

The
Sure *M*ercies
of David

The Sure Mercies of David

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Introduction

Our study of the ‘Sure Mercies of David’ is a natural progression from our earlier publication, ‘The Heir of All Things’. In many ways, this subject is a high point because it carries the theme of the mystery of ‘God in flesh’ from His incarnation, right through to the resurrection, ascension and into the new heavens and new earth.

There are two direct references to the ‘Sure Mercies’. One is in the book of Isaiah, and the other is in the book of Acts, where Paul uses the phrase to speak of resurrection. Isa 55:3, Acts 13:34. Of course, there are many other references applicable to this vast subject. Both Peter and Paul raise the subject of the ‘Sure Mercies’. The first declaration connecting David and the resurrection of Christ is made by Peter in his Pentecost sermon. The next plain statement is made by Paul at Antioch.

The resurrection! This is a huge subject, and absolutely central to the Christian faith. As Paul said, concerning this all-important subject, ‘How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?’

Our purpose in this book is to pursue those questions. We’ll recall the words of Jesus, ‘I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. John 10:10. What is the nature of the life that Jesus came to give us? If our pre-occupation as Christians is receiving the life of Jesus, then we need to understand the *nature of His life*. And we need to know *how* we receive His life. Further to this, if our lowly bodies are going to be conformed to His glorious body, we need to understand the *nature of His body*. And we need to know *how* this

transformation takes place. This is the wondrous study of the ‘Sure Mercies of David’.

* * *

In this present season, the Lord is convicting us about purging leaven, which is any form of corruption or contamination in our houses. Why? We are hearing this word so that we can be a ‘new lump’, properly built together in the body of Christ. By this means, we become partakers of the divine nature. And then at the last hour we will be changed like His glorious, immortal and incorruptible body. We lay hold of the living hope established by His resurrection. As Jesus said, ‘He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day’. John 6:54.

These are indeed glad tidings! However, we must ensure that we are ‘gladly receiving’ this word. We are reminded here of the hearers on the Day of Pentecost. They ‘gladly received’ the word of Peter, the message of the ‘Sure Mercies of David’. However, implicit within this hope is the need to purge leaven. We must join ourselves to the body of Christ so that corruption is purged and we are brought forth as incorruptible in Him. Those who gladly received the word were immediately baptised and added to a body of believers, purging leaven and apprehending this sure and blessed promise of resurrection life.

May we gladly receive the word in this season!

May it be written on the doorposts of every home!

May we incline our ear, come to Him, hear and live!

Chapter 1: The sure mercies

The most comprehensive statement of God's *mercy* is that He has raised the Son of God, in flesh, to the throne. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His *great mercy* has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'. 1 Pet 1:3. We have a living hope because Jesus has been raised from the dead. By resurrecting the 'Firstfruits', He has made a way for us to be raised from the dead also. This is fulfilled in the day of resurrection, the culmination of the Lord's great and rich mercy toward us.

The heart of the gospel is that we can be joined to *His* flesh, the *body* that was raised to the throne. According to His rich mercy, we can be seated with Him in heavenly places. Eph 2:4-6. Immediately we can see why the theme of the body of Christ is so central to the New Testament. Our pre-occupation is to 'come to Him' so that we can be built together. By this means, we heed the admonition of Jude to the beloved brethren. 'Building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, *waiting anxiously for the mercy* of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life'. Jude 1:21.

We have a most holy faith in a living hope! Like David, our flesh can 'rest in hope' of the resurrection on the last day. This was the faith of David. We shall awake with His likeness, in the morning. Psa 17:15. We are waiting eagerly for this day, the day when His 'Sure Mercies' are fully revealed. As the apostle Paul said, we 'groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body ... we wait eagerly for it'. Rom 8:23,25.

Indeed, the voice of the Son will call to the graves, just as He spoke to Lazarus when He called him to 'come forth', after he had been dead for four days. John 11:43. In the same way that the word has come calling to us, to enliven the *inward* man, the word of the Son of Man will call to the graves to fashion each *outward* man with a body that is like His glorious body. Phil 3:21.

Isaiah's prophecy – the sure mercies

Let's begin with the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah. 'Incline your ear, and *come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live*; and I will make an *Everlasting Covenant* with you – 'the *Sure Mercies* of David'. Isa 55:3. If we come to Him and hear His word, our souls will live. This promise that our souls can live by hearing the word of the Lord cannot be quickly passed over. And this is exactly what the New Testament teaches.

Then we read of the Everlasting Covenant. And what is this Everlasting Covenant? It is the 'Sure Mercies of David'. This is foundational to our understanding of this theme. The mercy of the Lord revealed to David is the fulfillment of the Everlasting Covenant. And more than this, He desires to include our flesh in the loving fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Truly, the lesser is blessed by the greater. Heb 7:7. This is the hope of gospel, the living hope established by the resurrection of Jesus. According to the desire and intention of our heavenly Father, we are 'predestined to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ'. Eph 1:5. It has always been the Lord's intention to reveal His life in the flesh of mankind.

So why is David mentioned? Because the purpose of God, as it unfolded, was established in very specific aspects with David, just as it was established very specifically with Abraham. Indeed, the Lord

made ‘covenants’ with both Abraham and David as the purpose of the Everlasting Covenant was progressively revealed to mankind. ‘The Lord has sworn to David a truth from which He will not turn back: “Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne”.’ Ps 132:11. Of course, the fruit of his body was Christ. The glorious truth here is not so much that Christ would sit upon the throne of David. No, it is much more than that! Christ would gather up the throne of David and raise it to the glorious heights of His own intrinsic throne, the throne of Melchizedek.

The house and kingdom of David is caught up into the kingdom of the Son, the eternal context of a multitude of sons revealed in glory. Accordingly, the Lord says ‘I have sworn by My holiness, I will not lie to David. “His descendants shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before Me’. Ps 89:35-36. Truly, the lesser will be blessed and caught up into the greater.

Christ descended from David

Our present theme will simply highlight that Christ descended from David, according to the *flesh*. Christ, called the ‘Son of David’ is declared to have risen to David’s throne, in the flesh, giving hope, to David and to all the seed of Abraham, of a physical resurrection.

A sure promise was delivered to David. It was that his descendent, the fruit of *his own body*, who would overcome corruption and be raised from the dead. Acts 2:29-31. This one was Christ. However, the marvel of this was not merely that Christ would descend from the line of David. It was that David’s *own* resurrection was a ‘sure mercy’ as a result. And in fact, all who would believe in the ‘Anointed’, the Messiah, both before the cross and after, could be raised with His likeness.

In fulfilling the sure promise delivered to faithful saints in all ages, Christ did indeed come in the flesh. He gave His flesh for us to have life. He also overcame death in the flesh, and was raised in a body of flesh to the throne. As a result, our flesh can rest in hope, the hope of being raised *with* Christ, in an incorruptible body, to participate in the new heavens and new earth.

Two reference points

So the story is quite straightforward. There are just two fundamental reference points. The system of the Scriptures links these to Abraham and to David, with Christ having descended from both. Christ took hold of *our flesh*, and we are to be joined to *His flesh*, with the final result being that He raises us up at the last day. The first aspect relates to Abraham, to whom Christ in the flesh was the promised Seed. The second aspect relates to David, to whom Christ in the flesh was the promised heir, who would be raised above corruption to the throne of the Son, the throne of Melchizedek.

The fathers of faith

Our subject bursts open around these few opening points. At once, we realise that all the fathers understood the promise of attaining incorruption. We recall the monumental words of Job, 'For I know that my Redeemer lives, and *He shall stand* at last on the *earth*; and after *my skin* is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh *I shall* see God'. Job 19:26. A great many fathers, prophets and believers testified of the process by which the hope of incorruption was established in their flesh, right there and then. And this is identical for us, here and now, even though the cross is a fact of history for us. The same Spirit of Christ teaches us, as was teaching the prophets.

Those illuminated fathers were not only prophesying in advance toward Christ. They were learning *the sufferings of Christ* in *their* day. Peter is explaining this in his letter. ‘The Spirit of Christ who was *in them* was indicating when He *testified beforehand the sufferings* of Christ and the glories that would follow.’ 1 Peter 1:10-12. Through the Spirit of Christ that was in them, the earlier prophets were inquiring diligently, and also teaching the generations to come, about the work of the cross.

We well remember what happened when Abraham asked, ‘Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?’ Gen 15:8. He was visited with a prophetic understanding of the cross. David, similarly, was caused to walk through the ‘pains’ and ‘sorrows’ of the cross of the Messiah, as he learned to rejoice in the ‘good inheritance’ and ‘lovingkindness’ of the ‘right hand’. Psa 16:6; 17:7. These patriarchs, and others, understood the one offering ‘once for all’ in which we are to participate, and by which we will attain to the resurrection.

‘Why should it be thought incredible’, Paul challenged King Agrippa, some time after the day of Pentecost, ‘that God raises the dead?’ Paul was very clear in his argument. The twelve tribes, serving night and day, had hoped to attain this promise of the resurrection. Acts 26:6-8. This was exactly what the patriarchs had understood. They knew exactly what was revealed to Abraham and David, namely, that God would resurrect ‘flesh’, a man like them, from the loins of Abraham and David, to the throne. And this Messiah would establish the same hope for every one of His brethren. Deut 18:15.

The apostles' message

Let us now shift the focus to the apostles. We find that Peter, and Paul, were both absorbed with the 'Sure Mercies of David'. They both understood that Christ, having been raised in flesh to the throne, had received the 'glory that He had before'. He was now active in His own Melchizedek administration. He was pouring out the Holy Spirit for the purpose of composing His many-membered body. Men and women were hearing the message of sonship in their own languages, and were now to be baptized into the name of the ascended Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only was He in full possession of His *zoe* capacity as Son of Yahweh, but He had been endorsed with His glory from before, that is, His intrinsic capacity as a King-Priest. This is what David had seen and rejoiced in, long before. And so it was to David's own words that Peter and Paul resorted as they addressed the Jewish hearers, ones already familiar with the patriarch's psalms.

So what is the heart of the Pentecost sermon? What might Peter have titled his message? 'The Sure Mercies of David'? Yes indeed, even though this expression from Isaiah was not quoted in the New Testament until Paul used it in Acts. Isa 55:3; Acts 13:34. Both Peter and Paul, and the other apostles, filled with the 'firstfruits of the Spirit', were now very much aware of the fulfillment of the promises made to David. The sure and certain promises made to David were to apply to *every* believer. They were verified and fulfilled by the resurrection of Christ. In fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham and David, Christ's resurrection signified the resurrection of *all* those, in all ages, who believed and participated in the process of the cross by which the inheritance became sure.

The Pentecost declaration

We should read what Peter said in his Pentecost sermon, and observe how clear the message is. ‘For *David says* concerning Him “I foresaw the LORD *always* before my face, for *He* is at *my* right hand, that I may not be shaken. *Therefore* my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my *flesh* also will *rest in hope*. For You will not leave *my soul* in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence”.’ Acts 2:25-28.

At one level, David was speaking about Christ. But he also understood that the promise of having an everlasting throne would be made possible in Christ. He could see Christ active as *his* right hand, and so he rejoiced and his flesh rested in hope. David knew that *he* would not be left in Hades and that, in Christ, *his* flesh would be raised incorruptible. As the passage says, it wasn’t David himself who ascended to heaven. However, he *did* witness the transaction between the Father (the LORD) and ‘my Lord’ (my *Adon*) in which the Son was granted the throne of Melchizedek, His intrinsic kingship and priesthood. He saw Christ the Son, as *my* Lord, just as Moses had done. Ex 34:9. David understood, by revelation, throughout his tumultuous experiences, that he was to be raised to sit in the Son’s throne. Rev 3:21. These were the ‘sure mercies’ promised to David. This was the lovingkindness that would be commanded in the ‘morning’. Psa 143:8.

Paul’s message about the resurrection of Christ

By way of further orientation, let’s peruse Paul’s words on this same subject of the resurrection of Jesus. ‘God *raised* Him from the dead ... and we declare to you *glad tidings* – that *promise* which was made to

the *fathers*. God has *fulfilled* this for us their children, in that He has *raised up Jesus*. As it is also written in the second Psalm: “You are My Son, today I have *begotten* You”. And that He *raised* Him from the dead, no more to return to *corruption*, He has spoken thus: “I will give you the *sure mercies of David*”. Therefore He also says in another Psalm: “You will not allow Your Holy One to see *corruption*”. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw *corruption*; but He whom God *raised up* saw *no corruption*. Acts 13:30-37.

All the seeds of our study are contained in this passage. Christ’s resurrection fulfilled the promises made to the fathers, including David. The resurrection, we are told, was linked to the matter of ‘begetting’. Indeed, as we read elsewhere, Christ was the *Firstborn* from the dead. Col 1:18; Rev 1:5. Then there’s the repeated reference to ‘corruption’, and to the fact that the Holy One saw *no corruption*. The real point here is that Christ overcame corruption in the flesh. He ended sin, for all of us, while still in the flesh. The message is not just that He was raised with an incorruptible body. There’s much more. By the time His work on the cross was ‘finished’, He had put sin to death, and established incorruption in His flesh. It remained only for Him to be raised in a glorious body, the same glorified body as believers will inherit in the resurrection of the last day.

Glad tidings

And Paul’s next statement in the Acts passage becomes the high point. ‘Therefore!’ We must see how this follows on. ‘Therefore’, forgiveness of sins is preached to us. And furthermore, everyone who believes *can* now be *justified* from all things that could not be rectified by the law of Moses. So what is preached is the removal of

corruption. We are to be properly justified, here and now, so as to inherit the sure mercies of David, in Christ. We too can be raised to incorruption, not by simply waiting and hoping, but by participating in a process for the removal of sin. This is our subject. These are the 'glad tidings'.

Looking more deeply, Paul is dwelling on the fact that the very word spoken by David, about no corruption, was prophetic of Christ. Christ was the One who would see no corruption. And, certainly, His body did *not* corrupt in the grave, having been cleansed of all sin. However, the real accent is more than this. Paul is highlighting the glad tidings that Christ's resurrection *establishes our resurrection*. We are the children of the fathers to whom the promises were made. Like David, we will all fall asleep and suffer corruption. But we will have a resurrection to incorruption, as will David, just as it was promised to him. God will give *us* the sure mercies of David. This is the amazing hope established by the resurrection of Christ.

Chapter 2: The bread of life

In His first letter, the apostle John writes about the Word of Life. Having heard, seen, looked upon, and handled this word, He described ‘the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us’. 1 John 1:1. This was the bread of life that came down from heaven. In this second chapter, we are giving consideration to the Father’s life coming down to us. What is the nature of this life? How does it come to us? And how can we appropriate it?

The apostle Paul accounts that in the fullness of time God sent forth His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. He likewise refers to the fullness of time when God the Father sent forth His son, born of a woman. Christ has come in the flesh, laying hold of the flesh of man. However, we must not in any way assume that His flesh is the same as our flesh. His flesh is from the Father and is the life of the world. He has humbled Himself to adopt the flesh and blood of mankind. However, His flesh is completely ‘*zoe*’.

The New Testament often uses the word *zoe* to distinguish the life of the Father, in the Son, from all other forms of life. It is distinct from *psuche*, which is the individual identity and soul-life of every human being. And it is likewise distinct from *bios*, which is natural biological life. When the Lord breathed life into Adam, he became a living soul with *psuche* and *bios*. He was a living being with human identify in a biological body. However, he did not have *zoe* life. According to the eternal counsel of God, *zoe* life would only be given to the world by the bread of God coming down from heaven. This is the bread of life, the bread of *zoe*.

The bread out of heaven

In a highly pivotal encounter with a large group of his disciples, Jesus spoke of the ‘true bread out of heaven’. John 6:32. From the very outset, it is evident that He was referring to something that mankind does not naturally possess. And nor do we have the capacity to produce it.

This account was set in the time of the Passover and unleavened bread. Jesus had just finished breaking the five barley loaves to miraculously feed five thousand people. And all of those people continued to seek Him because they ate of the loaves and were filled. They received the bread of heaven in symbol. Likewise, the Israelites were sustained in the wilderness by manna, the bread out of heaven. These were examples of miraculous provision. However, neither of these provisions were the ‘true bread’ out of heaven. We know this because both the Israelites in the wilderness and the five thousand were soon hungry again. Jesus said, ‘Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died’. John 6:49. The bread had no capacity to overcome their corruption and mortality. So Jesus quickly identified that and said, ‘It is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven’. John 6:32.

The bread of God

The true bread is the ‘bread of God’. This is amazing statement. It is the bread of the very life of God the Father. We are reminded of the earlier words of John. ‘As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God ... who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God’. John 1:12-13.

In the primary sense, the bread of God is not the life of the Son. It is the Father's *zoe*. As Yahweh the Son, He emptied Himself to the bosom of the Father and took up the Father's life in a body prepared. The pre-existent Son put aside all prerogative and expression of His own intrinsic life. He willingly took up the Father's life. We might say that His life was hidden in the bosom of the Father. Accordingly, the life He manifested was not His own. He was sent by the Father to be the author and cause of eternal salvation and sonship. Heb 5:9. This is where the apostle John began his gospel account. 'In Him was life'. John 1:4. He was the substance of the Father's *zoe*.

Jesus was the pre-existent Son, but He had been born of the Father. He was the bread of God. He was the bread of the firstfruits, the Father's firstborn. He was the burnt offering, the ascending aroma. And He became the offering for sin, carrying every name and every son into death. And by resurrection, He verified the eternal future of every son who would receive Him and obey the word of their sonship. Again, we'll recall the words of John. 'As the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself ... even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes'. John 5:26. Truly, He was the bread of God which 'gives life to the world'. John 6:33.

I am the bread of life

Having heard Jesus speak about the 'true bread out of heaven' and 'the bread of God', the crowds responded that they wanted to continually eat this bread. However, Jesus had more to say, and He quickly continued, 'I am the bread of life'. John 6:35.

The significance of this statement should not escape us, because this was the cause of many beginning to grumble and ultimately withdraw from Him. In the likeness of sinful flesh, born of a woman,

Jesus Himself was the substance of the Father's life. This establishes the mode by which this bread of life comes to us. It comes in the word of Christ. And this word has been committed to humble and lowly messengers. This was the first cause of offence for His listeners. They could not accept Him as the messenger, nor believe that He could bring anything supernatural to them. 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?' John 6:42.

Also of great significance is the fact that Jesus said 'I Am'. There are a number of times when Jesus prefaced a statement with 'I Am' throughout His ministry. And He did this in His full authority as Yahweh Son. Ultimately, the bread of life is the life of the Father and the intrinsic life of the Son. By eating the bread of life, we participate in the body of the Son, seated at the right hand of the Father in His own intrinsic throne. Accordingly, Jesus said 'Does this cause you to stumble? What then if you should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before?' John 6:62.

The words of life

As Jesus spoke about the bread of life, many people were confused. How could they truly eat His flesh? However, Jesus endeavoured to convey how simple it really was. 'It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the *words that I have spoken* to you are spirit and are life'. John 6:63. This became the testimony of Peter, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life'. John 6:68.

In the first place, the bread of heaven is coming to us as a word. John began his gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. John 1:1. And indeed, the word became flesh. It is essential to understand that He is the 'word of the

Father'. Again, Jesus has come in a body prepared by the Father. He is express image of the Father's life, word, and will in a body of flesh. He is the Father's offering, the bread of life, come to bring many sons to glory.

It was this word of which John spoke, 'We have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us'. 1 John 1:2. The nature of this word of life is begetting and birthing. To all who receive it, it is the substance and power of sonship. The living bread is a word proclaimed by a messenger calling all to 'receive Him'. This living and abiding word is the substance of eternal life.

Receiving Him

In this chapter, we are considering firstly the coming of Christ. The Scripture is clear. 'He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him'. John 1:11. The miracle of the faith of Mary was that she believed and received the word. And that word became flesh in her mortal body. And all the more miraculous is the fact that 'as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become sons of God'. John 1:12. By receiving the word, Mary became 'the mother of my Lord'. She was not yet born from above, but she, along with all those who received Him, received the right to become a son of God. This was fulfilled when Jesus breathed upon them in the Upper Room after His resurrection.

In the first phase of living bread, a messenger is offering the right of sonship to all who believe and receive. The purpose and outcome of this proclamation is that 'you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus

Christ'. 1 John 1:3. The living and abiding word is calling us into the one loaf, the new lump, the body of His flesh.

Fellowship or participation in the bread of heaven is bringing to us the substance of His resurrection in the inner man. As Christ laid hold of the flesh of man, condemning sin in the flesh, we likewise must lay hold of His flesh in the hearing and receiving of a word. If we truly lay hold of the word and obey it, that word is becoming life to us. We are eating of that life and becoming members of His body, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. If we aspire to a religion without hearing, receiving, and obeying a word, we are without hope in this world. As Paul said, 'we are of all men most to be pitied', because there is no *zōē* coming to us and no resurrection.

Participation in the word

When this word of life comes to us, there are two distinct and critical points of participation. Firstly, we receive both the messenger and the word of our sonship proceeding from Him to us. Resident within that word is the faith of our sonship. If we receive this word, we apprehend the power of our own sonship. Secondly, upon hearing this word of our sonship, this word compels us immediately to join and participate in the corporate loaf, the body of Christ. This is the message of the John that 'in Him was life'. Yes, life came to us in that first proceeding word. However, we have no continuing sonship outside of fellowship and participation in the body of Christ, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Coming into the body of Christ, we must pursue the seal of sonship which the Father sets upon us. We apprehend this seal by baptism into Christ. Indeed, we are buried with Him by baptism into His death. By this means, we are united in the likeness of that death and

the likeness of His resurrection. We are being raised from the dead, walking in the newness of *zoe* and apprehending the likeness of His resurrection. Our sonship is evidently alive as we present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead.

We read in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new'. 2 Cor 5:17. Christ is the new creation and we must be 'in Him.' Paul exhorted the church in Galatia to 'walk by this rule'. This rule or measure is the measure of *zoe*, bringing peace and mercy upon all who walk accordingly and upon the Israel of God. Gal 6:16. When we walk by this rule, leaven is being purged and we are becoming a new lump.

Eating and drinking

Jesus was very clear on the need to participate in His body. 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in Him'. John 6:56. As we eat and drink, we put on the new man which is created in the likeness of God. As the body broken, He has verified and made substantial His *zoe* flesh in all who receive Him. And having poured out His blood, this blood is now the life of the world.

By the power of resurrection, the newness of *zoe* is coming to the inward man of all who are eating and drinking. Accordingly, Jesus said, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves'. John 6:53. Eating and drinking engages what we'll call the adoptive transfer. This will be our focus in chapter six, 'The way of life'. It is by this process of adoptive transfer that we appropriate the life of Christ. He has come to give us life and more abundantly. Nevertheless, we must engage this adoptive transfer by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. It is by

eating His flesh that the adoptive transfer is effective and we receive *zoe* life.

Many of the disciples stumbled when He told them that eating this bread was the means of receiving eternal life. And particularly when He said, 'The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh'. John 6:51. This proposition of eating, and indeed drinking, is a source of stumbling even to our day. Many people refuse the word of a messenger who proclaims to them the word of *zoe* and the substance of their sonship. And all the more, they reject eating and participation in the 'one loaf', the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the flesh of the Son of Man.

His flesh – our flesh

Jesus initiated the process of adoptive transfer when He was 'born of a woman' and 'born under law'. He became 'as we are', so that we can become 'as He is'. It is vitally important to emphasise the difference between His flesh and our flesh. There is no 'fusion' or union between our old corrupted flesh and His *zoe* flesh.

He was not apprehended by the flesh of Mary. Rather, the *zoe* life of the Father entered the womb of the virgin by a word. Accordingly John said, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us'. John 1:14. Yes, He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. Nevertheless, the flesh of the Son of Man is completely *zoe*-fied flesh. Although He was mortal, He was in no way 'death-doomed' by corruption. In an action of total surrender and submission to the Father's will, He willingly laid down His life as an offering for sin. Hence He said concerning His life, 'No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative'. John 10:18.

In complete contrast, our flesh is bound to corruption and destined to death. In every way, our lives are dead in trespasses and sins. However, Jesus laid hold of our flesh and condemned sin in the flesh. When John said, ‘We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father’, he was referring to the glory of the Father manifested in a mortal yet incorruptible body. John 1:14. Christ came in the fullness of *zoe* to lay hold of our corruption, carrying it into death and bringing us to the glory of sonship by the power of His resurrection. The ‘death that He died, He died to sin’, but certainly not by sin. Rom 6:10. Death had no victory over Him and neither did the power of sin. Jesus was tempted in every way and crucified because of weakness, yet He was incorruptible. In this way, the weakness of God is stronger than men. He has been ‘declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead’. Rom 1:4.

Accordingly, as we hear the voice of the Son of Man, our inward man is being renewed. While the outer man perishes, we cherish a hope in God and the certainty of the resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. Act 24:15.

Raised at the last day

As we eat His flesh and drink His blood, participating in the power of His resurrection, the contradiction is quickly apparent. We receive *zoe* abundantly in the inner man, while the outer man continues to perish and decay. Nevertheless, we do not lose heart. We hold fast to the words of Jesus, ‘He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day’. John 6:54.

We recall again that Jesus came down from heaven to do the will of the Father. Coming with the seal of sonship from the Father, Jesus

said, ‘This is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day’. John 6:40. The Father draws all men to behold the Son and believe in Him. By this means, the Father gives us to the Son. ‘And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day’. John 6:39. This is the hope of all believers, in all ages, that we will be raised up on the last day.

We might suggest that this is conditional and completely dependant upon eating His flesh, the living bread. As we partake of this bread of God, we are being renewed in the inner man by the word of our sonship. We are beholding the Son, believing in Him, and receiving eternal *zoe* in the inner man. While the outer man is decaying and corrupting, we are being renewed inwardly in preparation for the last day.

The first Passover

The coming of Christ is referred to as the ‘appointed time’, the ‘right time’, and the ‘fullness of time’. These appointed times are particularly noted as the sacred feasts. The gospel of John accounts that Jesus participated in three separate Passovers through the course of His ministry. We’ll recall that John had twice proclaimed ‘behold the Lamb of God’. John 1:29,36. With each account of the Passover, there was an accompanying expression of purging leaven.

Immediately before the first Passover, John accounts that there was a wedding in Cana. When the occasion ran out of wine, Jesus directed the servants to fill the six water pots to the brim. These vessels were ordinarily used for the Jewish custom of purification and hand washing. Having turned the water into wine, this was the

beginning of His signs. John accounts that He ‘manifested His glory and His disciples believed in Him’. John 1:11. The peculiar nature of this sign was firstly to do with cleansing. After this, Jesus went up to Jerusalem and cleansed the temple of all the money changers. We might say that He was purging leaven from His Father’s house.

In response to this, the Jews asked Him for a sign of His authority. He answered them by saying, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up’. Unbeknown to them at this time, He was speaking of the temple of His body and the way a multitude of sons would be brought forth in Him. In other instances, He referred to this as the sign of Jonah, saying that the Son of Man would dwell in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. We’ll look further at this chapter seven, ‘Resting in Hope’. Our reason for mentioning it here is to show that the Jews were demanding a sign. Their belief or unbelief was completely dependant on His signs. However, seeking a sign does not produce faith.

John records that after He was raised from the dead, the disciples remembered His reference to the three days. Accordingly, ‘they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had spoken’. John 2:22. This was the evidence of genuine faith. We must progress from believing in Him because of signs to believing the Scripture. And more than this, we must believe the messengers that speak His word to us.

The second Passover

When Jesus performed the miracle with the five barley loaves, we read that the second Passover was at hand. Up until this point, many had been following Him ‘because they were seeing the signs that He was performing on those who were sick’. John 6:2. And then

they followed Him because they 'ate of the loaves, and were filled'. John 6:26. Jesus needed to shift their focus from seeking signs to receiving Him and His words of *zoe* life.

Accordingly, He began to speak of Himself as the bread of life, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. They were to eat of Him and drink of Him if they were to find eternal life. However, as soon as He began to speak that way, His followers began to grumble. John 6:41. Why did they need to listen to the humble son of a carpenter? This was the first evidence of leaven in their lives. Then they began to argue with one another, saying 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat? John 6:52. As they continued to disbelieve and reject Him, they sought to justify themselves. Their offence reached a climax when Jesus told them that unless they ate His flesh and drank His blood they had no life. Indeed, they found it difficult to believe that anybody could hear such a thing. Accordingly, the very word that should have become the cornerstone of their lives and faith became a stumbling stone and a rock of offence. 'As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore'. John 6:66.

By this means, He purged from among His disciples those with the leaven of unbelief. Even at this time, Jesus knew 'who it was that would betray Him'. John 6:64. Of those who departed, many had followed Him because they saw His signs or they ate the loaves and were filled. Again, this is not sufficient to establish faith. We must firstly receive His word, because 'faith comes by hearing'. In stark contrast to those seeking a sign, Peter testified, 'You have the words of eternal *zoe*-life ... we have believed and come to know'. John 6:68-69. Peter was evidently hearing and receiving both the Scriptures and the words that Jesus spoke.

The third Passover

In this His last Passover, Jesus firstly ate the Passover. And then on the same day, He became the Passover, the Lamb of God. Even in those final hours, Jesus was still purging leaven. In the upper room, He said to the twelve, 'Not all of you are clean'. John 13:11. When He took the morsel of unleavened bread, He gave it to Judas and thus purged the leaven of the betrayer from among them. All who received ate with Him that night endured the process of unleavened bread. Jesus foretold that all of them would be scattered.

Chapter 3: Wonders for the dead

We have considered Jesus as the bread from heaven who gives life to the world. He said, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst'. John 6:35. And building to a climax, He continued, 'Everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day'. John 6:40. With these amazing words, Jesus answered the question of the psalmist that echoes throughout the ages. 'Will you perform wonders for the dead? Will the departed spirits rise and praise You? Will Your lovingkindness [mercies] be declared in the grave?' Ps 88:12.

Certainly the Lord's mercies have been declared in the grave. The Father did not allow His Holy One to see decay and raised Him from the dead. The real 'wonder' is that as we eat the bread of heaven we are included in the incorruptible, immortal, resurrection body of Jesus. As Jesus said, 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day'. John 6:54. By this means, the Lord does indeed work 'wonders for the dead'. As we eat and drink, we receive *zoe*-life 'in ourselves', in the inner man. John 6:53. And further to this, as we eat and drink our flesh rests in hope of the resurrection of the last day. The outer man is perishing and destined to be laid in the grave. Nevertheless, we are assured that every believer who dies in faith will be raised by the word of Christ at the last day. The dead will rise and praise the Lord! This is the fulfillment of the 'Sure Mercies of David'.

Dead in trespasses and sins

We know the answer to the psalmist's question, but we mustn't overlook the need to ask it. It is the pertinent question for all mankind, because 'sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned'. Rom 5:12. Before we received the bread of life, we were dead in trespasses and sins. We walked according to the course of this world as slaves of sin and enemies of God. Indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, we were children of wrath by our very nature. We'll recall the words of Jeremiah, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?' Jer 17:9.

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes accounts that God 'set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end'. Eccl 3:11. The Lord has given mankind an unquenchable thirst for understanding. And yet we can never know by reason of thought and the deceitfulness of the human heart. Nor can we ever comprehend the work of God by our own understanding. We have eternal existence, but not eternal life. The work of God is only declared by the bread coming down from heaven. And we only have eternal life when we receive this bread of God that gives life to the world. Apart from receiving this bread of life, we can only come to the same realization as the psalmist. 'I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength, forsaken among the dead.' Ps 88:4,5.

The land of forgetfulness

We know that the name of every son was foreknown in the heart of the Father. More than this, every person 'whom He foreknew, He

also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren'. Rom 8:29. We are foreknown and predestined to be sons of God. However, from the very beginning, mankind has rejected this predestination. The psalmist described himself as being 'like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, and who are cut off from Your hand'. Ps 88:5. When we are dead in trespasses and sins, we are remembered 'no more'. We are completely 'cut off' from the hand of the Lord. We are assigned to the land of forgetfulness. Hence, we can only ask, 'Will Your wonders be made known in the darkness? And your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?' Ps 88:12.

We read in the book of Jeremiah, 'I will surely forget you and cast you away from My presence, along with the city which I gave you and your fathers. I will put an everlasting reproach on you and an everlasting humiliation which will not be forgotten'. Jer 23:39-40. When the Scripture speaks of the land of forgetfulness, it is not referring to the Lord's cognition of a person's existence. It would be absurd to suggest that the Lord is in some way senile. We know He is omniscient, knowing all things. Where can we go from His spirit? And where can we flee from His presence? We cannot flee from His presence, and yet in the fall, we were cast from His presence. We became aliens from the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. We'll recall the words of Nehemiah to those who opposed the rebuilding of the walls, 'You have no portion, right or *memorial* in Jerusalem'. Neh 2:20. This literally means 'no memorial record', which is no citizenship in heaven.

The Lord's remembrance is measured completely against His foreknowledge. He only remembers and 'knows' that which He foreknew and predestined. This is the meaning behind the words of

Jesus, 'I never knew you'. Matt 7:23. We need to consider that this is not only a statement reserved for unbelievers at the end of the age. As a result of the fall, it applies to every person in the loins of Adam. We have been forgotten, cast off, and assigned to everlasting reproach and humiliation. This is the beginning point of fallen mankind. And without the Lord working a wonder for the dead we can only live in the expectation of a resurrection to eternal judgment. 'It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes the judgment'. Heb 9:27.

With this in view, we begin to understand the desperation of psalmist. 'What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Psa 89:48. In the same way, the apostle Paul cried out, 'Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?' He was referring to the deception and wickedness of his heart. And he was also referring to the corruption and decay of his body. On both accounts, He was able to answer the question, 'Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!' Rom 7:24-25.

The Lord remembers His covenant

The psalmist asked the question, 'Has God forgotten to be gracious, or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion?' Ps 77:9. We have most certainly been delivered over to death. We are dead in trespasses and sins until the Lord remembers His covenant. The prophet Jeremiah refers to a day when they 'join themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten'. Jer 50:5. 'You are My servant, O Israel, You will not be forgotten by Me. Is 44:21.

We are delivered from the 'body of this death' because the Lord remembers His covenant. Accordingly, He sends the bread from heaven which gives life to the world. This is the fulfilment of the everlasting covenant conceived in the loving dialogue of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. From this dialogue, the Father, 'rich in mercy, because of His great love' ... made us alive together with Christ'. Eph 2:4-5.

The Lord delivered the nation of Israel from Egypt because He remembered His covenant. We read in the book of Exodus, 'So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob'. Ex 2:24. The psalmist subsequently rejoiced in the substance of this deliverance as it applies to all men. 'He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations'. Ps 105:8. In this same way, the Word became flesh in the womb of the virgin in the fullness of time. This was the 'appointed time' determined by the everlasting covenant. And further to this, 'While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Rom 5:6.

We are not remembered as individuals until we are remembered in the Seed, Christ. He is the Seed of the covenant. All our names, indeed our DNA, are known in Christ the Seed. He is the forerunner in every way. Christ Himself went out to the land of forgetfulness as the scapegoat. He was cut off from the land of the living, taking our sin and trespasses as far as *cherem* itself. By this we mean, He was 'accursed' and 'devoted to destruction' for our sake. He was reckoned among those who go down to the pit so that can be remembered in Him.

Why have you forsaken Me?

We recall the words of Jesus, 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me'. Mark 15:34. Jesus was cut off from the land of the living because 'He who knew no sin had become sin'. Accordingly, He suffered outside the gate in the place of the sin offering. He had taken the cup of sin, given to Him by the Father. This was the 'cup of reeling', and the 'chalice of His wrath'. Isa 51:17. He drank the cup to the dregs, fulfilling His own words, 'The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink all of it'. John 18:11. As He drank the 'cup of reeling', truly He became sin for us. And as the sin bearer, He took hold of the 'chalice of His wrath' and the full weight and judgment of our perdition fell upon Him. He was cut off from the land of the living, forsaken, despised and rejected.

Indeed, the divine Seed had gone into the ground and was abiding alone. Darkness covered the face of the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour. We'll recall again the Messianic words contained in the psalm of Heman. 'I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength. Forsaken among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more. And they are cut off from Your hand. You have put me in the lowest pit, in dark places, in the depths. Your wrath has rested upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves'. Ps 88:4-7.

And further to this, the psalmist cried out, 'O Lord, why do You reject my soul? Why do you hide Your face from me? Ps 88:14. Surely the face of the Father had turned away. Indeed, we all hid our faces from Him. He had drunk the cup of our sin and was enduring the fullness of our eternal judgment. We'll recall the words of Isaiah,

‘Your iniquities have made a separation from you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you’. Is 59:2.

The Father had made His soul a guilt offering. And as He drank this cup, Jesus ‘poured out Himself to death’. Is 53:12. He took the cup of our sin and corruption. Nevertheless, according to the ‘Sure Mercies of David’, the Father did not allow His ‘Holy One to undergo decay’. Ps 16:10.

The cry of remembrance

Jesus is our great High Priest and accordingly He transformed the place of forgetfulness into the place of remembrance. He interceded for our remembrance. In the words of Ethan the psalmist, ‘How long, O Lord, will you hide Yourself forever? ... *Remember* what my span of life is ... Where are Your former *mercies*, O Lord, which You swore to David in Your faithfulness? *Remember*, O Lord, the reproach of Your servants; How I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples’. Ps 89:50. Indeed, Jesus suffered the reproach of all mankind outside the camp. And yet, He returned with seven sprinklings of His own blood to activate the mercy of God for all believers. Accordingly, the Father remembered Christ and His covenant with David.

We read elsewhere in the psalms, ‘Why do You hide Your face, and forget our affliction and our oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust; Our body clings to the ground. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercies’ sake’. Ps 44:24-26. Again, we read in the psalm of Ethan, ‘I have said, “Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens”. “I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David”’. Ps 89:3.

From the horror of this darkness, the seed of David came forth as the first fruits from the dead. The word of the Father called to Him and He was raised by the glory of the Father. The Son cried to the Father, 'You are My Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation'. And the Father remembered His promise to the seed of David. 'I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My mercy I will keep him forever, and My covenant shall stand firm with him'. Ps 89:27-28.

As the firstfruits came again from the dead, we who are His were made alive and remembered in Him. Let us remind ourselves again, God's remembrance is not His mental cognition. He remembers His covenant to fulfil it. Where He has hidden His face, He remembers the everlasting covenant according to His mercy. God is faithful and He cannot deny Himself. This is the covenant and oath between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. His mercies endure forever.

Do this in remembrance

When we eat the bread of the communion, we participate in this remembrance. Yes, it is true that we do this in remembrance of Him. Yet more than this, as we eat the bread of heaven, we participate in the remembrance of God. We have a memorial! We are remembered before Him. All our names are known and remembered in the one Seed of David.

The bread which we eat is the substance of His resurrection body. As we eat His flesh, we are becoming 'as He is'. We'll recall the words of John, 'as He is, so are we in this world'. 1 John 4:17. If we rightly discern the body of Christ, love is being perfected and we have confidence in the day of judgment. Nevertheless, if we do not

rightly discern the body, then this very same bread and cup will be the substance of our judgment.

The bread of life will endure forever, but it will perpetuate everlasting corruption. 'I will put an everlasting reproach on you and an everlasting humiliation which will not be forgotten'. Jer 23:40. Again, this is the meaning of 'depart from Me, I never knew you'. For those whom He casts away, reproach and humiliation is there covering. And it will not be forgotten.

Likewise, the cup which we drink is the cup of blessing. It is our participation in the sufferings of Christ that are working for us an eternal weight of glory. Nevertheless, if we drink in an unworthy manner it is also the 'wine of His fierce wrath' which Babylon is made to drink. This is the cup of reeling, the chalice of His anger. The Lord always remembers His covenant. And in this very same way, Babylon is remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath ... for her sins have piled up as high as heaven and God has remembered her iniquities'. Rev 16:19; 18:5. With this in view, we eat and drink with sober judgment, knowing that we are partaking of the most holy offering.

The most holy offering

Christ the firstfruits, the true memorial offering came back from the dead. This was the 'most holy' of the offerings according to the oath of the covenant. Our English translations do no justice to this by referring to it as 'most holy'. The literal Hebrew meaning is 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. We are reminded here of the cry of the seraphim in the book of Isaiah, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory'. Isa 6:3. Similarly, in the book of Revelation,

‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and is and is to come’. Rev 4:8.

When we consider the testimony of the seraphim, we are reminded that Paul said Jesus would be ‘seen by angels’. This is our common confession. ‘Great is the mystery of godliness. He who was revealed in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory’. 1 Tim 3:16. We join the prophets, and indeed the seraphim, in bearing testimony to the Living One. He is indeed ‘the Holy One of Israel’. Isa 1:4. For this reason, He can offer Himself to *cherem* and yet never see decay. The unleavened bread from heaven is this most holy offering.

Salt and oil

Let’s consider again the great prophetic words of David. ‘For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy’. Psa 16:10-11. Here David speaks of the most holy offering. And he indirectly draws attention to two of the essential ingredients in the meal offering – salt and oil.

Firstly, ‘every grain offering of yours ... you shall *season with salt*, so that the salt of the covenant of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering’. Lev 2:13. The symbolism of the salt of the covenant, mixed in the ‘loaf of firstfruits’, is the preserving agency of *zoe*-life itself. That which is born of God cannot sin. It is the incorruptible seed of the life of God. Hence, the psalmist spoke of no decay.

Secondly, ‘if your offering is a grain offering ... it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, *mixed with oil*. You shall break it into bits and *pour oil on it*’. Lev 2:5-6. The oil mixed with, and poured upon, the loaf is the Spirit of the Father, Son, and indeed, the Holy Spirit. It is the oil of gladness. The oil is the symbol of *zoe* mixed in and poured upon the body prepared for the Son. He is the anointed, the Holy One of Israel. Hence, the psalmist spoke of the ‘fullness of joy’.

This holy anointing oil is truly the oil of joy for mourning. And Jesus promised us, ‘No one will take your joy away from you’. John 16:22. The most holy offering describes the path of life, the way of the cross. If a man enters into it, He will become a certain firstfruits entering into the joy of the Lord. The oil of joy is upon His head.

If the firstfruits are holy

We are familiar with the words of Paul, ‘If the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy’. Rom 11:16. Jesus was the most holy offering. The Father has presented Christ to Himself, alive, the firstfruits from the dead. He was begotten from the dead and we were begotten in Him. Hence, Paul speaks of Christ the first fruits and those who are His. Indeed, He is holy and we are a kind of firstfruits in Him. In this way, Jesus is the memorial portion, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Our sonship and our names were remembered in His firstfruits offering, the bread of remembrance. As we eat of that bread, we eat of His *zoe*-life. We are indeed receiving eternal life as we participate in Christ, the substance of our resurrection body.

If we do not have the Spirit of Christ, we do not belong to Him. If the same Spirit that raises Christ from the dead dwells in us, then He will make alive our mortal bodies. He firstly renews us in the

inner man, changing us from one degree of glory to another. And then in the last day, when the trumpet sounds, we shall be changed.

According to the 'Sure Mercies of David' we shall be made alive with Him, laying hold of the substance of our resurrection bodies. In that day, the voice of the Son of Man will speak to the graves and call forth those who are asleep in Jesus. Those who are alive and remain shall likewise be changed by the exertion of His power. The corruptible will be clothed with the incorruptible. And the mortal will be clothed with the immortal. This is the sure mercies of David by which we escape corruption, being renewed in the inner man for the day of resurrection.

Chapter 4: The new creation

The 'Sure Mercies of David' are the guarantee of the resurrection of all believers for the new heavens and new earth. We are reminded of the words of Jesus, 'Behold I am making all things new'. Rev 21:5. This declaration is made from the throne of the Son in the time of the end. However, we will consider here that there are various stages of the new creation.

Every stage of the new creation is brought forth by a word. The word comes calling into being things which do not exist. This was the substance of Abraham's faith. This is the word of the Father, for He is the source of all things new. He is the one who births and begets. Nevertheless, it is the Son who makes room for all things new. The Son is the One who emptied Himself to become the word of the Father, *ζοε* in the flesh. Hence the Scripture says, 'In the beginning was the Word'. John 1:1. The Word is the beginning of all things new.

Before the foundation of the world, the Son became the new creation according to the dialogue and covenant intention of Yahweh Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This was verified when the Father testified, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'. Ps 2:7. This is the testimony of the Father at each progressive revelation of the new creation.

Stages of the new creation

Let's briefly consider these stages of begetting, the stages of the new creation. This encapsulates the full circuit of Yahweh Son from His

own intrinsic throne, to the bosom of the Father, to the womb of the virgin, to the cross and the tomb, and then back to the Father's right hand. It is truly the descending and ascending of the Son of Man by which the everlasting covenant was fulfilled.

In the first stage of new creation, Yahweh Son stepped down from His throne. He emptied Himself of His own intrinsic name and glory to the bosom of the Father. Therein, He was begotten as the Son of the Father. He received from the Father the very life which the Father had in Himself. From there, He emptied Himself again to become the seed of Abraham in the flesh of the virgin Mary. This was the faith of the Son which caused the great angelic fall where Lucifer Himself was cast down. At the appointed time, He was begotten in a body of weakness for the suffering of death. This birth from the womb of the virgin, verified the flesh of Abraham and thus fulfilled the covenant promise to Abraham. It is important to note that His coming for the suffering of death is not particularly describing a death-doomed life. Rather He came to make offering. His death was in fact an offering to the Father. Having emptied Himself to the Father and then again to the womb of the virgin, He came to Gethsemane where He poured out His soul to death. In a body of flesh, a body of mortality and weakness, He emptied Himself again. The pouring out of His blood was the sum total of all emptying, as He Himself said, 'This is My blood ... poured out for many'. Mar 14:24. This of course culminated when the spear was thrust into His side after His work was finished.

It is important for us to note that there is always an emptying that precedes a begetting or a birth. In each stage of emptying and begetting, a word from the Father establishes the next stage of the new creation. In the same way, He was begotten from the dead with

power by resurrection. This resurrection verified the flesh of David and Christ as the seed of David. He was begotten as the son of David and thus walked with the disciples for forty days as the prototype Son. For those forty-days there was no house in heaven. The disciples were able to handle the substance of their resurrection bodies in Christ. This is the meaning of John's testimony of, 'What we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life'. 1 John 1:1.

When He was raised to the glory He had before, He took His seat at the Father's right hand. According to the psalmist, the Father said, 'Sit at My right hand ... You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'. Psa 110:1,4. This was the culmination of each stage of begetting and the bringing forth of the new creation. He had become the firstfruits and the names of all sons were verified in Him when He ascended to that glory. And so we here His voice from that throne saying, 'Behold, I am making all things new'. Rev 21:5.

According to the power of resurrection, *zoe* has been made available to every son in the inner man when we eat His flesh and drink His blood. His blood is the life, and His flesh is the substance, the very DNA or pattern of our resurrection body. These are the 'Sure mercies of David'. And He has given us the Holy Spirit as a sign and a guarantee of this inheritance.

The Son of Abraham

With this in view, we can now discuss the faith of Abraham and David in a little more detail. We'll recall again that Jesus is called both the Son of Abraham and the Son of David. Each of these fathers of faith received a distinct promise. And hence, they each had a particular faith in relation to the begetting and bringing forth of the

new creation. The emphasis of Abraham's faith was the begetting of the new creation in weakness. The emphasis of David's faith was the begetting of the new creation with power.

Through the course of his life, Abraham was pre-occupied with the bringing forth of a son from his own body. His various encounters with the Lord were about a son and heir. Of utmost importance here is the encounter when Yahweh Son told Abraham that He Himself would be his Son. We recall that Yahweh Son said to him, 'I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward'. Gen 15:1. He would be His seed, the reward of his faith. Accordingly, in His Seed, 'all the nations of the earth would be blessed'. Gen 18:18, Gal 3:8.

This was the covenant made with Abraham. And this covenant was sealed by circumcision, symbolizing the breach upon Abraham's flesh. In this way, Abraham could be the father of the divine Seed while at the same time being found Himself in that Seed. Abraham believed to be both a father and a son.

Jesus is referred to as the Seed of Abraham. The book of Galatians teaches us that He is the Seed, singular, and that all the promises of the covenant are directed to Him. Christ's descent from *Abraham* focuses on His incarnation and *birth in flesh* in Mary. He is the one Seed who included us all in Himself.

The incarnation – the word becoming flesh

We'll now focus on the word becoming flesh in the womb of the virgin Mary. In the book of Galatians we read, 'But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law that we might receive the adoption as sons.' Gal 4:4,5.

We should set out a few important points of reference here. What was the real essence of the incarnation? Did Christ merely take on human form, by a divine miracle, to provoke mystical speculation and religious reverence? Was there more to it? Traditional theology accounts, and we agree, that Jesus was fully God and fully man. However, He is more than that. He is also the new creation. He is *zoe*.

Let us take the point raised in Hebrews. Certainly, He did ‘take hold’ of the ‘seed of Abraham’, as distinct from the nature of angels, and He was everything that we are in terms of weakness and temptation. Heb 2:16-18; 4:15. But quite simply, His flesh was not, and is not, the same as ours. He is more than we are. He caught up the lesser into the greater. It was the pre-existent Son who took hold of the flesh of the seed of Abraham. It was One who came down from heaven, as the sum of the Father’s will.

Accordingly, there are three distinct aspects to the incarnation, the Word becoming flesh. Firstly, Jesus is Yahweh Son. He is ‘fully God’. It was Yahweh the Son who emptied Himself all the way to the womb. It was the pre-existent word, who ‘was God’, who became flesh in the womb of Mary. Secondly, He is the Son of God. He is the sum of new creation. Everything conceived in the bosom of the Father was brought forward to the womb of Mary by the overshadowing of the Most High. As the ‘only begotten in the bosom’, He proceeded to become the ‘only begotten’ in the womb. Thirdly, Jesus is the Son of Man. Having laid hold of our flesh, He is indeed ‘fully man’. He is the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, partaking of the flesh and blood of mankind.

Again, let us not assume that because He was mortal that He was anything less than *zoe*-life in flesh. When we say that He was mortal, He was not 'death-doomed' by sin and corruption. He was in all points fashioned as we are and yet without sin. He was fully Yahweh, fully *zoe*, and fully man.

Jesus is Yahweh Son

We recall the account when Jesus said to the Jews, 'before Abraham was born, I am'. John 8:58. Here Jesus used the ineffable, the unutterable name. The Jews promptly picked up stones to throw at Him. In similar fashion, He answered the question of the roman cohort in the garden with the words, 'I Am'. It is accounted that they drew back and fell to the ground such was the impact of this statement. Indeed, Jesus is Yahweh Son.

This was not apparent in His earthly ministry because He had 'emptied Himself' of all His intrinsic name and glory. He had laid aside all His intrinsic prerogatives and He was not revealing Himself. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul encouraged us to consider the nature of the Son's emptying. He wrote, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus'. Phil 2:5. Yahweh Son humbled, stooped and bowed to become the Father's firstborn Son. By this means, He emptied Himself to make room for something new. This was of course 'the new creation'.

When Yahweh Son emptied Himself to the Father's bosom, He inherited the body prepared for Him. He is the sum of new creation. We'll define further in a moment. At this point, which the Scriptures simply call 'today', the Father swore an oath. Firstly, He said, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'. Ps 2:7. And secondly, He said, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of

Melchizedek'. Ps 110:4. By this means, the Father re-activated the intrinsic capacity of the Son to make all things new. It was the intrinsic capacity of the Son to create 'in Himself one new man'. Eph 2:5. The Father begets and the Son creates.

Yahweh the Son had emptied Himself all of His intrinsic prerogatives to the bosom of the Father. And yet the Father re-activated His intrinsic capacity as king and priest, according to the order of Melchizedek. The intrinsic name and glory of Yahweh Son remained in the Father's keeping. Nevertheless, the only begotten Son proceeded from the bosom of the Father with all His intrinsic capacity to reveal and priest the Father's life.

Having been declared the Son of the Father, Yahweh Son continued to empty Himself to create the heavens and the earth. And He humbled Himself further still to become the Word in flesh, the Seed of the Father's life in the womb of a woman. It is difficult to perceive the extent of such humbling. He partook of human flesh and blood and continued to humble Himself, pouring Himself out to death, all the way to *cherem*, to eternal death. This was all for our sake, 'that through death He might ... deliver those who through the fear of death were subject to slavery all of their lives ... for assuredly ... He gives help to the descendant [seed] of Abraham'. Heb 2:14-16.

Therefore, when John spoke of the Word becoming flesh, He was referring to the Word who 'was God'. The Word that became flesh was from a pre-cognitive, pre-existent source. He was, and is, Yahweh Son, 'I AM'.

Jesus is the new creation

The Scripture, and particularly the writings of John, are full of references to Jesus as the ‘Son of God’. Perhaps the most quoted verse is, ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son’. John 3:16. The fact that Jesus was the Son of God seems straight forward enough. However, this was something completely ‘new’ in the fellowship of Yahweh. Of course, Yahweh Son was not always the Son of the Father. He was, and is, a co-essential member of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, we read in Paul’s letter to the Philippians that ‘He did not count equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself’. Phil 2:6-7. When He emptied Himself, becoming the only begotten Son of the Father, He was the new creation.

He was both the beginning of the new creation, and the ‘sum’ of new creation. This is the meaning of ‘from Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things’. Ref. He contained the new creation in Himself. And this was because the Father committed His life to Him. Accordingly, the name of every foreknown and predestined son is contained in the one Seed, Christ. John accounts, ‘God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son’. 1 John 5:11. He is only begotten Son, and we must be begotten in Him. Hence, ‘if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation’. Ref.

The Father is the everlasting source of all things new, but He has committed His life, word, and will to the Son. This is the body prepared. Accordingly, the Son declares, ‘A body You have prepared for Me ... Behold, I have come (in the scroll of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God’. Heb 10:5,7. The word of every person’s sonship has been committed to the Son. This is the meaning

of the scroll of the book, the Lamb's book of life where every name is written.

The Father has given His life to the only begotten Son. Therefore, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves'. John 6:53. The Father's word is declared by the only begotten Son. Hence Jesus said, 'The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life'. John 6:63. And the Father's will is likewise fulfilled through the Son. 'This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day'. John 6:40. This is why the Son of the Father is the 'sum' of new creation.

The new creation in the womb

When the fullness of time came, the new creation was brought forth from the womb of the virgin Mary. 'When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law'. Gal 4:4. The power of the Most High overshadowed Mary and brought forth everything that was birthed in the covenant dialogue of the Father's bosom. On the Mount of Transfiguration when the Father declared again, "This is My beloved Son", 'a bright cloud overshadowed them'. Matt 17:5.

Mary had this same experience when the Word of the Father came to her. The Word in her flesh was the only begotten Son. By the work of the Holy Spirit, the Word was conceived in her womb and brought forth in the flesh of mankind. For this reason 'the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.' Luke 1:35. The Word, the *zoe* life giving Spirit, had been born in flesh. He was the new creation in the womb of the virgin.

The only begotten Son, the Father's Seed, contained the name of every predestined son in Himself. All the promises are made to one Seed. *Seed* is the Greek word *sperma*, conveying the picture of supernatural conception. However, this was by no means a biological conception. It was by a word, not by the deposit of an embryo. The Word in flesh is not merely the synthesis of the Spirit of Christ and the egg of a mortal woman. Neither was Mary a surrogate mother with no participation in the birthing process. Concerning the Holy One, she was told by the angel, 'You will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus'. Luke 1:14. It was a genuine conception. Nevertheless, it was much more than a *natural* conception. A miracle took place in the womb of Mary. The new creation was brought forth by a word into the flesh of mankind.

Jesus is the Son of Man

The Holy One brought forth from the womb of Mary is the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham. He is the only begotten Son of the Father. But, He is also the Son of Abraham. Accordingly, He is the Son of Man forever. And He will never relinquish this aspect of new creation. Having ascended to the glory He had before, He is the 'glorified Son of Man'. We are reminded of the words of Jesus, 'When the Son of Man comes in His glory ... He will sit on His glorious throne'. Matt 25:31.

Our key point is that by incarnation, Yahweh validated the flesh of Abraham. Abraham had believed that *zoe* life would be revealed in the flesh of mankind. This promise was fulfilled in the womb of the virgin. The flesh of Abraham was validated and his faith was indeed substantiated. Participating in the substance of this faith, long

before its fulfilment, Abraham believed that a son would be born from his own body.

We recall again that it was the Lord Himself, Yahweh the Son, who proclaimed this promise to Him. He said, 'I am your shield, your exceeding great reward'. Gen 15:1. Abraham believed that Yahweh the Son, the Word speaking to him, would become his son according to the flesh. This is the meaning of Paul's question in his letter to the Romans, 'What shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?' Rom 4:1. He found the faith to reveal the only begotten Son of the Father in his flesh. By this means, He participated in the faith of God.

Further to this, He believed that in his Seed, Christ, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. He believed for the adoption of all believers, including himself, as sons of God. He believed the multitude of sons brought forth from this 'singular' Seed would be as 'numerous as the stars of heaven'.

With this in view, we must say again that the flesh of Jesus was not the same as our flesh. He partook of our flesh and blood for the purpose of suffering death and making Himself the sin offering. However, this was not the primary reason for His coming. Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly'. John 10:10. His flesh gives life to the world. It is the flesh of *zoe*. As we eat His flesh we receive life in ourselves, and the inner man is being prepared for the day of resurrection when our lowly bodies will be fashioned like His glorious body. He is the DNA, the pattern of our resurrection body, conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary. Truly, the lesser is blessed by the greater! This is the substance of the new creation.

Chapter 5: The promise to David

Continuing to discuss the bringing forth of the new creation, we'll now shift our focus to David. We have looked at the promise made to Abraham. And it is not as if the promises made to David are substantially different. Both Abraham and David believed in a God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things which are not. They both lived in faith for the new creation. Nevertheless, building upon the faith of Abraham, the faith of David extended to a further revelation of the new creation.

David's faith and experience direct our attention to the resurrection, where Christ is begotten from the dead with power. Referring to this particular stage of new creation, Paul specifically called Jesus the Son of David. We read in his letter to the Romans, 'His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh ... was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead'. Rom 1:4.

As the seed of David, Christ is the new creation made alive from the dead by resurrection. God verified the flesh of David, raising it in Christ when He was seated at the right hand of the Father with the glory He had before. The 'Sure Mercies of David' direct us to understand the nature of this life, and 'the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe'. Eph 1:19. In the first instance, this power is working to renew the inner man so that we are changed from glory to glory. In Christ the new creation, the Father is bringing His *zoe* life to our inner man in preparation for the resurrection of the last day. And more than this, we know that God

'has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power'. 1 Cor 6:14.

Again, the promise of God that His own Son would descend from Abraham draws our attention to His incarnation and birth in the flesh to Mary. He is the one Seed who has included us all. Immediately, we can see where the DNA of our resurrection comes from. It is through the virgin's womb. Nevertheless, our resurrection was assured when David's flesh was validated by the resurrection of Christ and His ascension to the Father's right hand.

The faith of David

Let's look further at Peter's great sermon on the Day of Pentecost. Remember that Pentecost was the celebration of the feast of weeks or first fruits. It was the presentation of the firstfruits from the wheat harvest within the Jewish religious calendar. With this in view, it is hardly surprising that the central feature of Peter's sermon was the resurrection of Christ the First Fruits and His ascension to the right hand.

After quoting from various passages including the book of Joel, Peter focused immediately on the dialogue of the everlasting covenant. He began by referring to Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God. Acts 2:22. Our first conclusion is that Jesus is the new creation in the flesh of Abraham. And further to this, He was delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. According to Peter, this dialogue and everlasting covenant determination, was itself the catalyst for His death. Of course, death is a fundamental statement of offering and giving, rather than simply the default consequence of mortality and corruption. Peter established

categorically that it was impossible for Him to be held by the power of death. Acts 2:24.

David is central to this proposition because He always saw the Lord in his presence. He knew the Lord was at his right hand, establishing his kingdom forever. David understood that he sat on Melchizedek's throne, holding it in trust for the Lord who was at his right hand. He understood that his throne was supported and verified by Yahweh the Son.

David was the anointed king. However, Peter also called him a prophet. He is David our father, who likewise took up the priestly ephod, ate the sacred bread, and sat before the Mercy Seat. Interestingly, he touched each of the four administrations of the Living One and the throne of the Son. This man understood the oath which was sworn to him to seat one his descendants on his throne. He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of Jesus.

It was David's faith that the fruit of his own body would overcome corruption and be raised from the dead. Indeed, Christ did overcome corruption in the flesh, ending sin for all time, and destroying the dominion of death. Peter draws our attention to the fulfilment of this. Jesus was raised up by the Father and exulted to His right hand. David slept with the Fathers, resting in this hope. According to these 'Sure Mercies', his own resurrection was assured.

The key of David

The power of resurrection is what the Scriptures call the 'key of David'. This is the key held by Jesus, the Living One who overcame the power of death. We recall again that Peter said it was impossible

for Him to be held in its power. Accordingly, the key of David is the key of hell and of death. Rev 1:18.

In the book of Revelation, we see that Christ addressed the church in Philadelphia as ‘He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David’. Rev 3:7. We should consider here that David did not possess this key and then give it to Christ. No, this key is the possession of Melchizedek. It is the key of Him who is able to shut the mouth of Sheol and open the gate of heaven. This authority of Yahweh Son was held in trust by David upon the throne of Melchizedek. David lived in the faith of this key, in the same way that He lived in the faith of being seated in the throne of Melchizedek. David himself slept among the Fathers and suffered decay. Nevertheless, he rested in hope knowing that this key is effective.

Raised to the glory before

Approaching His death, Jesus asked the Father to glorify Him again. ‘Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the *glory* which I had with You *before* the world was’. When Jesus used the term ‘before’, He was speaking of ‘before’ He emptied Himself to the bosom of the Father. Of course, this denotes something that is outside of time. This emptying initiated the beginning. Hence the Scripture says, ‘In the beginning was the Word’. John 1:1. Eternity does not refer to anything before the beginning. Rather, things eternal have a beginning but no end.

Of this ‘glory before’, Jesus was speaking of His own intrinsic name and glory as Yahweh Son. When He emptied Himself, He entrusted this to the Father’s keeping. He committed Himself to revealing the glory of the Father. Hence John says, ‘We saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the *Father*’. John 1:14. Jesus glorified the

Father by establishing the context in which many sons could be brought to glory. Now, approaching the culmination and finish of this work, He prayed that the Father would glorify Him.

The first step in this glorifying activity occurred when the Father raised Him from the dead. We recall that ‘Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father’. Rom 6:4. It is the glory and power of the Father that gives life to the dead. This is the glory and power which Jesus now possesses such that He can say, ‘I will raise him up on the last day’. John 6:39,40,44. According to His own testimony before Pilate, Jesus said, ‘You shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven’. Mark 14:62. This is the glorified Son of Man, endowed with all power from on high.

Nevertheless, the ‘glory He had before’ is something more again. It is His glory as the intrinsic king-priest after the order of Melchizedek. This was what is re-activated when He ascended. The Father said to Him, ‘Sit at My right hand ... You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’. Ps 110:1,4. By this means, the Father validated the intrinsic Son’s capacity as king-priest.

Raised to the intrinsic throne

The book of Ephesians tells us that Jesus has ‘ascended far above all the heavens’. Eph 4:10. He has returned to His own intrinsic throne, the throne of the Son. Before this, the Son was raised to sit with the Father in His throne. When we are speaking of thrones, we are referring to the throne of the Father and the throne of the Son. Remember that a ‘throne’ is the symbol of authority in a kingdom, and ‘sitting’ indicates rest once a work is complete.

The Son rested in the bosom of the Father having completed the Father's work. This occurred as He said, 'Father, into your hands, I commit My Spirit'. Luke 23:46. Jesus ascended to the Father's bosom in His immortal flesh on the day of His resurrection, having said to Mary, 'Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father'. John 20:17. Having done this, He did invite the disciples to 'touch Me and see', later that day in the Upper Room. Luk 24:39.

After walking with the disciples for forty days, Jesus then ascended from the Mt of Olives. He was raised again by the glory of the Father and seated with the Father in His throne. This was the first phase of His ascension, fulfilling the words of David, 'The LORD says to My Lord, sit at My right hand'. Ps 110:1. Jesus sat down in the Father's throne as the only begotten Son of the Father, having overcome the power of death. He was the glorified Son of Man, having brought a multitude of sons to glory. However, there was more. The Father also said to Him, 'You are a priest forever'. By this means, He re-activated His intrinsic name and glory and the Son. The Son ascended 'far above all the heavens' and resumed His own intrinsic throne, the throne of the Son.

Referring then to His throne, there are two salient points. Firstly, it is the place where He received the glory He had before, inheriting a more excellent name. 'God highly exalted Him, and bestowed upon Him the name which is above every name.' Phil 2:9. Secondly, it is the throne to which we have been raised to sit with Him in the heavenly places. Hence He says, 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne'. Rev 3:21. This is the throne of Melchizedek. This is the throne of His kingship and priesthood.

Gloriously, when we are baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we become members of His body seated in His intrinsic throne. He is the immortal head of the body of Christ. And we partake of His body when we eat and drink the communion. Hence Jesus said, 'I *grant* you that you may eat and drink at My table', in the same way He *grants* us to sit with Him in His throne. Luke 22:30. When we eat and drink the communion, we are granted participation in the throne and kingdom of the Son.

Chapter 6: The way of life

In psalm sixteen, David spoke of the ‘way of life’. And Peter quoted this on the day of Pentecost. ‘You have made known to Me the ways of life, You will make me full of gladness in Your presence’. Acts 2:28. This is the way of *zoe*-life. Having looked at the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham and David, we’ll follow the ‘way of *zoe*’ from the Last Supper to the cry ‘it is finished’. Accordingly, we will focus upon the transfer of our lives to Him and His life to us.

This is what we call the ‘adoptive transfer’. By this we mean the transfer of life by which our adoption as sons takes place. We recall the words of Paul, ‘He has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and *transferred* us into the kingdom of His beloved Son’. Col 1:13. We have been ‘predestined to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself according to the kind intention of His will’. Eph 1:5. It is ‘through’ Jesus that this adoptive transfer takes place. We will consider that the path from the Upper Room to the finished work were ‘steps’ in this adoptive transfer.

The Father’s offering by covenant

When we follow Jesus on this ‘way of life’, we are indeed ‘following the Lamb’. We are familiar with the cry of John the Baptist concerning Jesus, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God’. John 1:29. The Scriptures are built upon this way of the Lamb. Whenever we are beholding the Lamb, we are seeing the fullness of offering and the fullness of judgment. The first offering accounted for was the firstborn of the flock where Abel offered up a lamb with its fat portions. Gen 4:4. We know that the Lord had regard for Abel and

his offering. The Scriptures conclude when the Lamb is both the lamp and the temple.

Let us firstly consider the Father's lamb as the Father's offering by covenant. The adoptive transfer is itself made manifest by the Lamb. The pre-existent Son is before all things. The apostle John tells us that He had glory before the world was. We recall that the pre-existent Son emptied Himself of His name and glory to the Father's bosom. By this we mean that He laid aside all His intrinsic capacity to do nothing of Himself. Accordingly, the Father proclaimed 'You are My Son'. And as the Father had life in Himself, He gave it to the Son to have life in Himself. This was the first expression of adoptive transfer.

In this same transaction, the Son took up the body prepared for Him, that is, the body of the Father's *zoe* life. Immediately, He offered Himself to God, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice. He became the Father's lamb, foreknown before the foundation of the world. The name of every foreknown and predestined Son was transferred to the Son, the Lamb of God.

The Lamb's book of Life

Every one of these names was written before the foundation of the world in the Lamb's book of life. Of course, this is book of which the prophet spoke concerning Christ, 'In the volume of the book it is written of me'. Heb 10:7. Not only is every name recorded in this book of *zoe*-life, the predestined deeds and work of every son are likewise recorded there. The psalmist reassures us of our foreknown and predestined sonship in this book. Ps 139:16.

Every son will be judged when this book, ‘which is the book of life’ is opened and we are ‘judged from the things written in the books’ according to our deeds. Rev 20:12-13. Peter, in referring to the Father, the One who impartially judges, speaks to us of our redemption by the ‘precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ’. 1 Pet 1:19.

Behold the Lamb

Having become the Lamb of God and the begotten Son, the Father transferred the priesthood of the pre-existent Son back to Him. The Father declared, ‘You are a priest forever’. Ps 110:4. And so it is that we behold a Lamb ‘before’ the foundation of the world, ‘before’ the beginning.

John begins his gospel with ‘In the beginning was the word’. John 1:1. This word is the articulation and communication of the Father’s will by the Lamb of God. John the Baptist quickly identified this fact. Hence he proclaimed ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’. John 1:29,36.

John’s word is an imperative. It is a command to ‘Behold’. As each of His future disciples came into this experience, they saw and followed. To each of them, the Lamb spoke saying, ‘Follow Me’. John recounts in his first letter, ‘What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life’. 1 John 1:1. This *zoe*-life is in the Lamb.

The blood of the Lamb

We should remember here that the burnt offering was principally a lamb slain. And every other offering was laid upon it. It was the

foundational offering. The expression of offering between Father, Son and Holy Spirit brought forth a Lamb, 'foreknown before the foundation of the world who has appeared in these last times'. 1 Peter 1:20. When He offered Himself to the Father, He established the foundation of covenant by blood. Every covenant is ratified by the shedding of blood. And the blood of this Lamb is the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Accordingly, Jesus said at the Last Supper, 'This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many'. Mark 14:24. There are four primary operations of the blood which we should note. Each of these operations is applied by a priest. Firstly, the blood is the life. This is the blood poured out for many. Secondly, the blood is the agency of redemption, the purchase price, the ransom of sons. This is not firstly the cost to God to 'buy us back' from sin. It is the cost to 'give us His life'. We have been redeemed by the precious blood as of a Lamb. 1 Peter 1:19. Thirdly, the blood is the agency of remission. Hence the apostle says, 'Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Heb 9:22. Fourthly, it is the blood that cleanses us from all sin, presenting us without spot and blemish. The great multitude in the book of Revelation have 'washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'. Rev 7:14. The culmination of this shedding of blood is bringing back from the dead. He 'brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant'. Heb 13:20.

The Lamb and the Bread

As we follow the lamb from Abel to Moses, we don't see an offering for sin. Rather the lamb is the living sacrifice, the burnt offering. As

the aroma of the offering ascended, the Lord responded by a word. It was the word of the covenant, the word of *zoe*-life coming to the person making offering. As each one stepped forward as a priest to offer the expression of their sonship, the Lord answered by a word. This word was indeed the 'bread of heaven', 'true food' coming to each offering son. The adoptive transfer was effective in a true fellowship of giving and receiving. We transferred our life to Him in the body of a lamb. And He transferred His life to us in a proceeding word, an oath confirming the covenant. This is the bread of God which gives life to the world.

Proceeding to the time of Moses, the Lord commanded them to take a lamb for the Father's house. And this lamb was to be accompanied by unleavened bread. The most fundamental expression of Christ the firstborn is the bread coming down from heaven. He is for us the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. He is the bread of the grain offering, the firstfruits offering. When we eat this bread, we are eating of the substance of His eternal *zoe*-life. If we do not eat this bread, we have no life within us.

The blood of the Passover Lamb was truly effective and continual when it was accompanied with the bread of life. Accordingly, the children of Israel purged leaven from their houses. In this purging process, a worthy house was established. They could follow the Lamb on a three day journey to sacrifice in the wilderness. The apostle John reminds us that only the Lamb is truly found worthy.

The Lamb for our sake

The next facet of the adoptive transfer for us to consider is His offering on our behalf. He became our substitute, the mediator between God and man. He became the sin-bearer, the offering for

sin. He became 'as we are', laying hold of our flesh, mortality and sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. And more than this, He became the very judgment of God itself, the price of our redemption and ransom. This was the cost to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit to give us the divine nature. Christ was the offering and the priest opening the way of life by which we become partakers of the divine nature.

As the offering for sin and the priest of this offering, He opened not His mouth. 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth'. Acts 8:32. Peter tells us that, 'Being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats'. 1 Pet 2:23. He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth. The chastening of our well being fell upon Him. He took upon Himself our sin and eternal judgment; then He gave us His life by adoptive transfer. In so doing, the lie was removed and we were healed. He who was a liar from the beginning was lifted up and cast out. The ruler of this world was judged. By this process, we who were sin could die to sin and become the righteousness of God in Him.

As the Lamb of God walked among us, the life of God was manifested. That which had been hidden in the heart of God was manifested and revealed at the appointed time. By beholding the Lamb, we can believe and participate in Him. We may appropriate His life by drinking His blood. And we may appropriate the substance of our sonship by eating the bread of His flesh. If we 'eat and drink' in this way, He will raise us up on the last day, fashioning our mortal bodies according to the glory of His resurrection. This has been the focus of our study, bringing us to the poignant encounter with the Lamb and the disciples in the Upper Room.

The Last Supper

We recall the words of the Lamb to His disciples, 'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer'. Luke 22:15. In the Upper Room, Christ ate the Passover with them and He became the Passover Lamb that same day. He was indeed the fulfilment of all offering as He proceeded to offer Himself 'once for all'. Heb 7:27.

The account of this Last Supper reveals to us the substance of His flesh. As He celebrated this Passover meal with them, Jesus was transferring the disciples to Himself. He included them 'in Him', in the body of His offering. And when the disciples ate the bread, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, He was transferring His life to them. Indeed, they were receiving life. They received the substance of His Spirit, even though they were not yet born again. Jesus had accounted earlier in His ministry, 'I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me'. John 6:57.

This participation in the Last Supper was confirming their sonship. The identity of each son was confirmed as He gave them the bread of life. Again, the adoptive transfer was active among them. By eating the bread, they became participants in the altar of which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. As they ate of His flesh and drank of the blood of the new covenant, that bread was becoming the substance of their resurrection bodies for the last day.

The Garden of Gethsemane

From the Upper Room, they accompanied Him to the Garden of Gethsemane. We'll firstly consider Gethsemane as the place of blood. As Jesus cried out concerning the cup, He sweated drops of

blood from every pore in His body. The first of seven sprinklings occurred right there in the garden. This was the beginning of the blood sprinkled way, extending all the way to the finished work. He was truly pouring out His soul unto death.

Further to this, the priests of old were ordained for the work of ministry by the application of blood and oil. We are immediately reminded that Gethsemane is the oil press. And it was in the garden where the oil of the Spirit was poured upon Him. This was the oil of eternal Spirit, the oil of the Spirit of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As the blood and oil was sprinkled upon His garments, He was truly ordained and strengthened for this hour and the power of darkness. Luke 22:53. Indeed, Christ was strengthened by oil and by prayer. Thus the fellowship of *zoë* continued. As the Father's firstborn, the true grain offering, the oil was poured upon Him and mixed in the body of His offering.

We recall that Jesus told Peter, James and John to 'watch and pray' and then He went a 'stone's throw' further. This is more than a description of a distance. We know the casting of stones represents the judgment of the law. When Jesus went a 'stone's throw' beyond them, He went to the place of cursing and everlasting judgment. Thus Jesus established two modes of participation in the Garden. We must follow the Lamb all the way to Calvary, but He has walked the way of cursing so that we walk the way of blessing. Hence the cup the Lord gives us is a 'cup of blessing'.

We must participate with Him and drink this cup. 'Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ?' 1 Cor 10:16. Hence Jesus commanded His disciples to 'watch and pray' with Him. Having eaten His flesh and drunk His blood at the Last

Supper, the Spirit of Christ dwelt within them. Nevertheless, they had to activate the capacity of His Spirit within them by prayer. We know they stumbled at this point. Jesus spoke to them saying, 'So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour ... the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak'. Matt 26:41. They did not pray, they were not endued with the empowering oil of eternal Spirit. And that night they all forsook Him.

Gethsemane – drinking the cup

The cup we drink is for us the 'cup of blessing' because Jesus accepted the cup of sin on our behalf. It is likewise, the 'cup of reeling' and the 'chalice of His wrath', of which the prophet Isaiah spoke. 'Behold, I have taken out of your hand the cup of reeling, the chalice of My anger. You will never drink it again'. Isa 51:22. Again, the adoptive transfer is clear in the exchange of cups. Jesus drank 'the cup of reeling, and the chalice of My wrath' so that we may drink the 'cup of blessing'.

The cup that the Father gave Jesus to drink had two facets. Firstly, it was the cup of reeling, the cup of sin itself. Accordingly, He was made sin-sick. Secondly, it was the cup of the wrath of God, the full extent of His anger. He was cursed for our sake. 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'. Gal 3:13. When Jesus prayed three times He was strengthened to drink this cup. He then began to drink the cup at the midnight hour.

After praying three times, He returned and said to the disciples, 'Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners'. Matt 26:45. Jesus drank the cup that the Father had given Him when He was betrayed and suffered at the hands of wicked men. This was the midnight hour. This was indeed

the hour of darkness where the angel of death sought His destruction. Satan had entered the heart of Judas, and during the hours of Gethsemane, he was betraying Jesus. Judas received the Roman cohort and betrayed the Lord with a kiss. It is apparent that the disciples were unable to follow the Lamb at this point. Peter confronted the officers of the high priest. Nevertheless, Jesus said, 'The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?' John 18:11.

The Scriptures particularly account that 'they came and laid hands on Jesus'. Matt 26:50. This is particularly important. By this means, the sins of the world were imputed to Him in the same way as the high priests of old confessed the sins of the nation over the sin offering. We'll recall the words of John the Baptist, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' John 1:29.

Sin-sick and sin bearer

Christ was made sick with sin by the Father's hand upon Him, afflicting Him and making His soul an offering for sin. The Lord has caused the iniquity of us to fall upon Him. Indeed, He was weighed down, burdened and sin-sick. According to Jeremiah, 'Woe is me, because of my injury! My wound is incurable. But I said, "Truly this is a sickness, and I must bear it'. Jesus was made sin-sick, but He was also the sin-bearer. He was truly taking our infirmities and carrying away our diseases. Matt 8:17.

Like the scapegoat, all our infirmities and sin was imputed to Him. That goat was to bear and carry away all iniquity. We know that in His appearance, Jesus was marred more than any man. By oppression and judgment, He was taken away from the land of the living. According to the prophet Isaiah, 'He has borne our griefs and

carried our sorrows ... smitten by God, and afflicted ... He was wounded for our transgressions ... the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed'. Is 53:4-5. Quoting the words of Isaiah, Peter accounts that Jesus bore our sins in His body and by His wounds we are healed.

We are reminded here of the promises of God that if we keep His covenant, He 'will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt'. Deut 17:5. Conversely, if we refuse to keep His covenant, 'the Lord will bring extraordinary plagues on you ... miserable and chronic sicknesses'. Deut 28:59. We keep His covenant by following the Lamb. We are healed because we are redeemed by His precious blood. In seven wounds, He took away our sin and sprinkled His blood. This can be likened to the Old Testament cleansing of a leper. There had to a sprinkling seven times before the person with leprosy was healed and pronounced clean. Lev 14:7.

The sprinkling of His blood culminated in the eighth wound when the spear was thrust into His side. John accounts that 'immediately blood and water came out'. John 19:34. This was living water. In the book of Revelation, John described this as the 'river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb'. Rev 22:1. On either side of this river 'was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit ... for the healing of the nations'. Rev 22:2. As He was lifted up, becoming a curse for us, all the works of the devil and the curse of the law were removed. As this water flowed from His side, the curse was broken. Hence John accounts 'There will no longer be any curse'. Rev 22:3.

The full extent of the curse

When Jesus was lifted up on the cross, the full extent of the curse was upon Him. We recall again, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'. Ref. The full extent of the curse is the 'power of death' itself. This curse has two facets. Firstly, it is the death that reigned from Adam to Moses on account of sin itself. This affects all men, such that the psalmist cried out, 'What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?' Ps 89:48. This is the curse of mortality and corruption. Secondly, it is the death that is imputed by penalty of the law. This is the curse of the law.

We could consider that Jesus began to suffer these two facets of the curse when He appeared before the high priest, and later Pilate. Of course, this suffering 'at the hands of wicked men' culminated in His lifting up. When Jesus stood before the high priest the curse of the law was imputed upon Him as they condemned Him to death for blasphemy. This of course was a lie and had no power to kill Him. Nevertheless, He was 'judged' by the custodians of the law. The high priest tore his robes and said, 'What further need do we have of witnesses? The whole council responded by saying, 'He deserves death!' Matt 26:65-66.

He then proceeded to suffer the full extent of the curse of mortality and corruption when He stood before Pilate. In this place, He was not being judged according to the law of the Jews. He was suffering at the hands of Gentiles. 'And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head'. John 19:2. We recall that 'thorns and thistles' are the fruit of the curse in the beginning.

Both of these facets of the curse plague mankind in the venom of the serpent. The serpent is himself cursed, and He perpetuates the curse

by his deception and accusation. Satan, the serpent of old, is the father of lies from the very beginning. And he is likewise ‘the accuser of the brethren’. Accordingly, when Jesus was lifted up as the serpent in the wilderness, He became the full extent of the curse. He was truly cursed for our sake.

The separation of the sin offering

Jesus was indeed the sin offering. The judgment of God fell upon His *zoe* body as the accusation of the law in the hands of Satan and evil men. Nevertheless, we know that He did not open His mouth. He absorbed the serpent’s venom, His deception and lies. Being reviled, He did not revile in return. He sought no justification. Thus the testimony of the Lord prevailed. The truth was declared. We’ll recall the words of Jesus, ‘When you lift up the son of Man, then you will know I Am’. He was proven to be the spotless Lamb of God, bearing our sins in His mortal body. A separation was made between the serpent and the Lamb, the lie and the truth.

As the spotless Lamb of God, Jesus fulfilled the law and nailed it back into its proper place. He was truly the ‘one offering’, ‘once for all’. He abolished the enmity of the law. And accordingly, He destroyed him who had the power of death. The serpent was lifted up to be cast out and destroyed. This fulfilled the words of Jesus concerning His lifting up, ‘The ruler of this world will be cast out’. John 12:31.

More than this, as the spotless Lamb of God and the ‘sin-bearer’, Jesus condemned sin in His flesh. Having become sin, He carried it out in Himself to be judged. Again, a separation was made! With every drop of His precious blood, sin was dying and He was coming back from the death of sin. As He died, so also sin died. It was taken

away to judgment. Nevertheless, 'the death He died, He died to sin'. Rom 6:10. A separation was made between the body of sin and His *zoe* body, doing the will of the Father. In the place of everlasting judgment, the body of sin was cut-off and destroyed. By seven wounds, He came back from the death of sin as the firstborn from the dead.

I will draw all men

Jesus Himself testified, 'if I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself'. John 12:32. In seven wounds, Jesus preached peace to those who are near and those who are afar off. He reconciled Jew and Gentile in the body of His flesh, putting to death the enmity. And His blood draws all men. We are redeemed and brought near by the blood of Christ.

John recalled 'What we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life'. 1 John 1:1. The first effect of redeeming blood is that we may behold the Lamb, looking upon Him whom we have pierced. And looking upon Him, we believe. Jesus said He would be lifted up 'so that whoever believes' will have eternal life. John 3:15. Faith is born and activated in our hearts. 'But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written "I believed, therefore I spoke", we also believe.' 2 Cor 4:13.

When we behold the Lamb, we are compelled to follow and participate with Him. Truly the love of Christ controls us, having concluded that one died for all therefore all died. As we look upon Him we behold our own sin dying in Him. We also behold the testimony of 'I Am', back from the death of sin. And more than this, He is back from the dead as the 'great Shepherd of the sheep'. Heb

13:20. In seven wounds, He has brought us back from the death of sin 'in Him'. As we participate in the Lamb, we are brought back from the dead as the sheep of this 'great Shepherd'.

The blood of Christ thus speaks concerning our redemption and sonship. Indeed His blood equips us 'in every good thing to do His will'. Heb 13:21. We find faith to do the work and will of God. In the first instance, it is the work of God that we believe. 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent'. John 6:29. All that is required of us is that we look upon Him whom we have pierced, beholding the Lamb and following Him wherever He goes.

The firstborn from the dead

Jesus is declared to be the firstborn from the dead. In seven wounds, He was the spotless offering and a full propitiation for sin was complete. He had triumphed over sin and death. His work was now complete. In faith, He cried, 'Why have you forsaken Me?' Having been smitten and forsaken of God, the Father's face had been turned away from Him. This cry ascended before the Father and He could not deny the remembrance of our great High Priest. Right there, the Father received Him again and the everlasting doors were opened for the King of Glory. Thus He could cry, 'it is finished'. He was evidently the firstborn from the dead.

As one alive from the dead, He was the firstfruits of a new creation. He was the wave offering, the firstfruits of them that sleep. As His sheaf was waved, so also our names were waved before the Father in Him. Thus He could rest in hope, having opened to us 'the way of life'. He entered into rest with the cry, 'Father, into Your hands, I commit My Spirit'. Luke 23:46. By this means, He offered Himself to God. No one took His life from Him. When the soldiers came to put

Jesus to death so that He could be buried before the High Day Sabbath, He was already dead. In seven wounds, He had become the sum of all offering, and the firstborn from the dead.

His blood – fully poured out

The eighth wound was the fullness of Christ's emptying Himself. When the spear was thrust in His side, blood and water flowed out. We have already spoken of the symbolism of the water. Our interest here is the blood. Remember that the *life* of the flesh is in the blood. In the eighth wound, this blood was completely emptied from His body, never again to be His life source. In that sense, it is never reconstituted in His veins. This was the sum of the previous seven wounds. When we consider the dying of Jesus, it is not so much the outcome of His mortality. Rather, it is the outcome of offering Himself. He poured out His soul unto death.

Having been poured out, His blood still speaks. And it 'speaks better than the blood of Abel'. Heb 12:24. His blood poured out has become our life source when we drink that blood. Our participation in His blood is a participation in the very life of Christ Himself. This life that we drink is the life of the *zoe* Son of the Father. It is indeed the Father's life, ministered to us by the Son. His blood is the life of the world. This definition of the 'world' is all who behold the Son and believe. Of course, His blood does not avail for those who don't believe.

His blood is forever the life of His corporate body. It is an everlasting foundation. The psalmist rejoiced, 'They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house, and You give them to drink of the river of Your delights. For with you is the *fountain of life*.' Ps 36:8-9. This is the

end of the journey on the way of life. We apprehend a foundation of life!

Chapter 7: Resting in Hope

We'll recall the great prophetic cry of the psalmist, 'My flesh shall rest in hope'. Ps 16:9, Acts 2:26. The Lord spoke to Daniel saying, 'Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake to everlasting life'. Dan 12:2. And He said further, 'As for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age. Dan 12:13. The promise of rest is the promise of comfort and peace. This is the 'Sure Mercies of David'.

Yes, we have the promise of rest. And we who believe enter that rest. This is the reward of those who have believed and fulfilled all His will. Daniel was admonished to go his way and sleep. His rest was the reward for a lifetime of sonship. Those who enter the rest of Christ will indeed awake to everlasting life. It is for us an 'allotted portion' at the end of the age.

We could suggest that the sure mercies of David avail only for those who rest in hope. We should 'fear, if while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to come short of it'. Heb 4:1. In the negative sense, the Lord Himself has sworn in His wrath concerning those who disbelieve, 'They shall not enter My rest'. Ps 95:11. This is the judgment upon those who do not work the works of God. That is, those who do not believe and do the works prepared beforehand. They have not fulfilled their own sonship. Having heard the word, it did not profit them because it was not mixed with faith. 'The one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works.' Heb 4:10. When we enter His rest, we rest in hope.

Anointing of the Holy One

We rest in hope because the Holy One saw no decay. Jesus is the Holy One of God, anointed with the oil of gladness and joy. Jesus was certainly anointed in that fellowship and dialogue before the foundation of the world. The Father rested at the beginning and the Son was anointed. As the Father rested, even so the Son entered into the Father's rest, fulfilling His word, and thus bringing many sons to glory.

Let us consider again for a moment that the oil of joy is mixed with, and poured upon, the bread of the first fruits. This is the joy of resurrection. And we anticipate this joy in the day when He says, 'Well done good and faithful servant ... enter into the joy of the Lord'. Matt 25:23.

Our remembrance

We know our flesh is corrupting. Nevertheless, we hold fast to the promise of the Lord's remembrance. The psalmist rejoiced in a God 'who remembered us in our lowly state, For His *mercy* endures forever'. Psa 136:23. We will consider again the remembrance of our names. Every family derives its name from the Father. However, every name has been committed to the Son in the Lamb's book of life.

Christ is the Seed of Abraham, and the seed of David, and we are remembered in that covenant Seed. All our names were lost. We were without hope in the world, dead in trespasses and sins. Nevertheless, because death could not hold Him, the seed could fall into the ground and die and come forth as the memorial portion of

the first fruits. This brings the remembrance of our names. And this is the miracle of the cross.

By death, Christ Himself went out to the land of forgetfulness. Calvary is the place of forgetfulness. The faith of the Son was indeed the faith to lay down His life to the point of death. No one took His life from Him. But more than this, because He is remembered as the firstfruits of the Father, He is able to activate our sonship in Him. He has justified the ungodly and brought us near. We are justified by His blood and brought forth into the position of a son. On Calvary, Christ has been remembered and we are remembered in Him, This was the cry of the thief on the cross, 'Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!'

The seal of the covenant

Jesus was brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant. We'll consider here that the blood is the seal of the covenant. This seal or sign is the guarantee of the Lord's remembrance. It is the promise of God to complete and fulfil His own covenant will. We'll recall that very first covenant sign and seal when the rainbow was in the cloud. 'When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it to remember the everlasting covenant.' Gen 9:16. The blood as the seal of the covenant is indeed the guarantee of remembrance for the lost. It is the guarantee of life from the dead.

Further to this, the Holy Spirit is the seal of the new covenant, the evidence that God has received us as sons in Christ. He is the earnest or foretaste, the guarantee of our inheritance. The Holy Spirit is the constant reminder that we ought to work worthy of our calling. By this means, we will fulfil our sonship ready to be apprehended by the glory of the Father on the day of resurrection,

the redemption of our bodies. Hence we have a guarantee of resurrection. It is 'Christ the first fruits' and 'after that those who are Christ's at His coming'. 1 Cor 15:23. And recalling the words of Paul, 'the firm foundation of the Lord stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His".' 2 Tim 2:19.

The sign of Jonah

In contrast to seeking the fulfilment of the everlasting covenant, the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus for signs. This was truly religion with *zoe*, the evidence of unbelief. Jesus responded by saying, 'An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet not sign will be given it but the sign of Jonah the prophet'. Matt 12:39. He then proceeded to liken the three days and three nights that Jonah spent in the belly of the whale to the three days and three nights that He would spend in the heart of the earth.

This sign of Jonah speaks of His death, burial and resurrection. It likewise speaks of the day of Passover, the day of Unleavened Bread, and the day of Firstfruits. It is the three day operation by which Jesus is raised from the dead as the sheaf of firstfruits.

In another instance, Jesus was asked by the Jews to show them a sign of His authority. He responded, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up'. John 2:19. In this way, He spoke of the same three day operation. In those three days where He rested in hope, the Father brought forth the temple of His body. He crafted the corporate context of the body of Christ. And likewise, He crafted our resurrection bodies with Christ and in Christ. Consequently, He raised us up with Him in the sheaf of firstfruits.

Crafting our resurrection bodies

According to the sign of Jonah, the flesh of the Son of Man would spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. What happened during that time? We'll suggest that there was an interaction between our corruptible flesh, represented in the dust of the earth, and His incorruptible body. An 'adoptive transfer' took place that transformed our *bios* into the likeness of His incorruptible *zoe* flesh. Hence the substance of our resurrection bodies, begotten in the womb of the virgin, were crafted in the heart of the earth. The psalmist testified, 'My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in secret and skilfully wrought in the heart of the earth'. Ps 159:15.

The heart of the earth is the resting place of our corruptible flesh. As the Lord said to Adam, 'You are dust, and to dust you shall return'. Gen 3:19. Accordingly the psalmist said, 'Our soul is bowed down to the dust; our body clings to the ground. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercies' sake'. Ps 44:25-26. Likewise, the psalmist said, 'My soul clings to you, Your right hand upholds me. But those who seek my life, to destroy it, will go down into the depths of the earth. Ps 63:8-9.

The Holy One saw no decay even though His flesh descended to the heart of the earth. While our *bios*, our biological body is perishing, we can nevertheless lay hold of *zoe* as we eat the bread of heaven. We are renewed in the inner man, and our flesh rests in hope of the resurrection of the last day. 'He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day'. The Father has crafted our individual resurrection bodies. This is the guarantee of the 'Sure Mercies of David'.

The hope of resurrection

Our flesh rests in this hope. It is the hope of resurrection. Resurrection is the begetting and glorifying work of the Father. This is uniquely His capacity. He gives life to the dead, but more than this, He begets those things that do not exist. He calls forth the new creation, giving it a body as He pleases.

This is the hope of resurrection as we apprehend the substance of the living bread of Christ. He is the substance of our resurrection bodies. He is the Seed, the very DNA of our resurrection bodies. When we speak of DNA, we are referring to that essential 'pattern' of *zoe*-life found in the only begotten Son.

When this Seed was sown into the ground, into the heart of the earth, He did not abide alone. Nor did His body see corruption. He was raised by the glory of the Father, coming forth and bringing much fruit. And as Christ was raised from the dead, we have come forth in the sheaf. He is the firstfruits and we are His. He is the firstfruits of them that sleep. Our resurrection body is crafted in Him, that is, in the temple of His body.

By this process, the Father gives to each seed a body as it pleases Him. Each individual body is an expression of the glory of sonship foreordained in the heart of the Father. This answers Paul's question in his letter to the Corinthians: how are the dead raised and with what body do they come?

When Christ was raised from the dead, He was raised immortal. In His resurrection body, He walked the earth for forty days. He was indeed the bread of heaven walking among them. He walked with

the disciples as the 'prototype' of our resurrection bodies. Not yet ascended, He did not have the name above every name. He was, nevertheless, the full revelation of *zoe*.

The word comes calling

The word that comes calling is the word of our sonship. If we believe this word, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive because of righteousness. He is justifying the ungodly by faith. All we need to do is to believe and cooperate with the word that is coming to us. The word proceeding is the bread of God, coming down from heaven. As we receive it, we are joined to it. It is giving us life. And the faith of God is coming to us. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word.

This word of faith is indeed the faith of the Son and it has within it the power of its own conviction and intention. When we obey this word of our sonship it is defining our life and bringing forth the capacity of our sonship – to live and fulfil it. We must mix faith with the word coming, and thus receive the *zoe* of Christ, the very power and motivation of our sonship. The word is the very faith and life of God Himself. When we believe and receive that word it defines our life and our work. This faith is made manifest, for it is the very expression of new life coming to us.

According to this our inward man is being renewed and transformed by the word of *zoe* coming to us. And our bodies, though perishing, are nevertheless being quickened and made alive. As the word comes it is making substantial our eternal sonship. On the day of resurrection, that is, the day of *anastasis*, the word will come calling to the graves. 'Earth, earth, earth. Hear the word of the Lord'. Jer 22:29. The dead will hear the voice of the Son of Man and live. Those

who are asleep will arise to their allotted portion. This is the fulfilment of the adoptive transfer. As Christ has crafted our resurrection body in the earth, we will be raised with Him. The resurrection is guaranteed by the 'Sure Mercies of David'.

Being built together

The Father has crafted our resurrection body in Christ, in the temple of His body. However, we only apprehend the substance of this promise as we commit ourselves to being 'built together' in His body. We are to be built together as a spiritual house. We are to be a royal priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices. We must be built together as members of His body to inherit the substance of our resurrection bodies on the last day.

It is the five fold ministry grace of Christ which builds us together. This is the grace of Christ. We are being crafted together so that we can present offerings commensurate with our sonship. It is the grace of God the Father which crafts our sonship so that we can fulfil His will.

We must be crafted to fit together. For many, this becomes a point of offence. Christ is the chosen and precious cornerstone of the spiritual house, the temple of His body. If we receive His word then He is the precious foundation. And we will not be disappointed on the day of resurrection. Nevertheless, Christ is also the stone that the builders reject. For those who disbelieve, He is the stumbling stone and the rock of offence. We must not be offended by the word of Christ. If we withdraw from walking with Him, we lose the substance of our hope.

Concerning this matter of being built together, Peter began with the exhortation to put aside ‘all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander’. 1 Peter 2:1 Paul referred to these things as leaven. If leaven is not purged, then the word of Christ will most certainly become a stumbling stone and a rock of offence. We must come to Him and be built together. Then, as we are being built together into His body, leaven is purged from our lives. This is the practical interface between our corruptible life and His incorruptible body. This is the meaning of ‘resting in hope’.

Chapter 8: The house of David

When Jesus was born ‘in the house of David’, He dwelt in the temporary tent of the flesh of mankind. He is the Saviour and He came to redeem us, both in the inward man and the outward man. He came to give us life and build ‘a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens’.

Building on the faith of Abraham, David believed that Yahweh Son would be born in his flesh, as ‘the fruit of his body’. This was confirmed by the prophecy of Zacharias, ‘Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us *in the house* of His servant David’. Luke 1:68-69. Paul likewise accounts, ‘From the offspring of this man, God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus’. Acts 13:23.

We must consider this ‘house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens’ in three stages before we can discuss our own heavenly house. Firstly, it speaks of the only begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary. This was a completely *zoe*-fied body, dwelling in a mortal, temporary tent.

Secondly, it speaks of Christ’s individual resurrection body, raised from the dead with power. A place for all believers had been prepared in the ‘temple of His body’ and He came back to receive us to Himself. ‘I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself. John 14:3. Indeed, He walked with the disciples in this immortal, incorruptible *zoe* body for forty days. During this time there was no house in heaven.

Thirdly, Jesus ascended in His body to the right hand of the Father and gave gifts to men. As the Head of His 'many-membered' body, He poured out the Holy Spirit. This is the fulfilment of the words of Jesus, 'I will come again and receive you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also'. John 14:1-3. We have been raised to sit with Him in heavenly places. We have a heavenly house in heaven.

As members of His corporate body, we are 'being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God'. 1 Pet 2:5. The 'place' prepared for us becomes 'places to walk' as we live in His body and make offering. This was the faith of David. Hence he was pre-occupied with building the Lord's house and making offering. According to his own testimony, He 'delighted' in making offering for the 'house of My God'.

When we speak of 'the house of David' we are immediately reminded of the words of Paul. 'Christ was faithful as a Son over His house – whose house we are'. Heb 3:6. Like Moses, David was a faithful servant in the Lord's house. It was in the heart of David to build a house for the Lord. Nevertheless, in an amazing encounter, the Lord revealed to David the purpose for such a house. The Lord did not need David to build Him a house. No, He was building David a house, 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens'.

In this way, the Son is truly faithful over His house. The Son is faithful, and the Father is pleased to bless! David rejoiced, 'You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; For you have blessed it, O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever'. 1 Chron 17:27. Indeed, the Father will bestow upon David a spiritual body as it pleases Him in the resurrection. This is indeed a house of eternal *zoë* life.

David received the promise, 'the Lord will build a house for you'. 1 Chron 17:10. He lived in this faith, and his flesh now rests in this hope. It is the hope of a resurrection body for the new heavens and new earth. This is the promise to all believers. The Lord will build a house for you!

Two dwelling places

According to Paul's letter to the Corinthians, a believer has two dwelling places. One is an earthly tent and the other is a heavenly house, eternal in the heavens. 'For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this ... we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven'. 2 Cor 5:1-2. The earthly tent is our physical, mortal body. We know that our physical, mortal body is being torn down. All our weaknesses, sicknesses, vulnerabilities, aches and pains, bear witness to this truth. As sure as the sun sets in the evening, so a close will be brought to our physical tent. It is temporary, corrupting, and it will die. Paul refers to our body as a tent, or more particularly a tabernacle. He is conveying the temporary nature of our physical dwelling.

In sharp contrast to this is the notion of a 'building from God' which is an eternal dwelling, not made with hands. This heavenly house is in 'the temple of His body'. It is a heavenly house because Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father. This was the faith of David, because he overheard, so to speak, that divine dialogue. 'The Lord said to My Lord, sit at My right hand'. Ps 110:1.

As soon as the incorruptible seed lodges within our heart, our eyes are opened to this heavenly reality. When we lay this seed down in

Christ by baptism, we are raised to sit with Him in heavenly places. This heavenly house is 'unseen' because it is hidden with Christ in God. 'It has not yet appeared what we will be'. And yet, 'we know that when He appears, we will be like Him'. 1 John 3:2. From the moment of our baptism, while continuing to sojourn in a temporary tent, we groan to be further clothed with our dwelling from heaven. Indeed, our house is eternal in the heavens. As Paul says, 'for our citizenship is in heaven'. Phil 3:20. Hence Paul encourages us to look at 'what is unseen'.

In a temporary tent

It is evident that David understood the temporary nature of a tent. He was distressed by the fact that while he dwelt in an opulent 'house of cedar', the Ark of the Covenant, the very throne of Yahweh Son, dwelt in a tent. Accordingly, it was in the heart of David to build a house for the Lord.

However, the Lord did not want David, or any man, to build Him a 'house of cedar'. From the day that Moses pitched the tabernacle in the wilderness, the Lord had 'gone from tent to tent and from one dwelling place to another'. 1 Chron 17:5. It was the Lord's intent, according to the everlasting covenant, to firstly live in a tent. This temporary tent was the right and proper dwelling for the Ark of the Covenant. It was the necessary forerunner of the temple.

This is highly significant when we consider again the words of Paul. Our first house is an 'earthly tent'. When the Word became flesh in the womb of the virgin, Jesus did indeed come to dwell in a temporary tent. He adopted the mortal flesh of mankind and 'dwelt among us'. John 1:14. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. We must note here that His tent was never torn down. No one took His

life from Him, and death had no power over him. Nevertheless, He did humble Himself to the point of death in a mortal tent.

The tent is necessary, but it is only temporary. Even though David didn't fully understand the true nature of the temple, He was nonetheless 'burdened' to see it built. In the same way, Paul spoke of groaning in our mortal bodies. We are indeed '*burdened*, not ... to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life'. 2 Cor 5:4. We know our earthly tent is being torn down. However, the advent of corruption in the flesh of mankind did not bring about the need for a 'dwelling from heaven'. It has always been the Lord's intention that we inherit a house, eternal in the heavens. We don't groan to put off our earthly tent. Rather, we groan to be further clothed by the very substance of the *zoe* life of Jesus.

The temple of His body

Jesus dwelt in a temporary tent for the express purpose of building 'the temple of His body'. We recall the pivotal encounter with his disciples, when He said, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up'. John 2:19. The Jews thought he was speaking about Herod's temple which took forty-six years to build'. Of course, John recounts that after His resurrection they realised He had been speaking about the 'temple of His body'. John 2:21.

In a similar way, David had contemplated building the Lord a 'house of Cedar' before He understood the true nature of the temple. It was not until after the resurrection that John and the other disciples received this revelation. The amazing thing of David's illumination is that 'he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ'. Acts 2:31. He understood the three day and three night operation by which the 'temple of His body' would be built.

David knew that it would be ‘the horn of salvation in his house’ that would build the temple. As our great High Priest, Jesus was the righteous branch of David. And we recall the words of the prophet Zechariah concerning this great High Priest, ‘Behold the man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is, and He will build the temple of the Lord’. Zech 6:12.

As the righteous branch of David said, ‘Let not your heart be troubled ... in My Father’s house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also’. John 14:1-3. Jesus prepared this place in the temple of His body when He offered Himself to the Father. By this means, He carried our names in Himself to the bosom of the Father. And the Father crafted our resurrection bodies ‘in Him’ according to the remembrance of our names. When He was raised by the glory of the Father, the substance of our resurrection bodies was raised in Him. The ‘temple of His body’, the dwelling place of a multitude of sons, had been raised up in three days.

Your joy will be full

We recall the words of Jesus, ‘These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full’. John 15:11. Again, He was speaking of the anointing oil, the joy of resurrection.

On the day of His resurrection, the Scripture accounts that His disciples had been ‘mourning and weeping’. Mark 16:10. We recall that Mary Magdalene was also weeping when she found the tomb empty. She had come to anoint her Lord with oil and precious spices. Yet gloriously, this oil was not needed. Jesus had already

been anointed for His burial with the oil of joy. This was the power of resurrection life. Hence the angel said, 'Why do you seek the living One among the dead?'

Jesus had promised, 'Your sorrow will be turned into joy ... I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you'. John 16:20,22. This was most certainly fulfilled on the day of His resurrection. This was much more than joy that He was alive. This joy did not originate in the disciples at all. Jesus had said 'My joy' will be in you. This was the oil of joy 'out of death', truly the oil of joy for mourning'. The joy of the Lord is the guarantee, the foretaste, and substance of eternal *zoe*.

The disciples received this joy when they witnessed His immortal and incorruptible body, and beheld their eternal sonship in Him. This was the 'temple of His body', the glory of their heavenly house. Christ's bodily resurrection 'now' bears witness to our bodily resurrection for the new heavens and new earth. He is the prototype or pattern Son. As He walked with them for forty days, the disciples were able to see and handle the substance of their resurrection bodies. We have this joy now because 'the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead' dwells in us. Rom 8:11. Then our joy is full on the day of resurrection when we awake in His likeness.

A priest in His house

David spoke of this joy when he said, 'In your presence is fullness of joy'. Ps 16:11. With this in view, we understand why he brought the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem with great joy. At this time, David wore priestly robes of fine linen and the ephod. He had been anointed as the king over Israel, but he also lived in the faith of being a priest in the Lord's house. We should remember here that this

anointing the portion of the firstborn, that which belonged to Christ. According to the great mercies of the Lord, David had the crown of anointing upon his head, the crown of the high priest. 'I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always'. 1 Sam 2:35. David truly understood the day of Christ, that this great high priest would come forth from his loins, the One of whom it was said, 'You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek'. Ps 110:4.

This was the faith of David because He understood that the Lord was establishing his house and kingdom in the throne of Melchizedek. By faith, He understood that Jesus would raise us to His intrinsic throne and make us a 'kingdom of priests' with Him. All his days, David sought to participate as a king and a priest in the mercy of the Lord. He cried out, 'May my prayers be counted as incense before You; the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice'. Ps 141:2. And he appointed Asaph and his relatives to minister before the Ark of the Covenant in song as the substance of the daily burnt offering. David appointed them to sing, 'O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His *mercy* endures forever'. 1 Chron 16:34.

At the same time, Zadok the priest and his relatives continued to offer the morning and evening sacrifice on the altar at Gibeon. David appointed singers there also 'to give thanks to the Lord, because His mercies endure forever'. 1 Chron 16:41. David did not replace the morning and evening sacrifice, but as a priest in the Lord's house, he instigated the true substance of this priestly activity. He could sit before the Ark of the Covenant in the presence of the Lord Himself. 1 Chron 17:16. He found courage to pray, sitting before the Lord and

making enquiry concerning his house. And from this place, he looked forward to the day of Christ and the resurrection. As he sat before the Mercy Seat, he truly understood the ‘Sure Mercies of David’.

A priest making offering

David dwelt in the presence of the Lord, and he came to understand the nature of the Lord’s house. In the same way as Moses, who likewise touched all four administrations of the Living One, David learnt to be faithful servant in ‘His house’. He learnt the work of priestly service. Let us be clear. The Lord’s house is a house of offering. Our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, offered Himself to the Father in this house.

The offering of the Son is the substance of the Mercy Seat. And by the ‘mercies of God’ we must likewise offer ourselves to God. Hence Paul wrote, ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the *mercies of God*, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service’. Rom 12:1. We are ‘being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God’. This was the illumination David received as he sat and prayed before the Mercy Seat.

Accordingly, David was pre-occupied with offering and this is the only mode of participation in the Lord’s house. Having made provision for building the Lord’s house, He testified, ‘In my delight in the house of my God, the treasure I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of My God, over and above all that I have already provided for the holy temple’. He lived a life of offering as a priest in the Lord’s house. For this reason, the Lord considered David to be a man after His own heart.

The Lord will build a house for you

When we are making offering in the Lord's house, the body is edifying itself in love. This became David's pre-occupation as he himself made offering, and compelled the people to do likewise. But at the same time, the Lord is building a heavenly house for every believer, 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens'. This was the pinnacle of David's revelation, confirmed by the word of prophecy. In the mouth of Nathan the prophet, it was proclaimed, 'I tell you that the Lord will build a house for you'. 1 Chron 17:10.

It appears that at times, David struggled to comprehend the gravity of this promise. He went in and sat before the Mercy Seat and said, 'Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house?' 1 Chron 17:16. He marvelled that the Lord had brought him so far by establishing his natural kingdom. But much more than this, he marvelled that the Lord was speaking of his house for 'a great while to come'. 1 Chron 17:17. Indeed the Lord had promised, 'Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever'. 2 Sam 7:16. The Lord was promising to raise the throne of David to the throne of Melchizedek. And more than this, the Lord was promising to give him the inheritance of a resurrection body after the order of Melchizedek. This is the power of an everlasting life, a perpetual kingship and priesthood, for the new heavens and new earth.

According to this word, faith came to David. Like Abraham and Mary, he was able to believe for the fulfilment of this word. He cried out, 'Now, O Lord, let the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house be established forever, and do as You have spoken'. 1 Chron 17:23. This was the faith of David.

Accordingly to this faith, he found the courage to pray before the Lord, to boldly approach the throne of grace. He lived in the faith of priesthood, and he appointed his singers to proclaim the mercies of the Lord. 'I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations'. Ps 89:1. Jesus was a faithful high priest over His house, such that mercy is 'built up forever'. Ps 89:2. According to His mercy, He builds a house for every believer.

This is the culmination of our theme. We are presently being 'built together' so that what is 'fitted together is growing into a holy temple of the Lord'. Eph 2:21. But more than this, it is the Lord's intent to build every believer a house so that individually we become a 'dwelling of God in the Spirit'. When this is fulfilled, the saying is true, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them'. Rev 21:3. This is the everlasting covenant, the 'Sure Mercies of David'.

Conclusion: Sure mercies in the morning

As we conclude this book, we can take time to marvel at David's experience of the mercies of God. The psalms are full of such accounts. The mercy of God will be fully manifested in the morning, at the dawn, when we come forth from the womb of the morning, with the dew of lights upon our heads. The songs of David, and of other writers too, are full of this glorious subject.

'Hear ... O LORD ... give ear to my prayer ... You have tested my heart ... show Your marvellous *mercies* by Your right hand ... keep me as the apple of Your eye ... deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword ... as for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.' Psa 17:1-15.

This had been the hope of the promise throughout the ages, but not that we are simply waiting for life after death. Indeed, it is quite the opposite! The prophets spoke of an anointing that breaks the iron yoke of the curse. Like David, all believers are pursuing victory over the grave, while still in mortal flesh.

Accordingly, they cry out, 'Answer me speedily, O LORD; my spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Your *mercies in the morning*, for in You do I trust; cause me to know *the way in which I should walk*, for I lift up my soul to You.' Psa 143:7,8.

Learning the everlasting way

There is a way to walk, as David said, an 'everlasting way', wherein God searches the hearts and tries the reins of a man.

Psa 26:2; Psa 139:23,24. David's experience was not merely an echo, or a prophetic forecast, of the cross of Christ. He learned the way of Christ, the way by which the 'sure mercies' are inherited.

Let us agree that the whole inquiry of man orients around his capacity to overcome and exceed death. Is there life after death, and with what kind of 'body' will individuals arise? Can the inward man resist the encroachment of death, the erosion of the soul? Can the outward man overcome mortality? 'Those who are foolish ... death shall feed on them ... but God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me.' Psa 49:14,15.

Believers in Christ find a promise that the inward man is being renewed, and that the outward man will put on immortality. It is the capacity to lay hold of incorruption, here and now, that best describes the practical import of our study. And it is with David that we find the most extensive record of what the mercy of God. It is obvious that by the Spirit of Christ, David was taught the way of the Lord. He learned the 'everlasting way' and by this he would recover his soul from the grave and inherit the throne of life. David's throne would be as the days of heaven, because of his Seed, Christ. Psa 89:29.

Crying out and engaging with the Messiah, the Anointed One, David learned the 'secret of the Lord'. Psa 25:14. He learnt to walk in a tent, in the tabernacle of God, through the very same experience as Christ. His horn was exalted, and his lamp lit. Then he rested in hope, knowing that he would awake with the likeness of God. Psa 27:5; 132:17, 17:15.

We must all journey as David did. We must learn the 'everlasting way', even as Christ Himself travelled through deep waters to the

Father's bosom. The grave is never satisfied, and destruction never says, 'It is enough'. We must wait upon the Lord, until He inclines His ear, hears our cry, bring us up out of the miry clay, sets our feet on a rock, establishes our steps, and puts a new song in our mouth. Psa 40:1-3. He makes our feet like those of a deer, and teaches our hands to war. Psa 18:33,34. The enemy, the violent man, is too strong for us, and so together with Christ, we cry out for the Father to draw us out of the deep waters. He is *our* refuge, our rock, our fortress, our strong tower. Psa 18:2,16,17,48. Indeed, we run into His name, into the fellowship of His anointing. As we set our love upon Him, we are heard and received. Psa 91:14. He delivers our feet from the pit, and sets them upon the paths of righteousness. Psa 40:2; 23:3.

As we learn to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, He anoints our head with oil, and our cup, the cup of salvation, overflows to others. Surely His mercy follows us all the days of our lives. We shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psa 23:1-6.

His mercies are new every morning, all the way to the dawn of the new heavens and new earth.