

NBS I THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGS SALVATION

PART 2

Peter Hay, prepared for the Apostles Fellowship word, 2 October 2021
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

The process of the message

We will quickly 'recap'.

We started by understanding that when Jesus came to proclaim the gospel, He came to *reveal the fellowship of Yahweh*. He came to reveal the Father through His ministry, which is by the Holy Spirit. This revealed Their fellowship as 'light'.

We understood the Godhead model, and that Christ is 'the Message'. And, as that Message, He proclaims His faith to us.

It comes with *prevenient grace*, which is the *lovingkindness* of God, so that we are able to respond in obedience to the call to 'come'.

The word which ministers this grace is *ministered by messengers* who are sent before the face of Christ 'in the spirit and power of Elijah'.

As they come in that mode - joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering as those through whom Christ is being 'publicly betrayed as crucified' - that word ministers that grace to their hearers so that they can *respond*.

A 'breach' will happen, because this word comes *from the cross*. Grace and supplication comes from Christ's side, and it is ministered through these messengers; and it causes *a breach* to be made on the hearer.

THE FEAR OF THE LORD

The next thing that we will look at is '*the fear of the Lord*'. This message proclaims the *fellowship of Yahweh* but, as the messenger reveals this message, they exhort their hearers to fear God; to fear the Lord.

This is really important because, if we do not fear the Lord, we will not *respond*. We will draw back from the Lord when He comes to us - that is the first thing.

Or we will 'presume' on His kindness, and we will remain in our carnality. With the word which comes replete with grace, the messenger exhorts their hearers to 'fear God'.

Receiving the fear of the Lord as it is taught

Now, only a person who fears the Lord is able to confess by faith that Jesus is the Lord, and to

demonstrate true repentance which leads to salvation. This is why it is so important for us to receive the fear of the Lord. And we receive that fear even before we are 'born'.

Here is the key point. The fear of the Lord has to be *ministered, or taught*.

As well, it has to be *received* so that we will not reject the gospel of sonship or presume upon the kindness of God, and continue in our sin.

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him

King David spoke about the importance of the fear of the Lord, connected to 'the secret of the Lord'. The message that has been proclaimed by the messenger is 'the mystery of God'. That 'mystery' is also described in the Scriptures as 'the secret of the Lord'.

Do you see the connection between 'mystery' and 'secret'? Something that is a mystery is unable to be known; and a secret is unable to be comprehended, because you can't see it. It is also a mystery.

The Scriptures also call the mystery of God, which is the fellowship of Yahweh, 'the secret of the Lord'. King David said, 'The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him.' Psa 25:14.

So the messenger proclaims the mystery of God. And he exhorts those who receive this message to 'fear God, because you won't comprehend the secret of the Lord without receiving the fear of the Lord'.

'The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will *show them His covenant*.'

Meeting His eyes as a flame of fire; the judgement of God; His jealous love

The fear of the Lord is critical here. Accordingly, the messenger exhorts hearers to fear the Lord as they proclaim *the judgement of God*.

This is the first element of 'the eyes of Christ', which come 'as a flame of fire'. It reveals the judgement of God; that is, the messenger makes God's wrath known to their hearers, on account of the rebellion and sin of mankind.

The key point is that God is completely committed to His covenant plan. It is not that He thinks everyone is miserable, and that they had better know it so that they are scared enough to turn.

The reason why God's wrath burns on everything that is unclean and ungodly is because *His love is a jealous love*.

His *love* tells us that we can't approach Him or join what we are being called to, *unless* we are joined to a process by which we are delivered of our sin and rebellion. If we do come onto that ground with that uncleanness, we will die.

The fear of the Lord is saying, 'You had better know what you are being called to, and what you need to be delivered from, so that you can respond in obedience to that call.'

Looking on Him whom we have pierced; being taught to fear the Lord

Mankind is held accountable by God for the wickedness that has resulted from the Fall, causing pain and destruction both in the natural creation and in our relationships together; the effect of our sin on one another.

Through the word of the cross, which is ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah, a hearer is caused to 'look on Him whom they have pierced'. That is why 'the spirit and power of Elijah' is 'the spirit of grace and supplication'.

Zechariah said, 'I will pour out on them a spirit of grace and supplication, and they will look on Him whom they have pierced.'

The ministry of the messengers causes hearers to look on Christ whom they have pierced. Our heart is pierced and laid bare before the eyes of the Lord.

As we receive this word, we are being exposed before the eyes of the Lord. And the messenger exhorts us, 'Do not draw back in unbelief.'

That is how the messenger is *teaching* us to fear the Lord.

They say, 'You will feel under pressure here, and this will be confronting. Do not draw back in unbelief.' They implore us to continue to receive the word that is uncomfortable initially, but reveals to us the love of God.

They say the very thing that Jesus said. 'Do not fear men but fear God, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.'

'Another' gospel – without the fear of the Lord

The absence of the fear of the Lord causes us to give our ear to words that are not from Christ.

Can you see why Jesus said, 'Do not fear men'? If we do not fear the Lord, we will be afraid of being maligned by men. We will give our ear to it. And we will comply to a different gospel; a different conversation.

If we are engaged in a different conversation from this one, we fear men, and not the Lord.

Another gospel, without the fear of the Lord, causes us to give ear to words that are not from Christ, alleviating us of the need to repent of our uncleanness, and causing to walk in the *presumption* of our own sight.

If we do not fear the Lord, that is what will happen. It becomes a conversation where we say to another, 'Oh, you don't have to do that. No, that's not so bad.'

There is a whole 'other' conversation that calls uncleanness 'good'. It is a lie. It is deception.

When the word does come and bring conviction, *respond to it*. That is the lovingkindness of God ministered through the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Resisting the Holy Spirit; unbelief; drawing back

A person who resists the Holy Spirit at this point does not receive the fear of God, and is unable to *believe* the word of the messenger.

This is because they turn their face from Christ's eyes. Resisting the Holy Spirit is actually *drawing away from Christ's eyes*.

And the messenger is imploring us to 'look on Him whom you have pierced'.

We *resist the Holy Spirit* at this point. This is because we turn our eyes away from the Lord, drawing back from Him when our heart is pierced by the word and our iniquity is revealed to them.

Psalms 36 is an amazing psalm, highlighting this point. 'An oracle within my heart concerning the

transgression of the wicked. There is no fear of God before his eyes.' Psa 36:1.

If we do not receive the fear of the Lord, we will *draw back from His eyes*. Another way of saying it is that we will *not* continue to look 'eye to eye' with Christ.

When we are looking eye to eye with the Lord - remember, the eye is 'the lamp of the body' - it is 'spirit to Spirit'.

'There is no fear of God before his eyes, for he flatters himself in his own eyes.' If we are not looking into the face of Christ, which is a mirror, the only thing that we can receive is *our own reflection*.

'He flatters himself in his own eyes when he finds out his iniquity, and when he hates. The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit. He has ceased to be wise, and to do good. He devises evil on his bed, and he sets himself in a way that is not good. He does not abhor evil.' Psa 36:2-4.

That is the outcome if we don't fear the Lord.

Learning the fear of the Lord

I commend you to the example of Thomas, because Thomas was one who initially did not fear the Lord. He had to *learn* the fear of the Lord.

The disciples said to Thomas, 'We have seen the Lord,' and he said, 'No way. I just do not believe that. I do not believe that the resurrection life of God exists.'

If we do not fear the Lord, we will not believe in resurrection life. And we will seek to avoid all contexts of suffering and death.

Thomas did not believe. Before Thomas was able to believe the gospel, and to be born from above as a son of God, he needed to *learn the fear of the Lord*. He learned this when Jesus confronted Him with the wounds that resulted from His offering journey.

Remember, Christ is 'publicly portrayed as crucified' before His hearers. So a hearer interfaces with the wounds, the disfigurement, the trauma and horror of the cross. And Jesus was portrayed literally in front of Thomas. He said to Thomas, 'Thomas, you come and touch those wounds. Put your hands' - can you imagine that? Jesus had been risen from the dead for not even a day; although it was a couple of days for Thomas,

Jesus said to him, 'Come and put your hand in the effect of that brutality. Come and put your hand in My side. Don't draw back, Thomas. Draw near; so near that you can touch Me.'

The fear of the Lord was being 'instructed' to Thomas so that he would 'embrace' Christ; he would touch Him. Jesus said to him, 'Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' That is saying, 'Receive the faith that I am giving to you now as I am speaking to you.'

'By the same spirit of faith, I believed, and therefore I spoke.'

In this encounter, Thomas *drew near* to the Lord by touching His pierced hands and side. He was able to appreciate the effect of his sin and disbelief on the Lord. He actually was touching the effect of his transgression - '*pierced through* for transgression' - as well as the salvation that the Lord had finished for him.

By this means, Thomas *learned* the fear of the Lord.

The evidence of the fear of the Lord is our confession of the lordship of Christ

Furthermore, he was able to believe for resurrection life by the faith which he had received when Jesus said to him, 'Be believing.'

And we know that, because Thomas's fear - the fear of the Lord - was demonstrated by his confession, 'My Lord and my God.' The evidence of the fear of God is *the confession of the lordship of Christ* in our life. It is submission to His headship: 'My Lord and my God.'

The fear of the Lord is the expression of one's deep appreciation and respect for who Yahweh is. It is demonstrated by the confession of His lordship in our life.

The fear of the Lord is also *a spiritual grace* that motivates a person to press in.

As we receive the fear of the Lord, we do not draw back in unbelief; we *draw in*.

'As they acknowledge the lordship of Christ, they recognise that they violated God's word, and are under the judgement and wrath of God. The fear of the Lord constrains them to accept His purifying initiative towards them so that they can be delivered from their sin and self-centeredness, and can receive the word of truth that defines their participation.'

His prevenient grace gives us the choice to draw near or to draw back

His word that comes, both *ministering faith* and *teaching the fear of the Lord*, is under *the prevenient grace of God*, and it gives every person a *choice*.

The prevenient grace of God gives every person the choice, the freedom, to choose what is proclaimed to them in the word; or to choose their own way. Adam and Eve had this choice before they had 'another law'. They were not motivated by another law to eat the fruit. They did have that choice. It was simply the dignity of their accountability as an identity.

When the word is proclaimed, it gives everyone that same dignity and opportunity. We can, as the word is proclaimed, either draw back or draw near.

The one who draws back has no 'fear of God before their eyes'.

The person who draws near is *learning the fear of the Lord*. It is the Spirit motivating them to draw near.

Drawing back

There are two ways in which we can draw back.

The first is that people draw back because they *stumble*. As the word makes a breach on them, they are confronted by it and they draw back. They draw back, either stumbling because they are offended, in which case they will try to shut down the message and the messenger; or they will draw back because they think that the messenger is 'a goose'.

We know the example of the Jews, who stumbled. When Stephen proclaimed the word, they were 'cut to the heart'. But instead of saying, 'Men and brethren, what must we do?', they rushed on Stephen, and they killed him. They tried to 'shut him down'. We read that they literally shut their ears and tried to stifle the message.

Those who stumble or draw back do so either in that way or because they view the word of the cross as 'foolishness'.

Governor Festus responded in this way with the word of Paul. Paul was brought before Festus and Agrippa, and was sharing the gospel with them. As he came to the highpoint of his ministry, Governor Festus said, with a loud voice, 'Paul,

you are beside yourself. Much learning is driving you mad.'

We also may do this to alleviate the effect of the word of the cross on us. We may malign Christ's messengers as being simple, narrow-minded or even insane.

Within the church, this is probably the more common mode of drawing back. It is the mode of those who judge the message and measure themselves against it.

And that is not the evidence of the fear of the Lord, because it is not submission to the lordship of Christ.

Drawing near

Those who draw near come closer, as Thomas did, and embrace and accept that what they are seeing is true - that they have caused that injury. They see that the effect of their sin has resulted in the loss of their sonship, and has been an injury to Christ.

So they draw near and, at this point, as they fear the Lord, they become *poor in spirit*, because they know that there is nothing that they can do about it. They are completely 'finished'; they are at the end of themselves.

Mourning and repentance

The Holy Spirit convicts the hearer so that they can *mourn*. They are able to mourn and repent because of the insight and conviction that the Holy Spirit is bringing to them. Their heart is 'laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom they must give an account'.

The conviction of the Spirit is that He makes known to them what Jesus' eyes are seeing. That is why they can turn. That is why they can mourn.

And that mourning leads to 'repentance without regret'. They 'mourn alone' for the desolation of their sonship, as they crucified the Son of God through their sin and rebellion.

Blessed with comfort

And they are 'blessed with comfort' as they mourn in this manner.

I love this. If, by the fear of the Lord, we will press in and receive the conviction of the Holy Spirit, as He makes known what Jesus eyes are seeing, and begin to mourn, then, 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

What is the 'comfort' that we receive as we mourn? It is that, in a very tangible and personal way, we are *made aware of the lovingkindness*, or the kindness, of God that *brings salvation*.

This ministers forgiveness and cleansing to us. That is what the 'comfort' is. As we mourn alone, the comfort that comes is the cleansing and forgiveness that we receive.

The lovingkindness and the judgement of the fiery eyes of Christ

So those who fear the Lord and do not draw back from His gaze are shown the kindness of God, which brings salvation to all men.

In this, we recognise that the fiery eyes of the Lord are initially confronting. However, as we do not draw back, the conviction of the Spirit is not just the conviction of our sin; it is now also 'the conviction of righteousness'.

It is also 'the conviction of judgement', that if One died for all then we are dead with Him too. And we see, in the conviction of righteousness, the love of God for us.

The fire that is in His eyes is firstly against our wickedness. And we certainly know that, don't we?

But then, as we do not draw back, we receive comfort, which is that we recognise the love of God for us. That is the love that says, 'Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God.'

The process of being joined to the Light

The kindness of God is not the first illumination that a person receives. The first illumination is not, 'God has done this amazing thing on my behalf.' This is what we have understood.

Rather, the 'first illumination' is to see that God is *Light!*

And when we see that, we recognise that in Him is no darkness. But we see *our* darkness, and that we cannot be in Him.

However, as we do not draw back, but draw near, we receive the forgiveness that is made available on our behalf by the shedding of Christ's blood.

And we join a process by which we are cleansed from that darkness to join that light. That is 'the kindness of God'.

You see, it doesn't begin there; it begins with 'God is Light'. Then we see our darkness. Then we see the *process* by which we can be joined to the light.

Now, if that is not true in us, all that we can do is to *presume on the kindness* of God without the fear of the Lord, which will cause us to continue in our carnality, *presuming on the forgiveness* of God.

True illumination joins us to a process by which we can be delivered of the that which that we need forgiveness for! Otherwise, we will continue to sin and sin and sin.

The grace of God that brings salvation

We read, 'For the grace of God that brings salvation.' Tit 2:11.

This is the prevenient grace of God coming in the ministry of the Spirit, through the spirit and power of Elijah.

'The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts [teaching the fear of the Lord], we should live soberly and righteously and godly in the present age, looking [bringing regeneration; the capacity to see.] for the blessed hope and a glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.' Tit 2:11-14.

That is the mindset of a person who has known the kindness of God. The kindness of God is not presumption of God's forgiveness. It is evident in a person who has received the prevenient grace of God; has received the teaching that teaches us the fear of the Lord; and is denying ungodliness and worldly lusts; and then is being obedient to join a process by which they are able to live soberly, righteously and godly.

Obedience to the word of faith – we believe and 'sell all' for our sonship

A person's obedience to this instruction demonstrates faith, because obedience is only possible by faith, and obedience is in relation to a 'word'.

We cannot be obedient to *ourselves*, can we?

We have to be obedient to a word that comes from outside of ourselves; and *with that word comes faith*. If we are walking in this way, it

demonstrates that we have obtained the faith that came in the message.

A person's obedience to this instruction demonstrates that they have obtained faith to believe for the 'treasure' of sonship - to believe for the treasure of sonship!

It means that we have to give up what is already a 'treasure' to us. And that is *our own way*, isn't it?

We need to not only *see* that, but also to 'sell everything' to get that treasure.

To believe for the treasure of sonship is the same faith that Abraham received when the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Abraham. I am your shield of faith, your exceedingly great reward.'

By this faith, Abraham was illuminated to see the promise of sonship, likened by God to the stars of heaven. And we know that, in that passage, it says, 'When he saw that.' So the promise of sonship is the stars of heaven; that is the 'treasure' of your sonship.

So Abraham received faith. 'Abraham, I am your shield of faith, your exceedingly great reward,' By that faith, Abraham was able to believe for sonship - 'the stars of heaven'; the great treasure.

The very next verse declares, 'And [Abraham] believed God, and it was accounted to him [or reckoned to him] for righteousness.'

He was viewed by God as a son of God, simply by believing what Jesus said to him; believing for that treasure.

Being called 'the friend of God' – believe God

It is amazing that James said that when Abraham was reckoned, or considered, as righteous by God, that God made him His 'friend'.

'And the Scripture was fulfilled, which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.' Jas 2:23.

How beautiful that! If we do not draw back from His eyes, but will draw in to receive the provision for our inclusion in that fellowship, He says, 'You simply have to believe for that sonship, and I call you My friend.'

We are not even born again yet. That is amazing! We have the friendship of God simply because we will *believe His word*. He calls you His friend.

Likewise, a hearer becomes the friend of God when they receive the free gift of righteousness which comes through faith.

What does a friend of God 'look like'? They have received the friendship of God. As a friend of God, they give themselves to 'receive and obey the commands of Christ'. Jesus said, 'You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.'

Now, friendship in Christ is based only on that. Friendship in the body of Christ and in relation to the Lord on any other basis than that, is friendship with the world. If you are a friend of the world, you are 'an enemy of Christ'. These were Jesus' own words. We need to be very clear about what it means to be 'the friend of Christ'.

We see how important the fear of the Lord is, because the fear of the Lord draws us near so that we will let go of our own understanding.

In this regard, it was Abraham's own understanding of God's word that made him anxious and depressed. The Lord came and said, 'Stop being anxious; do not fear. Do not believe by your understanding of the gospel. I am your faith, Abraham. Look now up at the stars and see that treasure.'

When Abraham believed, it was accounted to him for righteousness, and he was the friend of God. That is the same for you and me. We need to let go of other gospels that keep us bound to a different friendship.

As the word of the cross comes, it is not just to 'trouble' these things. It is to *deliver us* to eternal life. If you are an enemy of Christ, you will not have His eternal life. He does not give it to His enemies.

Friendship with Christ is that we *obey His commands*.

Present yourselves; join His fellowship

The *first* command that comes, I would have thought would be 'way down the track'.

The very next command that comes to those who are the friends of God is, 'Present your body a living sacrifice.' I don't know how I missed that - well, because I'm turning and repenting.

But that is the same thing that happened to Abraham. Having been called the friend of God, he then said, 'How will I know I will inherit?' And he was told to come and *join an offering*.

That is the same thing that the messenger says to you and me. When we are joined to Christ and become His friend, the first command we receive is, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, present your bodies a living sacrifice.' 'Come and join the fellowship from which those messengers are proclaiming.'

As the friend of God, the hearer then receives the messenger's exhortation to present themselves as a living sacrifice in the fellowship of Christ's offering, and to recover their obedience as a son. That is the sonship that they have seen as a 'treasure'.

The prophet Elijah demonstrated this very principle. This is the ministry of 'the spirit and power of Elijah', which was exemplified most beautifully by Elijah.

Remember the event where he came up against the 400 prophets of Baal, and he taunted them. That's about the only time we are allowed to tease anyone! And when they had finished cutting themselves and carrying on with their nonsense, what was the first thing that he did?

He repaired the altar of the Lord. He 'defined the ground of offering' where he was to make sacrifice.

And he said to the children of Israel, 'Come near to me. Come near to me as we participate in this sacrifice.' As the people received Elijah's words - this was a command to them; they were to come to him - and joined the fellowship of this offering, they were symbolically cleansed by the water of the word that he poured over the sacrifice and the altar which he had set.

I had always thought that he was pouring the water simply to make a point about how amazing the fire from God was, coming down to 'lick it up'. That water is the same water that comes as 'a fountain for sin and uncleanness', from the side of Christ. How awesome is that!

The altar is being repaired. We are being called to join that. And that water, which is the word, is being poured on that, and it is washing us clean because we are joined to that altar! They were

symbolically *washed clean* by the water of the word that was poured out over the sacrifice and altar.

Furthermore, they were *delivered* from their idolatry. Literally, they were delivered from their idolatry when they killed all of the prophets of Baal. They were delivered from their idolatry, and of the unclean spirits in the land, which had proliferated under the influence of Jezebel.

This is where our cleansing happens, so that we who are in darkness can be *joined to that fellowship of light*.

We are joined to the fellowship of light, even before that process is fully complete. Likewise, as a hearer responds to the messengers who are called to present themselves as a living sacrifice, they are washed by 'the water of the word' which the prophet Zechariah described as 'a fountain for sin and uncleanness'.

That is all the work of a messenger who comes in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Made ready to receive Christ

Now, at this point, no-one is 'born'. They have *seen* Yahweh. They have been drawn to Christ. They have learned the fear of the Lord. They have become the friend of God. And they are beginning to be washed in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings - but they are not born. They have not 'entered' anything yet.

And Christ Himself has not even come yet. This is just 'the messenger before His face'. Once that work is done, the heart of the hearer is ready to *receive Christ Himself*.

The messenger bears witness of the Light, who is Christ

While the messenger bears witness to the light of the gospel, he is not the light. This is a very important distinction to make.

'There was a man sent from God, whose name is John [the spirit and power of Elijah]. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe [All, through Him, might believe!].'

This means that he is ministering faith in the word.

But, 'He was not the light, but he was sent to bear witness to the light. That was the true Light

which gives light to every man coming into the world.' Joh 1:6-9.

Who is that 'Light'? It is Jesus, isn't it? He said, 'I am the Light.' He is the Light of the world. Only He can give the light, which is 'the substance of the life of new creation'.

We have to *meet* Christ, personally. A person obtains this 'substance' when the Spirit of Christ enters their heart.

Interfacing with Christ

From this point, we interface personally with Jesus in four progressive stages

1. The Spirit of Christ Himself enters their heart when He comes to them. A hearer first receives the *adoption* – that is the first effect of the Spirit of Christ entering.
2. Then they receive *regeneration* - that is the second effect of the Spirit of Christ.
3. The third effect is that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Seed, which is the Spirit of Christ, is *germinated* within them.
4. And the fourth implication is that they are *joined to the travail of Christ* through which they are brought to birth, or fruitfulness, as a son of God.

Adoption proclaimed to us

We will now consider the adoption. We see adoption and regeneration as being the end of this prevenient phase.

The believer has been invited to *fellowship* with the messenger; and that fellowship is with the Father and Son. Within the fellowship that is established by the messenger who has been sent by Christ, Christ Himself comes and sows the Seed of their sonship into their heart.

All that has happened before. This is not the sowing of the Seed. This is an important point.

Elijah, John, you and I, as part of that messenger administration, do not sow the Seed. Our job is to *prepare the heart to receive the Seed*.

Jesus sows the Seed.

He does this first by *proclaiming our sonship* to us as adoption. There will be adoption, regeneration, germination, and then travail.

So Christ comes with adoption. In our last session, when I was talking about the Godhead

model, I said that when Jesus emptied Himself and was begotten by the Father, *the fullness of the Father was now in the Son*. So Yahweh Son became the Seed of the Father, and all of the names and life of every son, from the Father, were in Him.

Now, the Spirit of Christ is Him. But another way of saying it is that the Spirit of Christ is the Seed which contains your name and life. The Spirit of Christ is the Seed that Jesus referred to in the parable of the sower and seed.

It is the Seed of a person's name, which goes into the ground. And, when it *germinates*, it brings forth a new name and life.

The important thing to note is that, in the New Covenant, that germination is only possible *by the Holy Spirit*. But it does mean that, under the Old Covenant, they could *receive the adoption*.

The Spirit of Christ could *enter* their heart, but it could not germinate.

So the Son is the expression and image of who they are to become as a son of God.

He has already *finished* our sonship; He has already perfected it; He has fulfilled all the works of it. He is the full expression of our sonship.

And when we receive that, He brings it to us.

He comes into our heart, crying, 'Abba! Father!' This is an amazing point. He does not cry, 'Abba! Father!', personally, to the Father. He cries, 'Abba! Father!', as the cry that will become *your cry* when you are born of that life. *He is the expression of your life*. He comes to you, sowing the Seed into your life, saying, 'Abba! Father!' What He says is what you will say when you are born of that life.

So the first impact of the Spirit of Christ *coming as a Seed* into your heart is Him revealing to you what you will say, or what you will express, *when you are born of God*.

This is the adoption being proclaimed to us.

Although He has come into your heart, He is yet to 'dwell' in your heart.

The distinction between adoption and regeneration

Now, I'm not being playful with words on this. That is a key distinction in the Scriptures.

The Spirit of Christ entered the hearts of the men and women of faith under the Old Covenant, but Jesus did not make *His abode* in those people.

The Seed, the Spirit of Christ, can come into a person, but that brings the adoption; it brings the *promise* of sonship.

But we do not *receive* that sonship until *He dwells in our heart*. There is a difference between Him 'coming in' and Him 'dwelling'.

When He dwells in us, He is 'putting down roots' in our heart. That is *abiding*, isn't it?

I want to clarify this point regarding adoption and regeneration. The ministry of the *adoption* is a feature of *prevenient grace of God*, which is characteristic of 'wayside ground'. Hence, it was observable under the Old Covenant.

This is amazing, and is why it is so important to consider the example of the heroes of faith. Let us consider Moses, for example.

The Lord said to him, 'You have found grace in My sight.' That is the *prevenient grace* of God. It is the lovingkindness of God coming from the fellowship of Yahweh.

'You have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.' Exo 33:17. Through that *prevenient grace* of God, Moses had received the adoption, which was the Seed of his name.

But he was not 'born' of it.

A son of God, entitled to the inheritance of His house

However, he could *see it from afar*. This is the key point.

Within this dimension of God's *prevenient grace*, a person who has received the *adoption* has *become a son in God's house*.

If you are a son, you are *entitled to the inheritance* that belongs to that house. So, as an adopted son, we are brought into His house and we are *entitled* to the inheritance, which is a great treasure.

But we don't *have* the treasure yet. We are 'entitled' to it.

Under the Old Covenant, they saw this treasure from afar. They counted that treasure much better than the treasure of Egypt.

Moses had been illuminated, hadn't he? He had the adoption. So he was entitled to the inheritance that belongs to the Son.

This inheritance is the promise of the divine nature. It is the promise of the Spirit, through faith, that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith. That is awesome!

We have the adoption

You and I *have* the *adoption*. And we *are obtaining* the *promise* of the divine nature.

That is why we are 'greater than John'. John had the adoption, and he proclaimed, or bore witness, to the Light.

We actually *have* the treasure.

But if we want it, we have to go and *sell everything to get it!*

And what do we have to buy? We buy the 'ground' that the treasure is in.

We buy the *fellowship* to have the treasure that is our entitlement as a son of God.

Jesus said this when He came. This is what John said about the ministry of Jesus before He ascended to heaven.

'As many as received Him [the Spirit of Christ, coming in His word as a Seed] but as many as received Him, He gave them the right to become a son of God.'

That 'right' is the adoption. As many as received Him, received the adoption.

Being born again

But, when we are delivered from our own understanding, and we are allowing this *regeneration* process to happen within us, which is by the Spirit of Christ, that Seed *germinates* within us by the work of the Holy Spirit, and we are *born again*.

And we get the treasure promised in the *adoption*.

I trust that we will continue in fellowship as we now eat in our houses together.