

# The Heavenly House

by Victor Hall

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## The heavenly house

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# Zoe Life

This meditation is focussed on the ‘heavenly house’, which is the inheritance of eternal *zoe* life. The apostle Paul described this life as a ‘house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens’. 2 Cor 5:1. Our eternal ‘house’, as Paul used the term, is the full expression of our sonship in the new heavens and new earth. We’ll find this to be a most glorious theme in the Scriptures. There is a heavenly house prepared for all believers. For the moment, this house is hidden with Christ in the bosom of the Father. In this lifetime, we sojourn in a temporary tent, or a body of weakness. However, when Christ returns, all believers will receive the glorious inheritance of their resurrection body. With this in view, our primary interest is: how do we arrive at this body of resurrection?

## The evangelist’s message

In pursuing this theme, my starting point is the evangelist’s message. What is the evangelist’s message?<sup>1</sup> Because you also participate in evangelism, what is it that *you* are going to preach? What is the word of the *mystery* of sonship that you are going to share?

Some time ago, I preached about the events of the Day of Pentecost as they are related to us in chapter two of the

1. You will find a helpful reference to this in the book, *The Fellowship of the Mystery*, page 31, the section called ‘The fundamental gospel’

book of Acts.<sup>2</sup> In this sermon, I introduced the concept that on the Day of Pentecost, two mysteries were proclaimed. The first mystery was preached by one hundred and twenty disciples, many of whom were identified by Luke in his account. He tells us that they preached and prophesied in languages 'from every nation under heaven'. Acts 2:5. The wonderful works of God were proclaimed to each individual present, in their own language. Acts 2:11,12. It is likely that many of the disciples proclaiming these works spoke in more than one language, as the Holy Spirit gave utterance. We have about sixteen to eighteen languages listed, but many more could have been spoken. Acts 2:9-11.

They proclaimed to everyone present their individual sonship, the mystery that had been kept secret, hidden in the heart of God. Eph 3:9. It had been proclaimed from the cross by Christ in the action of Him being 'lifted up'. The apostle Paul explains something of this in his letter to the Ephesian Christians where he writes, 'if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you'. Eph 3:2. Here we have the thought that the *administration* of the grace of the Father is making available to each one who believes, the sonship life that He purposed for them. The second mystery proclaimed was that this sonship life can only be realised through baptism into Christ.

2. Transcript available on Lampstand website

## The life from above

The writers of the New Testament introduce us to a new concept of life. This life is very different from the life which had existed since mankind was created and sin became part of the human condition, through disobedience. They tell us that this life had been hidden as a mystery until Christ came and brought it to light. Now it has been revealed and is proclaimed to all men as part of the good news of the grace of God.

The translators of the New Testament often render the apostles' description of the *zoe* life of God as 'eternal life', and in one sense this is true. It is life that will never cease. But the term 'eternal' does not adequately convey the fact that this life from above is totally different in quality from any other life. It is not the kind of life for eternity that the angels have and it is not the mortal life of this world continuing forever. It is something new that was created for mankind as part of the Father's plan for a multitude of sons.

To help us distinguish this life from all other kinds of life, we will refer to it as *zoe* life.

## A multitude of sons

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit do not need *zoe* life. Their life together is a different quality again and is the complete expression of love and life. It is because they *are* love that they are able to give. What are they giving and bringing forth? They are bringing forth a *multitude* of sons. Heb 11:12; Rev 7:9. The whole plan came from the heart of the Father.

The Father desired to give *zoe* life to a multitude of sons for our sake. Equally, the Son emptied Himself to empower the Father's desire for our sake. Paul wrote concerning the Son, 'Though he was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich'. 2 Cor 8:9.

The sons that are to be brought forth are to be in the image and likeness of the Son. They are not just like angels. There is no thought here of angelic replacement. God did not put into place *plan A* which became corrupted when the angels fell. Neither did He put in place *plan B* when He created man, or put in place a contingency plan to redeem man if he failed. There was never in the heart of God a plan to replace the fallen angels with men. Ninety percent of the human race has not believed, so who or what is going to replace man? No, this has nothing to do with a contingency plan. The Father is working in accordance with what he has *always purposed in His heart*.

## Of God

*Zoe* life is that dimension of existence which is *of God*. The very giving of God's own nature means they want us to participate in, and partake of, the divine nature. This does not make us God but makes us *of God*. 1 John 5:18. We need to understand the way in which we stay eternally men, but are nevertheless also sons of God. So close, so near to God, but not God. We are raised above the creature and above the animal, to be in the state that God had always purposed for His sons. And this is only possible in and

through Christ, through this amazing capacity of Yahweh Son to make offering.

Jesus said, 'I have come that they may have *life*'. John 10:10. So He came that we may have access to the *zoe* life that was purposed for us in God. The apostle Paul tells us, 'You died and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him'. Col 3:3,4. It's worth noting that the word being translated life in this instance, is *zoe*. It is not *psuche* or 'soul' life.<sup>3</sup> Your *psuche* life is *not* hidden with Christ in God. Your *zoe* life is hidden with Christ in God.

So our *zoe*, or sonship, life will appear when He physically comes again bringing our 'house from heaven' to clothe this mortal 'house' on earth. He did not come just to give us redemption in the sense of restoration of the lost life of Adam. It was not just renewal, not just being born-again from the death of sin. He came that we might have *zoe*, that sonship life of power by which we are to rule and reign and populate the new heavens and new earth. This is why He came. This was the aim.

## The mystery of Christ

The apostle Paul clearly conveys this message throughout his letters to the various churches of the New Testament.

'By revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already), by which, when you read, you may

3. Gr. soul-life

understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.' Eph 3:3,4. Now the mystery of Christ is the mystery of the *zoe* life of God incarnate, the Word becoming flesh. John 1:14. Yahweh became, in Christ, one of the sons of men so that we, the sons of men, might become the sons of God. Gal 3:26; Gal 4:6. Paul says of the mystery, 'in other ages [it] was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body'. Eph 3:5,6.

Then in his letter to the church at Colossae, Paul spells out a different aspect. 'If you were raised with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth. For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on earth.' Col 3:3-5.

Also in this vein, in his letter to the church at Philippi, he explains that for those who set their minds on earthly things, their god is their belly. Wherever we set our minds on earthly things, what then is our god? It is our own appetite. But our citizenship is in heaven. Because we have been born from above, we are already there, seated with Christ in the heavenly places. That is where our life is, and from there we eagerly await the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the Man, Christ, in heaven, is at the Father's right hand, and we are with Him. Our life, our glory, the glory of our name is with Him. But we are in a 'tent' on earth. Our

*existence* is here on earth, revealing His life; but our *life* is there in heaven. He will 'transform our lowly body so that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things in Himself'. Phil 3:19-21.

# Illumination

In this context, let us remind ourselves of the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus on the new birth. ‘Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God”.’ John 3:3. I want to remind us here of the concept of *seeing* with the eyes of our understanding, as opposed to seeing with our natural eyes. Jesus was saying to Nicodemus that unless one is *born*, one has no *illumination*.

We cannot *see* the kingdom of God nor have we any capacity to comprehend or apprehend the truth in our unsaved state. But once we are born from above of this *zoe* life of God, we are able to see and understand the realities of the kingdom of God. ‘Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh [*psuche* life], and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit [*zoe* life]. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’.” ‘ John 3:5-7. Why then do we marvel about these things and find them so difficult at times?

I want to emphasise strongly here that we must be born from above to be able to truly see. Otherwise, we have no capacity to receive a revelation of the truth. With these verses in mind then, let us examine chapter four of the second book of Corinthians.

## Seeing and entering

The apostle Paul is telling us in these verses something of his own life of suffering as he walks out his path of obedience in Christ. Remember that at the point of his conversion, the Lord showed him 'how many things he must suffer for My name's sake'. Acts 9:16.

'For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith ... knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus ... therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.' 2 Cor 4:11-16. This verse clearly reminds us of the aim of our faith. In this world he wants the life of Jesus to be manifested in our mortal flesh. Remember also that the apostle Paul, as he continues in verse eighteen, is speaking as a man, 'born from above' who is *seeing* the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, and is entering the kingdom, by water and Spirit.

We need to be able to see what Paul is seeing. This is the focus of my meditation. Many Christians have *never seen* what I am endeavouring to explain, even though they have read these passages many times.

'While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'  
2 Cor 4:18.

## Comprehending eternal realities

Here is the first thing we are supposed to *see* when the messenger comes and proclaims to us the *zoe* life of God. As Paul explains, we are not called to look at ‘the things which are seen’. He is talking about temporal things, mortal things, physical creation, animal life, *psuche* life. Our focus is not to be on the things that we see with our natural eyes and understanding. That is why when we have truly seen, we do not lose heart. Why? Because we have seen something else! What is it that we have seen?

We have understood, with the eyes of our understanding having been enlightened, that there are eternal realities that cannot be comprehended with our natural senses. We understand that this natural world is passing away, but that we have been created to be participants in a different dimension of life that is not passing away. To be born from above and enter the kingdom of God is to be raised above the natural realm of *psuche* life.

The wise man who wrote the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes raises the question of what happens after a man’s natural *psuche* life ceases.

‘I said in my heart, “Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals”. For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all is vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.

Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth?' Eccl 3:18-21.

The wise man does not know the answer to the question of what his ultimate destiny will be in God. When we are born from above into the *zoe* dimension that is 'of God', we partake of the divine nature that is in Christ Jesus. 'By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' 2 Peter 1:4. This is what it means to be born of water and the Spirit.

## The pattern Son

Christ is the 'pattern' Son of all that we are to become in Him. Scripture teaches us, 'For 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.

Through this small meditation, I want to give us a picture, a glimpse, of something that is of our very essence. I want to show you, *YOU*. For many of us do not yet know who we are! We are not 'mere men'. 1 Cor 3:3. Our natural birth gave us identity and eternal existence. Pause for a moment and think on this. *Eternal existence*. All men have eternal existence, but all men do not have eternal *zoe* life. So we have to make a distinction now between what is life and what is existence. To have eternal existence without our sonship life is akin to eternal damnation. It is not life at all.

But Christ gives us *zoe* life. *Zoe* life enables us to be *of* God as His sons. You were hidden, as a name, in the heart of the Father, predestined for glory as a son, and you were preached or proclaimed. In fact, the name of every human creature under heaven was proclaimed by Christ from the cross as a new creation. Col. 1:23.

## A new creation

To be a son of God for eternity is our predestination and life. *Zoe* life is a new creation revealed in Christ, who is the first born of the new creation. ‘Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.’ 2 Cor 5:16. We know Him now after ‘the power of an endless life’. Heb 7:16. This endless life is endless *zoe* life. ‘The word of the oath which came after the law appoints the Son who has been perfected forevermore.’ Heb 7:28. So this word of *zoe* came after the law. It came from the Father and appointed Him, perfected forevermore, ‘Priest and Son’. Heb 5:5,6. ‘Therefore, 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. The new creature is the *zoe* life of God given to us as the seed of new creation in Christ. We are born again, ‘not of perishable seed but of imperishable, *through* the word of God which lives and abides forever ... and it was preached to you’. 1 Peter 1:23,25. This word is the source of our *zoe* sonship life.

We should know this and we should live out our lives in the full knowledge of this, if we have been born from above. In reality, many still have not seen those things that

are only seen when the eyes of our understanding are enlightened.

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

This message is echoed in many passages of Scripture such as where Jesus said, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature’. Mark 16:15. That is: proclaim the name, proclaim the seed of every individual, to every individual, that they may believe and come into Christ.

## The seed of you

The first word of the gospel is the word or the seed of you, proclaimed to you. This is the word of your sonship. This is encapsulated in the Conclusion of *The Fellowship of the Mystery*, third paragraph: ‘With the first breath of the evangelist’s voice, the supreme glory of my eternal sonship is proclaimed, heralded across the heavens to the new heavens and earth’.<sup>4</sup>

This is the gospel that was proclaimed from Calvary, and that is what happens when we hear the gospel proclaimed to us by an evangelist. The second mystery, or the second word of the gospel, is the mystery of how our sonship is realised, in Christ.

4. *The Fellowship of the Mystery*, 2007, V J Hall, D Falk, D Baker, M A Wylie, RFI Publishing, Toowoomba. p80

In the Scripture previously quoted from the second book of Corinthians chapter four, we understand that the apostle is telling us two things. Firstly, Paul is telling us that we are 'looking' at something and secondly, why it is that we do not lose heart. The 'something' at which we are looking, is *you!* You have been proclaimed – your name first and then your work. Paul said, 'We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary.' 2 Cor 4:18.

What is temporary, right now, is this physical tent of clay, this mortal house; it is perishing. If we look at this tent, with its aches and pains and imperfections, we can become discouraged and lose heart. But, 'we do not lose heart' because we are now focussed on the reality of our eternal predestination as it is outworked in Christ. We are not looking at the things that are seen, for they are temporary.

One of our dear brothers has been suffering physically a great deal of late, but he is not looking at that which is temporary. It is only temporary suffering, working for him an eternal weight of glory. 2 Cor 4:17. It is working for him something to do with his sonship which is being proclaimed to him now, for the new heavens and new earth. Our disciplines now are not just to do with our expression in this world, which is good enough, but they are for the age to come.

## My life or Christ's life?

So these things are temporary! But the things which are not seen are eternal. The chapter division in our Bibles between chapters four and five of the second book of Corinthians is not present in the Greek text. Rather, Paul

continues straight on in the same vein, explaining our sonship, our life, our glory, our heavenly house. This is what he wants his readers to understand; and I want to help each one of us to see this now. I want firstly to proclaim to each one their life, and then proclaim to everyone, Christ's life. For the life each one is to live in this world is not their own life. If we live our own lives here, we cannot enter the kingdom. The life we must live in this world is Christ's life, because we have laid down our lives in Christ. Gal 2:20.

Once we are illuminated to see beyond our mortal body and its temporary setting, we begin to see where our treasure is. Now, where is our treasure? 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' Matt 6:21. Jesus tells us in one of His parables that a man was ploughing in a field one day and he struck treasure. He went and sold all of his temporal possessions, so that he could obtain this treasure. Matt 13:46.

In our context, a preacher came, an evangelist, and as he spoke, we heard him proclaiming a treasure for us. And let us not forget that each one of us has now become that evangelist to the world, proclaiming this treasure. But that treasure must be held in heaven for us to appropriate it. How is it going to arrive in heaven? We need to examine this question carefully and fully digest it, because this is an extremely important matter.

# Our Heavenly House

Now the apostle Paul writes, 'For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens'. 2 Cor 5:1.

At death, this mortal tent is dissolved. It perishes. However our heavenly house with its eternal life, glory and capacity for expression, is already in heaven. If we were to die at this moment, whatever our glory is, whatever that expression, it is already established in heaven. That expression may vary from the full revelation of our sonship glory to that of the faintest star. It all depends to what extent we have manifested Christ's life in our flesh here and now.

This is evident in the pathway established by Christ from His mortal body. He expressed His full glory on earth and so proceeded to the full glory of His resurrected, eternal, immortal body. This is the way in which we are called to inherit. Accordingly, our reward or the expression of our sonship glory can vary, just as in this earthly realm there is a difference between the glory of an amoeba and that of the sun.

Where do we read this? In his first letter to the Corinthian church in chapter fifteen, the apostle Paul tells us there is varying degrees of glory. There is the glory of the sun, the glory of the moon and the glory of the stars; a glory celestial and a glory terrestrial. Then he talks about the different

glory of birds, beasts and animals, right down to the most minute form of animal life. 1 Cor 15:39-41.

Do you want to be raised to your heavenly body, having just made it to heaven? It would be rather like 'twinkle, twinkle little star' – a 'zoe worm' for eternity! Is that the glory you are prepared to settle for? Why settle for that? Why not settle for the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ by fully pleasing Him? Eph 4:13. However, you can only receive this glory through participation in the body of Christ. So, even as a 'little worm' you have to be in the body of Christ if you want to receive any part of the glory that belongs to your sonship.

## Taking up residency

At death we depart from this mortal body and take up residency in our heavenly house. This house is already with Christ in heaven; this house is part of Him in heaven. This is the Man in heaven. For those who do not die before the day of resurrection and are waiting for His second coming, Christ who is their life shall come with the heraldry of the last trumpet. He will bring with Him their heavenly house to clothe and change their mortal bodies to immortality. Col 3:4.

The capacity of their eternal life and sonship is in their heavenly house which is already 'sun glory' for that group. They have passed through the events recorded in Revelation chapter seven, the fulfilment of the Day of Atonement. They are the full and glorious bride of Christ, in mortality, having the full glory of the sun, moon and stars. Rev 12:1. They are, however, still in a body of mortality, needing protection and not yet changed. They

are still in the body of weakness until the day of resurrection and the coming of Christ.

He brings to them their house, for the bride of Christ is revealing, as the *Paraclete* of the Son, the life of the Son. On that day every individual son in that body receives the full glory and life of their own individual sonship. This is the point of the revelation of the sons of God. At that point our work is done. We have a thousand years' rest where the glory of the Lord and the knowledge of all this will cover the earth.

There will be great dialogue for a thousand years about what our job is to be in the new heavens and new earth. Each one of us, by name, will join that dialogue. This is fantastic. We are speaking about what is to be forever, eternal! This is eternal increase by the principle of offering, the principle of rest, which is the principle most holy.

So now you would agree that we have some more definition on these unseen aspects that are revealed to us when we hear the word of the gospel. The Scripture is telling us that the first thing revealed to us when illumination comes is this house. There is a house for each of us, which is eternal in the heavens. The house is to replace this tent of weakness in which we now dwell so that we can have a visible expression of our name that has been designed for the new heavens and the new earth.

This house came down from heaven, in Christ, and was proclaimed to us from the cross. 'For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not

be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God.' 2 Cor 5:4,5.

## Tent of weakness

My physical existence in this tent of weakness can be thought of as a process of participating in offering that is developing connecting points. This means we can be joined to this house from heaven when it comes with Christ on the day of resurrection. That is of course, if I am here, alive and remaining to the second coming. 1 Thess 4:17. If I depart before then, if I lay this tent down, and it is destroyed and perishes, I am at that point joined to my house in heaven. 2 Cor 5:1.

When the house of sonship from heaven clothes the human mortal tent, the composite eternal body is then called the spiritual body. This body in which I now exist is called 'my earthly mortal tent', while the house in heaven is called 'the heavenly house or 'the heavenly body'. The resurrection body is called 'the spiritual body'. This is our eternal son of God/son of man, composite eternal body. At that point we can say that the tabernacle of God is *with* men, and they are His sons to whom He has given the eternal inheritance of all things. Rev 21:3.

But how did my house arrive in heaven? What is it and what is its substance? Now the apostle Paul writes that God has prepared us for our inheritance. So the reason we groan and travail is that there is a deep sense inside us

suggesting that there are some 'bits' missing. Well, this is what is missing – it's our house from heaven. 'Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.' 2 Cor 5:5. Guarantee! It comes with a guarantee. And don't forget that it's the Holy Spirit who is bringing the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of Christ to us. We are always confident, and that is why we do not lose heart. 2 Cor 4:16.

Once we see this, 'We are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight.' 2 Cor 5:6,7. So here is what it means to walk by faith. 'We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be *well pleasing* to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive of the things done in the [mortal] body according to what he has done.' 2 Cor 5:8-10.

## A house prepared

The apostle John also writes about this matter in chapter fourteen of his Gospel. 'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God.' John 14:1. Jesus is expressing the same thought here as when Paul refers to being always confident and not losing heart. 2 Cor 5:6. Jesus says, 'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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.' John 14:1-3.

He is not talking here primarily about His manifestation to the world when He returns in His glory. He is explaining to them what is going to happen after His crucifixion. He will be raised from the dead and come back amongst them in His resurrected body. By this means, He will raise the seed of their (and our) sonship house with Him, to the Father's house in heaven. Putting it another way, we can say that He raised us to the bosom of the Father when He said, 'Into Your hands I commit My Spirit'. Luke 23:46. We went with Him to the bosom of the Father.

He has come back in this way so that our joy may be full. John 15:11. Our joy can be full because He proclaims to us, by His testimony and the fact of His resurrected body among the disciples, that our house is already in heaven. That house is your *life* and it is already in heaven. How did it get there?

Jesus says we have a dwelling place, so we know it is there. In a humorous vein, some may think that when Jesus went to heaven or when He went back to be with the Father, He went on a building frenzy. He is up there building many, many houses and He has names hammered in all over heaven (like For Sale signs). He preached it to every creature under heaven so He had to prepare a house for every one under heaven. Then, on the day of resurrection, there is going to be much upset because there will be a huge 'fire sale' for all those who did not come and take up their occupancy. Is that what happens? Not at all!

Let me tell you how your house came to be in heaven. When the messenger came to you and proclaimed to you your name, the 'seed of you', he proclaimed to you your eternal sonship. That seed, that *zoe* seed, is you – your

eternal life. It is that which was hidden in the Father. Col 3:3.

As soon as you heard the word and received it, you took that *zoe* seed, that life, the seed of your house that now has to grow and develop in glory, and you laid it down in the body of Christ. It was committed into Christ's offering by baptism. I do not just mean water baptism. I am not just preaching baptism or regeneration. I am referring to what water baptism really means. This is immersion into Christ's baptism, His passion, His offering.

## One new man

This process is clear from the apostle Paul's statement: 'For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.' Eph 2:14-18.

Christ brings us near by His own blood, both Jew and Gentile. How close does He bring us to Himself? He brings us nearer than hands and breathing. He creates the body of Christ within Himself of the very substance of His own life, 'for He Himself is our peace'. Amplifying that verse and quoting again from the gospel of Matthew, 'Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest', we are able to gain a more complete picture of the rest to which Jesus is referring. Matt 11:28. 'For He Himself is our peace', the very substance of what we are to become.

So He re-creates Jew and Gentile within Himself by making them partakers of the substance of His *zoe* life. We, with Him and one another, become a *new* creation. That is what Paul was referring to: creating in Himself one new man from the two, the new creation. This is the corporate body, one new man. The enmity caused by law is abolished in Him. The peace and rest of our true life and inheritance is given to us in Christ. Eph 2:14-18.

'For the former things have passed away ... "Behold, I make all things new".' Rev 21:4,5.

The apostle Peter also refers to this reality in his second letter: 'By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.' 2 Peter 1:4.

We find a clear example of this process in the record of Christ's crucifixion. One of the thieves crucified with Christ, reckoned himself to be dead in Christ in the true spirit of baptism. To my knowledge, this thief was probably the first one to receive his heavenly dwelling place. There may have been others who were close to receiving their 'houses' at that time as well. Nevertheless *that day, that man had entered into Christ's sufferings and Christ's offering. He died with Christ that day, and followed soon after to his house in heaven.* Luke 23:42,43.

He heard his name preached to him. He is the only one I know to whom Jesus actually spoke a word of evangelism from the cross. He *did* preach from the cross and He made it very individual. That man believed, received and laid that *zoe* seed down in Christ. He died with Christ, and that seed multiplied.

The thief who died in a mortal, weak little 'tent' only a few hours after Yahweh the Son, went straight to his house in heaven, the house of his eternal glory. That man's testimony is visible eternally in the heavens as a result of his three hours of being identified fully with Christ on the very day that Christ died. He entered fully into His death and burial, proceeding then to the *bosom* of the Father.

## Zoe life from the bosom

This operation, by which the thief ended up with Christ in paradise, is different from the resurrection dynamic that occurred three days after Christ's death. We are referring here to the bosom of the Father, the place of formation for all of the sons of God. This was the pathway established by Yahweh the Son for every seed. Yahweh the Son emptied Himself to the bosom of the Father to become the *zoe* Son, to manifest the power of God in weakness and to create this universe in which the weakness of God would be demonstrated.

Every son of God, every seed, was proclaimed from Christ the *zoe* Son, the Seed, and each name is in that Seed. The pathway is from name to seed, from the desire in the heart

of the Father for many sons, to the bosom of the Father, where Yahweh the Son becomes the Seed. Then Yahweh the Son mixes your name with the *zoe* life that the Three created and determined would be the portion of the sons of God. This is the life of those who would be in the image and likeness of God.

This is the essence of the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, for 'the life is in the blood'. The *blood* of all three, the life of all three given is what establishes *zoe* life. Then He mixes that life with your name, and puts it in the mouth of a messenger who comes and proclaims it as a seed to you. This was not known before Christ came, and was not available until He was lifted up. You *could* not believe; but the moment He proclaims your name through the mouth of a messenger, you can believe and have everlasting *zoe*. This is the message proclaimed by the apostle John. 'That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting [*zoe*] life.' John 3:16. That is what Christ proclaimed from Calvary.

# Sonship from the Zoe Seed

In this proclamation we have the revelation of a new dimension of living – born from above. What is new about this dimension of living?

At this point, we need to differentiate between our *zoe* sonship and the regeneration of our dead humanity. There is a distinction between being ‘born from above’ and being ‘born again’. Born again is only regeneration of that which was lost. It has to do with being brought back from the death of sin. ‘And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.’ Eph 2:1. Regeneration is the process of restoration. There is a washing, a cleansing action that takes place in the process of regeneration.

Along with this, there is a renewing of the Holy Spirit. This is where *zoe* comes into play. ‘For we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit.’ Titus 3:5. To be sanctified is to be renewed, made new, and then separated to our name as a son of God and to our place in the body of Christ. 2 Thess 2:13,14. This is the ‘born from above’ dimension that comes to us by virtue of an incorruptible seed, through the living and abiding word of God that is the good news preached to us. 1 Peter 1:23. This establishes an eternal house, an eternal life.

The word of sonship proclaimed to us by a messenger of Christ, also enables us to participate in the offering of Christ. For the messenger proclaims Christ’s life and calls us to lay our sonship life down in Christ that we may

receive it. Having been born from above, the sonship life we have received goes straight to heaven through an operation of faith called baptism; straight to the bosom of the Father where it is hid with Christ in God.

## Immersed into Christ

Our baptism by water, spirit and blood is our participation in the offering of Christ. Now, we are immersed into Christ and His life of offering and suffering, and we offer ourselves for the sake of others. No one has a house in heaven who has not received the word of that house as a seed, then laid it down in Christ. Through this operation we died with Him, we were buried with Him and He raised us with Him. He raised that seed, raised that house to heavenly places. That is where our life, our citizenship and our house are. Meanwhile, in the realm of time and space, we live in a tent of weakness, the physical body. For us, our identity is not our life.

Let us make that distinction clear. Our citizenship and our life are in heaven. The glory of our name, the glory of our house is in heaven. On this earth, in this tent, we have exchanged our life by adoption. It has gone to heaven with Christ in exchange for His life. Our life is in the bosom of the Father being fashioned for power, not for weakness, that we may demonstrate the power of sonship in the new heavens and the new earth.

Yahweh the Son emptied Himself and went to the bosom of the Father to become the vessel or the house of weakness, to demonstrate the power of God, in weakness. He wants us to join Him in the fellowship of His weakness.

However, when the word of our sonship was proclaimed to us, it was also proclaimed to the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, through baptism, having been raised with Christ, we are being formed through offering and suffering, to express and to manifest sonship in power, in reigning and ruling. Note however, it is *not* His intention for this to be manifest here on this earth, but rather in the new heavens and new earth. 'It does not yet appear what we shall be.' 1 John 3:2.

Until then, in this portion of space and time, *Christ is our life*. If we seize that life proclaimed to us and say, 'I'm not laying it down in the Son. I'm a King's kid and I want to rule and reign here', we will perish. That is the attitude called 'stony ground' in Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed.

The attitude of 'thorny ground' or prosperity is demonstrated in a lifestyle aspiration that says, 'I will have the life but I am going to have it on my own terms with my own agenda'. But the life cannot be gained in this way. We must be planted in Christ for our life to grow, develop and mature to its glory in heaven.

## Participating in Christ's offering

*Zoe* life is only realised by participation in Christ's offering. As Jesus said, 'Most assuredly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies it produces much grain'. John 12:24. In other words, this is the process that multiplies our house in heaven. He is talking about us and our sonship predestination.

We are able to lay down the seed of our *zoe* life and we do this by water and by the Spirit of Christ. We join Him in His death, burial, resurrection and being raised to the bosom of the Father. As sons of God, we are able to enter the kingdom of God by the processes of water, blood and spirit. These processes are those of offering, which are the elements of the life of Christ of which we are now born. At the same time we are participating in the processes of the adoption that are glorifying us as sons of God.

‘But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be *baptised* with the baptism that I am *baptised* with?” They said to Him, “We are able”. So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be *baptised* with the baptism that I am *baptised* with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father”.’ Matt 20:22,23.

And again, ‘He who loves his [*psuche*] life will lose it but he who hates his [*psuche*] life in this world, will keep it for eternal [*zoe*] life’. John 12:25. So we lay aside all of our ambitions and aims in this world and become disciples of Christ. This is what it means to be, or reveal, the life of Christ. This is a disciple’s life.

You might say, ‘I want to be a business man, a philanthropist, a preacher ...’. At that point you are on stony ground. Then as the word of your *zoe* comes to you it is your opportunity to lay your desires and ambitions down and become a disciple. You can only be a business man or a

preacher if that is your calling. You have to be a disciple. You have to be a friend of His. You have to be a servant of His. You have to be His *doulos*, His slave, and reveal His life.

## Receive the full reward

With regard to the portfolio of the whole of my pilgrimage on earth, I do not want to fall short of my allotted portion of time. You see, the day I depart from this tent of weakness, this tent in which I now groan and travail, my house in heaven ceases to be built. For my groaning and travailing is birthing, by the Spirit of Christ, the glory and power of my heavenly house.

It is terrible indeed to have our house in heaven, see the glory begin to be built into it, being named towards the new heavens and new earth and then backslide or apostatise. Better to have never known! 2 Peter 2:21. What a grief that is.

Judas had such a house and he had such a throne, but he lost them both in the space of about twelve hours! 'For you I have chosen ... judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' John 13:18; Matt 19:28. He lost it. This is astonishing.

So, we are now beginning to understand something of our house. It was proclaimed to us. We know that it exists and something of its substance, but we do not fully know what it is. 1 John 3:2. We laid the seed of it down, and it is now multiplying by offering, in the offering of Christ. It is already in heaven, hid with Christ in God.

Now we must not cease to discern the body of Christ. We must not bail out, or be weak and become sick and die before our time or we might fall short of the glory predestined for our house. 1 Cor 11:29,30. The reality of our humanity is in this earthly tent.

We need to hold onto this earthly tent for the full portion of time allocated to us by the Holy Spirit. Let us press on to a full reward. As the apostle John encouraged one of the churches, 'Look to yourselves, that you do not lose those things you worked for, but that you may receive a full reward [of sonship]'. 2 John 8. Fully please Him. All the way to the full expression of sonship is the full 'sun glory' and it is the predestination of God for your life. 1 Cor 15:41.

So this is what we are to see and this is what the Jews could not see. Jesus explained in the parable of the seed and sower (the first parable to the Jew), that He was speaking to them 'in parables' about the seed of their eternal *zoë* house; that seeing they might see and not see. Matt 13:14,15; Isa 6:9,10. So let us search to see and understand this message of eternal life, and having seen and understood, let us walk wisely, making the most of the time we have been given.