

A BANNER TO THE NATIONS – BAPTISM PART 3

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 27 March 2022
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Introduction

In our last session, we understood that baptism into Christ is the expression of one's *faith for fellowship in His death, burial and resurrection*.

We also considered that the *death and resurrection* of Christ are the two key aspects of Christ's offering journey from Gethsemane to Calvary. We obtain the salvation that He pioneered for us through His offering journey.

This salvation includes our *deliverance from iniquity and sin*, and the *fulfilment of the works that belong to our sonship*, as we are conformed to His death.

We took some time to explain the difference between *our* death because of disobedience under 'the curse of the Law', and *Christ's* death, through which this pathway of salvation, was uniquely pioneered for each of us.

We obtain salvation as we are conformed to His death as a way of living

The point is that we obtain this salvation as we are *conformed to His death*.

Paul made the point that this is a walk, or a way of living, for a son of God. Rom 6:3-4.

Christ finished judgement and our works

At the conclusion of Christ's offering journey, as He was lifted up on the cross, Jesus Christ was the full *revelation of God's curse* on the sin and death of all mankind.

Furthermore, He was equally the full *revelation of every person's sonship*, as part of the Father's house.

This is the beautiful point that He made 'all alive'.

He *finished* and experienced the *judgement* that belongs to every one of us because of sin.

He also *finished* and fulfilled the *works* that belong to our sonship for eternity, as sons of God.

Both of these realities were revealed at the conclusion of His offering journey.

The new heavens and new earth - sons of God as new creation

We concluded our last session by noting Isaiah's summary statement of this finished work. Christ

said, revealing the Father, 'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.'

This is 'all things made new'.

The new heavens and new earth will be the context, or the dwelling place, of the sons of God who are part of the new creation. This is one dimension of Christ's finished work that was revealed on the cross.

Creation has passed into the sea of God's forgetfulness

'For behold, I create new heavens and new earth, and the former *shall not be remembered or come to mind*.' Isa 65: 17.

The second aspect of Christ's finished offering is that the whole creation has passed into the sea of God's forgetfulness.

Creation is under the judgement of God the Father, and it is confined to the lake of fire.

The new heavens and earth revealed on the cross

Isaiah picked up both aspects of Christ's finished work. 'I create new heavens and earth, and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create. For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy.' Isa 65:17-18.

Everything that belongs to the new heavens and earth, or the citizenship of those who are part of the new heavens and earth, is Jerusalem - a New Jerusalem, which He has created. This is what was being revealed by Christ on the cross. This is the New Jerusalem at the conclusion of His offering journey.

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John also described the creation of the New Jerusalem, through Christ's offering on the cross.

This is an amazing point, because Revelation Chapters 21 and 22 not only discuss the final element of the prophetic destiny of mankind; they actually refer to the reality, today - in the church age.

Isaiah proclaimed, 'For behold, I create a new heavens and earth.'

And John saw what was created from the cross. 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.' Rev 21:1.

John was quoting from Isaiah in this passage. This is exactly the same picture.

The Father fashioned the church from the physical body of Christ to become His bride

'Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem [this is the one that has been created], coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.' Rev 21:1-2.

This New Jerusalem is described as a bride that was prepared for Christ. We have previously considered that the marriage between Christ and the church happened on the day of His crucifixion.

The Father fashioned the church, from the physical body of Christ, to become His bride.

This was foreshadowed by the formation of woman from the rib, or side, of Adam to be his wife.

Christ's body on the cross was literally *pierced*. His side was pierced, and blood and water flowed from His side.

In this, the Father was creating, or forming, a bride from the body of Christ, in the same way that Adam was put into a deep sleep, and a rib was taken from his side, forming woman. Moses said, 'She was formed to become the wife of Adam.'

We see that when Jesus' side was opened, it was the point at which a bride was prepared for Christ.

Isn't that simply amazing? We can see that this picture, which Isaiah and John saw, of this New Jerusalem, who is a bride adorned, actually happened at the cross.

The twelve foundations - the twelve apostles first manifest on the day of Pentecost

This 'city', which is coming down out of heaven with *twelve foundations*, which are the apostles of the Lamb, was first manifest as a helper in Christ's work of bringing forth sons of God, on the Day of Pentecost.

They were not the *apostles* until they had been filled with the Holy Spirit. On that day, they went out and began to proclaim the gospel, through which thousands of people were born of God, and entered this 'city'.

We know that the twelve foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem are the twelve apostles, because that is almost word for word what is written in the book of Revelation.

'Now, the wall of the city had *twelve foundations*, and on them were the names of the *twelve apostles of the Lamb*.' Rev 21:14. Those twelve apostles of the Lamb were first manifest on the Day of Pentecost.

Jesus' death reveals the finished work of righteousness and of judgement

We also remember that, on that day, three thousand people were born of God and baptised into Christ.

The point to note is that we are connecting *baptism* into the death that Jesus died.

The conclusion of the death that Jesus died reveals both the finished work, in terms of the expression of sonship, or the bringing forth of the *righteousness* of the sons of God; and the finished work of *judgement* that belongs to those who resist or reject the word of the cross.

This revelation revealed a city called 'the New Jerusalem', which is the 'bride' of which we are to be a citizen.

The only entry to the New Jerusalem - fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ; the culture of God

The point to note is *how we are a person* who is a citizen of the New Jerusalem, or this heavenly city which is coming down from above; or you could say, 'has its dwelling place in heavenly places'.

A person is not a part of this city, nor are they able to participate in the work of bringing forth sons of God - either sons of God in their own house, or in the proclamation of the gospel as an evangelistic initiative - if they are not *baptised into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

Our only entry to that city is fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ. It is equally true that if a person has been baptised into Christ, they will *maintain their participation* in the *culture* that belongs to that city.

The mark of their citizenship is not a position or a self-nomination, or even a nomination imposed by another; it is demonstrated by *fruit*. It is evident in the way that a person lives that they *belong to that city*.

The *agape* meal is the cultural statement of all the citizens of the New Jerusalem

If a person has been baptised into Christ, they will maintain their participation in the culture of the city, which is the *agape* meal.

That *agape* meal consists of four elements. These are the elements that were established among the people after the Day of Pentecost which are fourfold.

The first is *the apostles' doctrine*. When we refer to 'the apostles' doctrine', we are referring to *the word of present truth* proclaimed from the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit.

The second foundation is *fellowship*. This is the fellowship of the presbytery that the apostle John spoke of in the opening of his first epistle.

The third element is *the breaking of bread*. This is hospitality that we share, from house to house, with one another. We are caring for one another, and we are able to be ministers of the life of God to one another.

The fourth element is *prayers*.

The fruit of the tree of life provides the food for the *agape* meal

The reason why the *agape* meal is the cultural statement of all the citizens who belong to the New Jerusalem, having been baptised into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is because, in the midst of the city, is *the tree of life*.

It's important to note that the *fruit* of the tree of life provides the food for the *agape* meal.

If those foundations of the *agape* meal are not the cultural expression of your life, or of the life of your house, it means that you are not eating from the fruit of the tree of life, which means that you are not part of the New Jerusalem.

Of course, the opposite is true, which is a great statement for us. We know this, because Jesus said to the presbytery of Ephesus that, if they overcame the loss of first love, which is *agape*, they would have the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

This is what he said to the church, two thousand years ago. He said, 'You have the right to eat from that tree, which is in the midst of the city, if you return to *agape* as the culture of your faith community, or church, and your houses.'

Jesus lifted up on the cross - 'a banner to the whole world'

We will continue the theme of 'Christ lifted up', revealing the two finished realities of His offering, which was once, and for all time. The prophetic Scriptures describe this dual implication of Christ's crucifixion as 'a banner that is lifted up'.

Jesus was lifted up on the cross, fully revealing the righteousness of God - that is the *sonship* that belongs to each of us; and also revealing the *judgement* of God, which is the passing away of the old creation.

The prophetic Scriptures describe this imagery of Jesus lifted up on the cross as 'a banner to the whole world'. When that banner is lifted up, every person is drawn to it. No-one is able to escape that finished work of Christ.

'He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, and will whistle to them from the ends of the earth, and surely they shall come with speed, swiftly.' Isa 5:26.

A banner is lifted up. It goes out to the four corners of the earth, and *everyone* has been drawn to this banner.

Again, referring to this banner, Isaiah noted, 'And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse [Jesus Christ], who shall stand [or be lifted up] as a banner to the people ['the people' refers to the Jews]. For the Gentiles shall seek Him [Jew and Gentile, now in one body. He is lifted up, or standing, as a banner to the people] and His resting place shall be glorious.' Isa 11:10-11.

Christ lifted up by the word of the cross being proclaimed

The banner, of course, is *Christ*.

He is lifted up to the whole world through the word of the cross that is proclaimed by those through whom Christ is 'publicly portrayed as crucified' to their hearers. That is the work of a *messenger*.

It is not only the proclamation of the theology of the cross. It is also the *demonstration* of the cross through the word that is being proclaimed by a

person who is living in *the fellowship of Christ's death, burial and resurrection*.

That is how He is portrayed as crucified among those whom they are speaking.

The word 'banner' is the word of the cross that is proclaimed by those through whom 'Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified' to their hearers. That was Paul's testimony. Gal 3:1.

When a person rejects that word, they are choosing to be forgotten by God

Those who reject this word, and the fellowship it establishes, are appointed their place with the unbelievers. That is, they are passing away and forgotten.

As the word of the cross comes, Christ is publicly portrayed as crucified. When that word is rejected, their 'portion', which they are choosing because of the way that they are interfacing with the word of the cross, is that they are *forgotten by God*.

This is because they are pursuing the right to be *the source of their own life and destiny*.

That brings them under the curse of the Law, which Christ fully finished and satisfied, and their portion is what He is satisfied in judgement.

The word of the cross is a two-edged sword, cutting some in, and cutting some out

The prophet Isaiah discussed this implication of *response* to the word of the cross. When he referred to 'a sword', he was referring to 'the word of the cross that is proceeding from the mouth of Christ'.

It is a two-edged sword, and it cuts in those who respond to the word and are being delivered from sin and the other law.

However, it is, also, on the other side, cutting those out, or appointing a person to judgement, because of their *rejection of the word*.

His sword is 'bathed in heaven'

'For My sword [the word that's proceeds from Christ's mouth] shall be *bathed in heaven*.' Isa 34:5.

'Bathed in heaven' refers to that which is lifted up to heavenly places. This is the prophetic word that is being proclaimed from Christ's mouth.

This 'sword bathed in heaven', which is *prophecy*, is *the testimony of Jesus*.

The testimony of Jesus is what He testifies from His *offering*. That sword, or word, is proclaimed from His offering.

Isaiah said that the 'sword shall be bathed in heaven; indeed, it shall come down on Edom [referring to the people who belong to Esau, as a picture of the world], it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse for judgement.' Isa 34:5.

That word which is coming - a sword bathed in heaven - appoints those people to the lake of fire.

His glittering sword belonging to the *aggelos*

This sword is also referred to in the song of Moses. This is simply amazing. Moses sang this prophetic song.

This song will also be sung in the time of the end.

Moses sang a prophetic song and it was the word of the Lord to the people. He said, 'If I whet my glittering sword.' Deu 32:41.

That term, 'glittering sword', literally means 'lightning sword'.

The word coming from His mouth, the word of the cross, is a sword. And it comes as 'flashings of lightning'. This is the ministry of an *aggelos*, isn't it?

Atonement is not only cleansing from sin, but also being made one with Him

'If I whet My glittering sword [lightning sword] and My hand takes hold on judgement, I will render vengeance to My enemies [they are apportioned to judgement], and repay those who hate Me.

'I will make My arrows drunk with blood and My sword will devour flesh with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy. Rejoice, O Gentiles, and His people [Jew and Gentile, in one body], for He will avenge the blood of His servants and render vengeance to His adversaries, He will provide atonement for His land and for His people.' Deu 32:41-43.

That is the second element of the cross; the other side of the sword, if you like. Atonement does not mean only cleansing from sin. Atonement means being *made one with Him*.

Believers are cleansed from their sin, born of God, and joined to the fellowship of Yahweh to which

they were predestined as part of the Everlasting Covenant.

Further, those who *mourn* in response to the word of the cross are obtaining this atonement.

Those who mourn in response to the word of the cross find repentance, because godly sorrow is leading to repentance.

And they *obtain faith*. This is the faith that comes by hearing that word. By this faith, they are able to believe for their participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

His rest - the glorious resting place revealed by the banner lifted up to the world; our inheritance of sonship

Jesus said, 'If you will be yoked to Me and to the fellowship of My offering and sufferings, what will you find? You will find rest for your souls.' Mat 11:28-30.

This 'rest' is the glorious resting place that is revealed by the banner lifted up to the world.

He said that 'in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people, for the Gentiles shall seek Him and His resting place will be glorious'.

If we are believing for our participation in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, we are finding that rest for our souls.

This glorious resting place, revealed by the banner lifted up to the world, is the inheritance of sonship that belongs to each person in the body of Christ.

When the Scriptures refer to 'rest', it refers to those who have entered *the land of their inheritance*. They have obtained their *sonship*, which was predestined for them by the Father. Isn't that a beautiful statement? This is 'the banner lifted up'.

The banner, in relation to the curse of God, was revealed to the prophet Zechariah as 'a flying scroll that was twenty cubits in length and ten cubits wide'.

We have discussed Isaiah revealing 'a new heavens and earth', and the old one passing away, in Christ lifted up.

Then we moved to understand that that statement, or that reality, is described 'as a banner lifted up to the whole world'.

'The flying scroll', a curse, goes over the whole earth

Then Zechariah described this prophetic imagery of a banner as 'a flying scroll'.

'Then I turned and raised my eyes.' Zec 5:1. That is beautiful, isn't it? This was an illumination being obtained. He turned in repentance, and was then able to *see* something.

'Then I turned and raised my eyes and there saw a flying scroll. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I answered, "I *see* a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits, and its width ten cubits."

'Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth"' Zec 5: 1-3.

This is our connection point between 'the flying scroll' and 'the banner lifted up'.

Isaiah said that 'the banner it is lifted up to the nations from afar'. This 'flying scroll', which describes a curse, goes out over the face of *the whole earth* in the same way that 'the banner lifted up' proclaims a message to nations from afar.

Do you see the *connection* between 'the banner lifted up' and the cursing element of this 'flying scroll'? This is what is written on the scroll. This is a curse that is going out over the face of the whole earth.

Every thief and every perjurer will be expelled from the city of blessing

'Every thief shall be expelled, according to this side of the scroll.'

A 'thief' is one who is in bondage to the law of sin. They fight and compete for the limited resource of *life*. They covet life, and they steal it from others through all sorts of interpersonal strategies.

'Every thief shall be expelled.' Where are they being expelled from? They are expelled from the *city* where the blessing is. This is the city that only the living are in.

'Every thief shall be expelled according to this side of the scroll.' That means that they will be *forgotten*. They will be sent out.

'Every thief shall be expelled,' according to this side of the scroll, and 'Every perjurer shall be expelled.' Zec 5:3.

What is a perjurer? A perjurer is a person who has lied under oath. They have sworn falsely. They are a liar, yes, but they have also *lied under oath*.

“I will send out the curse,” says the Lord of hosts, “it shall enter the house of the thief, and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name [the perjurer]. And it shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it, with its timber and stones.” Zec 5:4.

A couple of things happened there. First, it comes into the house. It then *remains* in the midst of the house. Then it *consumes* it right down to its very foundation.

The prophetic significance of the dimensions of the scroll

Before we consider this curse in more detail, as well as its impact, it is important that we recognise that the dimensions of the scroll have a prophetic significance.

The dimensions of the scroll were twenty cubits by ten cubits. These are the same dimensions as *the porch of Solomon’s temple*.

‘The vestibule [the porch, or doorway] in front of the sanctuary of the house was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the width of the vestibule extended ten cubits from the front of the house.’ 1Ki 6:3.

Those of you who know the schematics of the tabernacle will know that there were two sections of the tabernacle - the most holy place, and the holy place.

When Solomon built the temple, he had a doorway into the holy place. That doorway was called ‘Solomon’s Porch’. It was like an entryway to the house. It was the ground in front of the gate of entry into the holy place, or the sanctuary. That entryway into the sanctuary was twenty cubits by ten cubits.

When Zechariah saw this flying scroll, the implications of what was written on that scroll have to do what happens on that porch. The porch is an *entryway* into the sanctuary. And that sanctuary is actually the *city* itself, the New Jerusalem, the temple of the body of Christ.

There is a point of decision depending on how that flying scroll is revealed, right on that porch.

You either gain *access* into the sanctuary; or you find yourself *outside*, or expelled, because of what is written in this statement.

This is amazing. This is the ground of decision. It is like coming to the foot of the cross, isn’t it?

The Lord, through Zechariah, was proclaiming the word that determines whether a person gains entry into the holy place of the temple or whether they are excluded.

This flying scroll, with the curse, draws a person to that ground. Then, depending on how they receive this flying scroll, which is like ‘the banner lifted up’, which is like ‘a sword made in heaven’, they will either gain entry or will be excluded.

The *curse* is the implication of rejecting the word that otherwise births a person ‘from above’, and establishes them in fellowship with Christ as *part of a lampstand church*.

The connection between a lampstand church, and entry into the sanctuary

How do we arrive at the connection between ‘a lampstand church’ and ‘entry into the sanctuary’?

Paul described the church as ‘the temple of Christ’s body’. Col 1:18,24.

Thus, if we are to have entry into the church, we are granted *entry by being built into the temple of His body*.

Entering or remaining outside the city

Do you see that *how you receive the word* that is proclaiming a curse will either include you or exclude you?

You will gain entry into the church, which is the temple of His body, the New Jerusalem which is coming down from heaven; or you will be outside the city.

The implications of receiving this ‘flying scroll’ are also depicted in the book of Revelation. Rev 22:14-15. The apostle John wrote, ‘Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they might have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates into the city’.

This is the scroll *drawing* us to the threshing floor of the gates. We need to do the commands that are written in this scroll. Those ‘commands’ are actually *the word of present truth*.

The temple is the whole of the city, the New Jerusalem, as we explained before. The temple is the church, and the church is the bride city called 'the New Jerusalem'.

John went on, 'But outside are the dogs and sorcerers.' Rev 22:15. These are people who are oppressed by unclean spirits, and even possessed by unclean spirits.

'But outside are the dogs and sorcerers, and sexually immoral, and murderers and idolaters and everyone who loves and practises a lie.' These are perjurers.

The New Jerusalem that is now – the bride city established on the day of Christ's crucifixion

I always understood Revelation 22 as belonging to the whole of the old creation having passed away, and that this is a picture of what the new heavens and new earth will be like.

However, John was not referring to Jerusalem in the new heavens and earth. He was speaking of the bride city that was *established on the day of Christ's crucifixion*, which was first *manifest* as the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven on the day of Pentecost. This is the church, the temple of His body

And, in this passage John was speaking to every generation of the church.

How do we know that? We know this because John distinguished between those who were *in* the city, and the dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, liars who were *outside* this city.

In the new heavens and earth, there will be no dogs, sorcerers, idolaters, liars outside the city. They will be in the lake of fire and completely forgotten. This is a context where those people still have an expression, but are not part of the bride city.

There is another clear statement that affirms this point that John was describing the new Jerusalem that is *now*. Heb 12:22-23.

'But you are come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.' Remember, this is the Jerusalem that is 'adorned as a bride coming out of heaven'

'But you are come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven.'

This is the implication of the curse, and John was saying that, depending on how you *receive the commandments*, which are the words written on the 'scroll', you either have entrance into the city where you have the right to the tree of life, which means you are participating in an *agape* meal; or you will be outside of the city and numbered among those who are described as dogs, sorcerers, sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, and everyone who practises a lie. This is everyone who lives by a *projection*.

Everyone is suffering the curse of the Law, and are finishing it

Let us look further at the effect of this curse, and return to the content of the second half of Zechariah's prophecy. We have established the fact that it is drawing our attention to this curse and the implications of how we receive it.

We recognise that the curse that the Lord proclaimed as a scroll is 'the curse of the Law'. *Everyone* is already under the curse of the Law.

Jesus gathered up all suffering that is associated with the curse of the Law as judgement, and He has suffered it, and finished it.

And now *everyone* is suffering it, and finishing it, in Him - whether they are in Him as those who are *born of God and are joined to the fellowship of His sufferings*; or are suffering it as part of the body of sin, which is going out as a consequence, or an outcome, of His circumcision.

It does not matter which response they make, but this curse is the curse of the Law upon them now, being proclaimed to them from the cross. The curse is the curse of the Law, and it is causing sickness, fatigue and death.

How do we know that? We read that it will 'come into the house and consume it'. It is as though a person's 'house' is being eaten up and no longer has structure.

The blessing of Abraham and the curse both belong to each individual and family

This is the effect of sin and death in our body and spirit - our *individual* 'house'.

But it also refers to the effect of this curse in our households or in our families, because the blessing, which is the other side of the cross - the blessing of Abraham - is to *every family of the earth*.

In the same way that the *blessing* belongs to an individual and to a family, because He puts every individual in families, the *curse* also belongs to every individual, but also to every family.

The curse entering a house refers to both the 'house' of our physical body, and to the 'house' that delineates the context in which our family lives.

The point on families is straightforward.

And then Paul himself called our physical, mortal body 'a house'. 'For we know that if our earthly house [which the curse touches], this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' 2Co 5:1.

This is true for those whose citizenship belongs to New Jerusalem coming out of heaven - not to the natural Jerusalem, which is Sodom and Gomorrah

'For in this we groan.' A person who is 'groaning' is a person who is *conformed to Christ's death*. That is why they are groaning. They are experiencing the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

'For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.'

'Now He has prepared us for this very thing is God [or the Father], and has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.' 2Co 5:2-5.

The curse enters the house and consumes it
Zechariah proclaimed, concerning the curse, 'It shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name. It shall remain in the midst of His house and consume it, with its timber and stones.' Zec 5:4.

Where our lives individually, and as families, are being consumed in this manner, they are being eaten away and are coming to nothing. It

indicates that the curse is in our lives because we are a thief or a perjurer.

A 'thief' covets life and takes it from another
A 'thief' is someone who covets life, and looks to take life from others by empowerment; by using them; by seeking to draw people to themselves to *validate their own identity*.

They are motivated by the other law within them, which is bringing them into bondage to the law of sin. And, by the law of sin, they seek to obtain life at the expense of others.

They may not think that they are doing it at the expense of others but, wherever their validity and expression depends on *affirmation* from another or on their *connection* with another, they are *using* that person for their own validation.

That is the evidence that they are not participating in the culture of the city, and are outside as a thief or a murderer.

Their validation is not found in the tree of life through the word.

A 'murderer' steals life from someone else
A murderer is simply a person who steals life from someone else.

In terms of lying, they are a 'perjurer'. They swear falsely. There are a lot of implications of this, but two that I wanted to lean on today. One of them is projection.

Determining your own life - a projection, a lie

If you are living from the basis of your own sense of your right to be the determiner of your own life and destiny, you will communicate with, or engage in, life on the basis of a *projection*.

That projection is not *true*. It is not who the Father, who is the source of all truth, has *named* you to be. Everything that you are communicating that is not consistent with your name, which is only found in fellowship, is a lie; it is a projection.

A perjurer - swearing falsely in the covenant of marriage

The other element that I want to touch on in relation to *swearing falsely* has to do with the covenant of our marriage because, remember, we make *vows* before God when we marry.

They are a 'swearing', if you like, in relation to our commitment to *the culture that belongs to the Father's house*.

Where, in our marriage, we are not committed to *reformation* to the culture that is defined by the tree of life – that is, bringing the conversation of our marriage and our family to the tree of life – we are swearing falsely, and are becoming a perjurer.

I am not saying that everyone's marriage has to be 'perfect'. But I am saying that we are to *walk blamelessly*.

This means that we are committed to a process by which we are putting off those aspects of our conversation and conduct that are *not of the culture of the body of Christ*.

And we are doing that in *the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings*. That is *the circumcision of Christ*, connected to our baptism at work in our life.

And we are committed to *the conversation of faith* that defines how we are to live, and how we are to cultivate the divine nature in our houses.

Those who are doing that are obtaining 'a remnant of the Spirit', each day, in order to be able to 'bring forth godly seed'.

This belongs to the culture of a person who is part of the heavenly Jerusalem – a bride adorned to be a helper to bring forth godly seed, or children, to God the Father, in Christ.

Where our lives and families are being *consumed* in this regard, it indicates that the curse is in our lives, and we are coveting and stealing life; or we are lying, or swearing falsely, including in relation to the covenant of our marriage.

The word of the cross tests every person's building

The word of the cross comes and tests every person's building. That is true whether you are an unbeliever or a believer.

Remember, the word of the cross is a banner that is lifted up to the entire earth from every nation. *Everyone* is brought to it, and it tests how a person is building.

They may be continuing to build *from the basis of their own sight and their own understanding*; in which case they are holding on to the other law as the basis for their life, and they are 'going out' as part of the body of sin.

Alternatively, those who are *born from above* are being conformed to Christ's death, allowing the fellowship of His offering and sufferings to be the context in which they are being delivered from the other law. They are progressively growing in the capacity of their sonship.

It does not matter whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, *everyone* has to come to the cross.

The testing of fire that brings deliverance or judgement

Either it will *bring deliverance* for those who are receiving it or it will *bring judgement* on those who reject it – but it will test *everyone*.

He is coming to baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire, and it is the *fire that tests* the way that we have been building and whether we have built on the foundation that belongs to the heavenly city.

In his first book to the Corinthians, Paul raised this principle of 'taking heed how we build', and the effect of the word of the cross which brings a curse. This *brings to nothing* those who are *not* building with the elements of the divine nature that are ministered to us through the word.

'For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it.' 1Co 3:9-10.

This is the foundation of the apostles that belongs to the city.

'But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it.' 1Co 3:10-13.

'Day', there, refers to the day of Christ's finished offering, the day of His crucifixion, which proclaims the judgement of God upon the whole earth.

'The Day will declare it, because it will be *revealed by fire*; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which is built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.' 1Co 3:13-15.

The fiery trial is to prove whether we are obtaining the precious materials to build with

The point is, if you are born of God and are baptised into Christ, you *will* endure the fiery trial, which is to prove you. And there are some things that we do need to let burn.

But, also, in that process, we are obtaining the precious materials which we are to *build* with.

If your work is burned, that, initially, is so that you will not be condemned with the world. However, you do have to accept that it is *brought down to nothing* so that you can *build* properly on the foundation.

We are the temple of God, the body of Christ

I am bringing all the threads together in terms of how we are to *continue to receive the word* and to *continue to build* as those whose citizenship belongs to the heavenly Jerusalem, which is the temple of His body.

'Do you not know that *you* are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy Him. For the temple of God is holy, *which temple you are.*' 1Co 3:16-17.

How are we building?

The question in relation to the word of the cross is, 'How are you building?'

Are you building on the foundations of the *agape* meal, which are the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers - or are you failing to discern the body?

That is the question that 'the scroll' calls us to account for.

In His house, being sanctified

The curse of the Law and the deprivations - that is, the breakdown of our identity because of sin - demonstrate that we are living in a carnal manner and are under the judgement of God.

If you are *in His house*, you are not under condemnation. If anyone is in Christ, they are no longer under condemnation.

That does not mean that you are 'perfect'. It means that you are joined to the process by which you are being *sanctified*.

Not discerning the body of Christ

If you are outside of that context because you continue in a lie or you continue to thieve, you are *not discerning the body of Christ*.

You are 'outside' it, not discerning the place where the Father has appointed you.

This is what Paul said about the effect of this curse.

'For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgement to himself, *not discerning the Lord's body*. For this reason, many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.'

Another way of saying it is that the curse has entered your house and it is consuming it to its foundation.

'For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.' 1Co 11:29-31.

When we commune, or *presume to fellowship*, in a manner that operates from the basis of our need for self-verification; or we continue to dwell treacherously with our wife; or we are not coming to the light in relation to our sexual immorality, we are not finding deliverance from the uncleanness in our houses, and are subject to unclean spirits. We are not eating from the tree of life.

You might be part of the meeting or house to house roster, but the more you do it, the more you are coming under condemnation. That is what Paul was saying.

We are then under the condemnation of God. The curse is active on the 'ground', or place, where we live and toil, and seek for blessing and prosperity.

Receiving redemption - being born of God

The Scriptures teach us that redemption from the curse of the Law is possible only when we are being delivered from sin, and when the righteous requirements of the Law, which the Lord demands, are being fulfilled in us.

This redemption is possible in our lives only when we believe the gospel and become adopted sons of God through faith, and then receive the Spirit of the Son and the Holy Spirit in our lives, who give to us the life and nature of God the Father, which is the divine nature.

That is what we have been talking about over this season. Redemption becomes possible when we are *born of God*.

To live by the Spirit, we must continue to receive and walk in the light of the word of the cross. The first implication of this fellowship through which the cleansing blood of Jesus is effective in our life, is to be *conformed to His death*.

Baptism – the expression of faith for fellowship in His death, burial and resurrection

I have brought it around all the way back to the importance of the reality of baptism for us.

Baptism is not a sacrament.

It is *an expression of faith for fellowship in His death*, so that we are granted entry into a context where we can continue to eat and *participate* in the culture of the city that is heavenly.

As we have been considering, at the point of this death, the Spirit is giving to us the resurrection life that flowed as Christ's blood was shed and He was brought back from the death of our sin.

By this life, we are being brought back from the death of sin, *with Him*. Our mortal body is being quickened with *life*, enabling us to fulfil the works of our sonship which Christ has already finished for us.