

# Demonstrating the fruit of sonship

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## All the nations will mourn

After Christ had yielded His Spirit to the Father and died on the cross, His side was pierced with a soldier's spear. Joh 19:34. A spirit of grace and supplication was poured out from Christ's heart upon the house of David. Zec 12:10. These were the Jews and inhabitants of Jerusalem who witnessed His crucifixion. Grace and supplication gave to them illumination so that they understood that they had crucified the Lord of glory, their Saviour. The conviction of their sin enabled them to mourn in repentance, to become bankrupt in spirit, and to find forgiveness and cleansing from sin. Luk 23:48.

Christ was raised from the dead by resurrection life, and then ascended to the right hand of the Father. Rom 8:34. Eph 1:19-23. As our Melchizedek High Priest, *He continues His ministry from the cross* to subsequent generations of humanity, through the power of Eternal Spirit. This ministry will continue until the end of the age. The apostle John made this point when he said, 'Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And *all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him*. Even so, Amen.' Rev 1:7.

In the book of Revelation, John observed that Christ, as Melchizedek, is *currently* dressed in the priestly garments of a servant-priest. Rev 1:13. These are the *same garments* that He wore when He offered Himself to God as a living sacrifice during His journey from the last Passover until His work, on our account, was finished on the cross. The eschatology of the cross, which is the content of the book of Revelation, reveals that Jesus is continuing to priest to us the finished work that He has already accomplished on the cross for us.

As our great High Priest, Jesus, who is now living with God the Father in heaven, continues His priestly ministry as our Advocate by making intercession to the Father on our account. 1Jn 2:1. Heb 7:25. Further to this, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ joins us in fellowship with Himself to His offering. He then makes the benefits of His offering available to us as we abide in Him and receive His life by eating and drinking the elements of the communion meal. Joh 6:54-56. Christ's ministry will continue until the prophetic word concerning every individual is accomplished. When this happens, time as we know it, will come to an end. As we noted in Part 6 of *The Steps of Salvation*, the word as a sword defines two prophetic destinies, which are written in the Scriptures, for each individual.

Christ, dressed in the garments of a servant-priest, is now standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands. Rev 1:12-13. While on the cross, Christ personally poured out grace and supplication on the house of David. However, it is now ministered from the cross through the word of His messengers, who are part of a lampstand church administration. Illumination is being brought to all the nations of the earth through this administration.

The word of the cross is preached and portrayed to all mankind by those who now *handle* the word of life. 1Jn 1:1. These are messengers whom Christ described as ‘stars’ in His right hand. Each star is a messenger administration that belongs to a lampstand church. Rev 1:20.

A messenger of Christ handles the divine nature by demonstrating, in himself, the dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2Co 4:10. As they minister this way, Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified among those to whom they are sent with the message of sonship. Gal 3:1. Those who receive the ministry of Christ’s messengers also receive from them the spirit of grace and supplication that Christ made available when He died on the cross.

## The writings of John

On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Peter questioned Jesus concerning the pathway and works that had been prepared for his fellow disciple, John. Jesus responded, saying, ‘If I will that he remain till I come [a second time], what is that to you?’ Joh 21:22. John himself explained that Jesus did not mean that he would not die before the second coming of Christ. Joh 21:23. Nevertheless, John *did* see the second coming of Christ. He was able to see this because he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day. Rev 1:10.

In the Spirit, John received Christ who came to Him as the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the First and the Last. Rev 1:11. Moreover, he was connected to the ministry of Christ that would continue until Christ’s second coming at the end of the age. John saw this in the Spirit, testifying, ‘Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand”.’ Rev 22:8-10.

The apostle John wrote his Gospel, his three epistles, and the book of Revelation (the last four books of the Bible), in response to Christ’s direction, ‘Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.’ Rev 1:19. Through his writings, John, and those who were part of a presbytery with him, were to proclaim the gospel of sonship, which is the word of the cross. By this means, Christ is coming with clouds to reward everyone according to their works. Rev 22:12-13.

*The Gospel of John* is ‘the word from the beginning’ which was proclaimed, demonstrated and personified by Christ. Joh 1:1-2. Through his Gospel, John bore witness to the Word made flesh, and testified to us of Christ’s ministry on the earth. Joh 1:14-15. These were the things that John had ‘seen’.

*John’s epistles* are the word that is proclaimed by those whom Jesus identified as star messengers in His hand. Rev 1:20. This word is the gospel message that should be proclaimed throughout the church age by presbyteries that are in the right hand of Christ. John’s epistles were his crystallisation and clarification of the gospel. They are ‘the things that are’.

*The book of Revelation* is the eschatology of the cross. It reveals the way in which Christians among the Gentile nations are to live together as sons of God as He brings to pass His Everlasting Covenant purpose in the church. These are ‘the things which will take place after this’.

## Abiding in the light

The apostle John introduces his epistle by telling us that he is part of a presbytery.

1Jn 1:1. A presbytery is symbolised by John, in the book of Revelation, as a shining star that is ministering among the churches from the right hand of Christ. Rev 1:20. From this position, John invites us to receive the word of God that he is proclaiming to us. We will then be able to have fellowship with him and the presbytery, and with the Father and the Son. 1Jn 1:3.

In his epistle, John tells us that God is light. 1Jn 1:5. God is making Himself known to us. He is revealing Himself to us so that we may have eternal life. If we are to have eternal life, we must come to Him who is the Light. We must abide in, and live by, the light. John then tells us that this light is also the fellowship of God, and that fellowship is the expression of love. 1Jn 2:10. It is only in this fellowship that we can practise the truth, for in this fellowship there is no darkness at all. 1Jn 1:5-6. God is love and, as we keep His word, the love of God is being perfected in us. 1Jn 2:5.

We fellowship with God in the light when we practise the truth by fellowshiping with one another. As we fellowship with one another, we are given access to the life of God, which is in the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The blood of Christ, then, begins to cleanse us from all sin. 1Jn 1:7.

Participating together in a communion meal is an action of fellowship that joins us to the offering of Christ. 1Co 10:16. Christ is the Bread of God which came down from heaven. Joh 6:51. When we eat His flesh, and drink His blood, we abide in Him and have eternal life. Jesus said, 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.' Joh 6:56-57.

The fruit of fellowship is that the love of God is perfected in us. When this is happening, we know and are assured that we are in Christ. 1Jn 2:5. John then expanded the meaning of fellowship, incorporating it into the concept of abiding in Christ. 1Jn 2:6. The confession of a true Christian is their declaration that they abide in Christ. They are saying that they are always in union with Christ because they dwell in Him.

The theme of 'abiding' was then developed by John in all of its aspects so that we may appropriate the eternal dimension of God's life. When he referred to 'abiding in Christ', John was explaining to us the substance of eternal life. Those who abide in Christ have eternal life. Joh 6:54-56.

## The fruit of sonship

Those who are born of God demonstrate the fruit of sonship. The fruit of sonship is the fruit of the Spirit. This fruit is the light of God's life that gives us true sight. It replaces the darkness of our own fallen perspectives and judgements, which are sourced from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Our own sight, which is darkness, has no substance or veracity. It is deluded. It is the sight that resulted from believing the lie of Satan, who said that we could be 'like God', and have life in ourselves, without being 'born of God'. Gen 3:4-7.

Our self-protecting mechanisms and our offensive reactions demonstrate that we are walking according to the darkness of our own sight. In this condition, we view ourselves as the victims of the contrary circumstances that we inherited when we were wounded

and made lame through Adam's disobedience. Rom 5:12. We recognise that we have the sentence of death in ourselves, and are afraid. If we live in darkness, we can trust only in ourselves.

The first light that God sends to us, and causes to dawn in our lives, is the word that declares that we do not need to fear, and do not need to trust in ourselves. Mar 5:36. 2Co 1:9. Our own resources and natural capacities are not sufficient to save us from death. However, Yahweh has made an offering for us. Through God's messengers, we are invited to accept God's offer to save us and to raise us from the dead with Christ. The Father has the power to raise the dead. 2Co 1:9.

Jesus said that when He returned to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit to us. He described the Holy Spirit as 'another Helper' and 'the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him'. Joh 14:16. The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring to our attention the things that Christ continues to teach us as the word of present truth. Joh 14:26. For this reason, Jesus Himself admonishes us to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Rev 2:7.

The substance of what Christ teaches is brought to us by the Spirit as fruit that we are to eat. The fruit that the Holy Spirit feeds to us, and then receives from us, are the variegations of the love of God. Eph 3:17-19. The expression and character of God's love that we have received are revealed by us as 'joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control'. Gal 5:22-23. These fruits of the Spirit are the character and cultural expression of a son of God.

The old commandment that Christ speaks to us through His messengers is the word from the beginning. As this commandment is being fulfilled in us by the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is revealed through us. That is, the word from beginning, which is the demonstration of the love that reveals who God is, is being revealed in us. The apostle John called this reality 'the new commandment'. 1Jn 2:8.

John explained that when we receive and believe the word from the beginning, which the Father sends to us as light, it illuminates our lives. We are being delivered from the darkness of our fallen perspective and our self-preserving mechanisms. 1Jn 2:8. As we noted earlier, when we receive the word that brings light, we *abide* in fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The Son then sends to us the Holy Spirit who teaches us to abide in Christ. 1Jn 2:27. We abide in Christ by eating the flesh of Christ and drinking His blood. Joh 6:56. The Holy Spirit feeds us with the substance and life that belongs to the new humanity. The new humanity is all those who are becoming sons of God in Christ.

The Holy Spirit brings to us the substance of the divine nature. He causes us to be born of the divine nature. This is what it means to be 'born of the Spirit'. When we are born of the Spirit, our bodies become a temple of the Holy Spirit. 1Co 6:19. We become a temple in which the Holy Spirit worships the Father and Son in fellowship with, and through, us.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit's worship in us is the expression of the divine nature of a son of God, in and through us. This is what the apostle John meant when he said, 'But you have an unction from the Holy One [Jesus Christ], and you know all things.' 1Jn 2:20. Because of this anointing, we have no need for anyone to teach us. 1Jn 2:27. What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to teach us all things? It means that He is the full expression of the divine nature within us, giving expression to our identity as a son of God in Christ.