is beginning to open up. This revelation will be accessed more fully as we enter into the intercession with Christ.

Christ in us, the Intercessor

The Scripture promises us that the Spirit Himself will help us *“making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* (**Rom.8:26**), and *“He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God”* v27. Remember that **Romans 8:34** identifies Christ being at the right hand of God making intercession for us – God is one: Christ in us [the Spirit] and Christ seated at the right hand! How can this great intercession fail! It is a God thing!

Creation is waiting

It is time to enter into this great intercession, understanding the goal, receiving the inheritance, being exercised to embrace and pray with and allow the Spirit to pray through us to bring many sons to glory. This is *“the manifestation of the sons of God”* that all of creation is waiting for, because it is through the manifest sons that the creation will be delivered.

God has already given us some foretaste of this reality in various places in the world. For example, in the small island nation of Fiji [western Pacific Ocean] a few years ago a village whose water stream was poisoned came to repentance over the sins of their forebears. In the 19th century a white missionary from Australia was murdered in this village area by their forebears. The village turned to Christ in recent years and then communicated with the descendants of the white missionary asking them to come to the village from Australia for a reconciliation ceremony in which the villagers led by their elders and their Christian ministers asked for forgiveness for the past sins. Forgiveness was given; reconciliation was achieved and miraculously on that day the stream became sweet again. Hallelujah! There are other stories similar to this.

A mature church is the key

Our expectation is that God who created the earth to be a fruitful and hospitable environment for mankind and all of the creatures that He created, will, through His manifest sons who are walking in the revelation of His glory, begin to deliver creation and release creation into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Our expectation is that, **as the church begins to walk in maturity by fully acknowledging and receiving the spirit of adoption [sonship], the church will begin to be the glorious church that Jesus is preparing to present to Himself.**

It is time for the great intercession

Discipleship Courses **for Christian Ministers and Serious Disciples**

These courses have been prepared for brethren who are serious disciples of the word of God. There are three years of course work altogether.

The first year's modules, seminars and practical constitute the coursework for **Certificate I**.

The second year's modules, seminars and practical constitute **Certificate II**,

The third year's modules, seminars and practical constitute **Certificate III**.

Three Seminars

There needs to be three seminars arranged for each year's course:

one at the beginning of the course to introduce apostolic teaching to the disciples,

one in the middle of the course to consolidate the apostolic teaching in their understanding;

one at the end of the course to complete the teaching and graduate the successful students.

Seminars need to be presented by an apostle or apostolic teacher.

Curriculum - based on manuals and books

The **manuals and books** that are to be studied will be made available to the acting principal of the course and copies can be made for all participants if that is possible.

Certificates will be issued at the end of each year's course to those who successfully complete the course.

Each module is based on a manual [written by Paul Galligan or one of the team at Revival Ministries Australia] or a book. Each manual has between four and eleven sessions.

We recommend that the school meets at least **one full day per week** and that at least two sessions are presented each day. Please note that some of the sessions in some of the manuals have recommended workshops that the students are expected to participate in.

Each year's course is the equivalent of nine modules. Normally a module is one manual and the books in the course are equal to 2 modules each. Some of the sessions are longer and an individual session may take a full day. Some of the sessions are shorter and three or four may be covered in one day. Most of the sessions are average length and we suggest two sessions per day.

In the third year course there are two modules [M7 and M8] that are devoted to developing practical ministry skills – preaching set biblical topics & memorizing Scriptures in particular subject areas.

The course should be successfully completed in **nine months**, following the above schedule.

Practical Ministry: there are two areas of practical ministry required for the three years of the course:

- the regular celebration of the Lord's Supper
- disciplined reading of the Scripture – the whole Bible in one year.

For further information contact Revival Ministries Australia. There may be an apostolic leader in your area who is able to present the seminars and also have access to the Curriculum materials.

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Stewards of the Mystery