

Christ has joined our suffering

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Notes prepared for Brisbane agape meal, 5 December 2021 - Draft 2

Our sin was laid on Christ

- Jesus Christ defined all of our sin and suffering in the seven wounding events that He endured for our sake. The measure of our eternal death, both now and for eternity, was in the seven wounding judgements that befell Christ.
- The sufferings that Jesus experienced as a son of man were not only physical; they were also psychological and relational. They commenced with His humble birth in an animal stall, where He was placed in a feed trough as a makeshift crib. Luk 2:7. In this regard, we note the words of Paul, who wrote, 'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich'. 2Co 8:9.
- For the whole of His life on earth, the consequences of our sin were being laid upon Jesus for our sake. Isa 53:4. For this reason, even before He commenced His offering journey in Gethsemane and was crucified on the cross, Jesus was identified by John the Baptist as 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'. Joh 1:29.
- In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ was made to be an offering for sin. 2Co 5:21. Isa 53:10. He became the full embodiment of sin when the Father made every son and daughter of man to be a member of His body. This happened when Jesus drank the cup that the Father gave to Him in Gethsemane. Luk 22:42.
- Although Christ became the embodiment of sin, He was not made a slave of sin. Accordingly, He did not die as a consequence of living by the law of sin. The law of sin is the way of life that belongs to the *sons of disobedience*. The death that Jesus died was because of His *obedience*. Jesus Himself testified, 'No-one takes [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.' Joh 10:18.
- Through His offering, Jesus gathered up all of our sin, dysfunction and the death that results from sin, and destroyed the law of sin which holds mankind in captivity because they fear death. Rom 5:17,21. In His mortal body He experienced the sufferings of death resulting from every person's bondage to the law of sin, under the curse of the Law. The curse of the Law is God's judgement on sin.
- As Jesus journeyed from Gethsemane to Calvary, He was being progressively cursed and cut off from God. By this means, sin and death were being destroyed in His flesh and in our flesh. In other words, sin and death were being ended as He was dying under the judgement that belongs to us. Sin was brought to nothing and forgotten.
- In each wounding event, Christ overcame the law of sin and death. He disempowered sin by fulfilling the Law. As sin was destroyed, death was ended by being cast into the sea of God's forgetfulness. It was eternally lost and forgotten by God. Once the darkness of sin and death came to their end, nothing was left but life, light, and

immortality. 2Ti 1:10. Concerning this outcome of Christ's offering on the cross, the Lord said, 'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.' Isa 65:17. Rev 21:4.

- Through His offering, Christ's life is multiplied and given to every person who will fellowship with Him in each of His wounding events. By this life, we are able to endure our sufferings, which He made His own and now shares with us as a *fellowship*. Php 3:10-11. By this means, we can be delivered from our sin to live only by His life.

He became a merciful and faithful high priest

- The apostle Paul made the profound statement that, in order for Jesus to become our great High Priest, it was *necessary* for Him to be made like us, and to experience our sufferings and temptations. Specifically, Paul wrote, 'Therefore, in all things He *had to be made* like His brethren, *that He might be* a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.' Heb 2:17-18.
- In the covenant fellowship of Yahweh, before the creation of the heavens and the earth, Yahweh Son did not consider equality with the Father a thing to be grasped. Php 2:5. He emptied Himself of His glory so that His end was in the Father, and He was begotten as the Son of God by the word of the Father. Heb 1:5. The Son offered Himself further, being made lower than the angels as He was brought forth as the Son of Man, from the womb of Mary. Heb 2:7. Php 2:7. As the Son of Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death as a sin offering, in Gethsemane. Php 2:8. In all of this, Jesus was faithful to the Father, who appointed Him as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Heb 2:17. Heb 5:5-6.
- However, there was another aspect of priestly service to which Christ became obedient. As Paul noted, He 'became obedient to the point of death, *even the death of the cross*'. Php 2:8. This was the death by which Christ redeemed the whole world by becoming a curse for us. Gal 3:13-14. Through the things that Jesus suffered, He obtained the human and spiritual experience that was *essential* to achieving our redemption, and to ministering His life to us through His offering. Paul made this point clear, writing, 'Though He was a Son, yet *He learned obedience* by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, *He became* the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek".' Heb 5:8-10.
- Because Jesus was subject to weakness, He is able to have compassion on those who are ignorant and are going astray through iniquity. His compassion is revealed as He priests to them a participation in the outcome of His offering and sufferings for them. Heb 5:2. This was a key implication of the sufferings that Jesus experienced for us in the course of His offering journey.
- As we respond in repentance and faith to the word of the cross, the sufferings that we experience are a chastening upon us. A primary purpose for this chastening is to deal with our immaturities. By this means, we are able to obtain the human and spiritual experience that is necessary for our priesthood in the temple of His body. This is fundamental to our spiritual service of worship as living sacrifices, and to our

capacity to minister reconciliation to others as ambassadors of Christ. Rom 12:1.
2Co 5:18-21.

Christ joined us

- As we considered earlier, the sufferings that we experience in life are the consequence of our sin, and of the judgement of God upon us. That is, sin is endeavouring to kill us, and we are also under the judgement of God. Rom 2:12.
- When Christ was made sin in the garden of Gethsemane, He joined us in our suffering under the judgement of God. Whereas our sufferings were the consequence of disobedience, Christ's sufferings were the fruit of His obedience to the Father. By this means, *He added offering to our judgement*, multiplying resurrection life to us. Paul coined the term '*exanastasis*' to describe this life, which is received in our mortal bodies. Php 3:11.
- By offering, Christ came alongside each one of us to carry the judgement of God upon us, because of our sin. He picked it up and made it His so that we might obtain the salvation that He authored through this offering initiative. To this end, we recognise that Simon of Cyrene was not pressed to assist Christ with carrying His cross. Rather, *Christ was carrying the cross that belonged to Simon of Cyrene*. Mar 15:21.
- Through his fellowship with Christ, Simon obtained the life that Jesus was multiplying to him as He carried Simon's cross. It appears that this life was for the establishment of Simon's family in the fellowship of the body of Christ, who were later well known among those who were part of the New Testament church. Mar 15:21. Rom 16:13.

Offering transfer

- In his letter to the Galatian Christians, Paul wrote, 'For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the Law, to do them".'
Deu 27:26. Gal 3:10. He continued, 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' Gal 3:13-14.
- Because sin entered the world through Adam's disobedience, every person was condemned to death under the curse of the Law. Importantly, we are condemned by the Law even though it was given to the Israelites as a covenant, through Moses. Paul noted that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness because the knowledge of God was manifest in the sons and daughters of men and is clearly visible in the creation. Rom 1:18-20. The Law, as a covenant, was given by God to reveal the inadequacy of the flesh to obtain life apart from God. Instead of ministering life, it only caused sin and death to increase.
- There has been a redemption from the curse of the Law. The curse of the Law is the result of the seven actions of judgement, with their accompanying condemnation and punishment, that culminated with Christ dying on the cross because of our failure to keep the Law. This redemption, which Christ has accomplished for *all men*, has given them access to the promise of receiving the Spirit of Christ as their personal possession.

- The promise of the Spirit was given to Abraham and his descendants, by Christ, through what was proclaimed in the Scriptures (also called 'the oracles of God'), written down by Moses in Genesis 15:1. Abraham believed and received what Christ said, and it was 'accounted to him for righteousness'. Gen 15:6. This same oracle is being proclaimed to us today so that we can believe and receive the Spirit of Christ. This promise of receiving the Spirit is called, in Scripture, 'the adoption', and was given to Abraham. Rom 9:4. Gal 4:4-7.
- The parable of the sower, sowing seed on wayside, stony, thorny and good ground, is an illustration of how Christ plants the seed of His own life, which is the divine nature, into our hearts. This parable declares to us the terms and conditions that are necessary for receiving the adoption, and becoming a son of God.
- 'Faith obedience' in, and to, the word of God, is the necessary prerequisite to demonstrating the culture, or fruit, of sonship. Faith obedience is the fruit that springs from the seed of the Spirit of Christ that we have received into our hearts.
- A son of God fulfils the works of priesthood that the Father planned for them to do before the creation. This way of living, as a son of God, is called their 'sanctification', and results in everlasting life. Rom 6:22.
- We were disconnected from the Law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 'The law of sin' became the law by which mankind endeavoured to live. The law of sin describes the way of living that belongs to fallen mankind, who now compete with each other for the limited resource of life. This gives rise to all manner of sinful and destructive actions. Rom 7:7-8. Because life has become a limited resource for mankind, they are kept in bondage to the law of sin because of their fear of death. Heb 2:9,14.
- By giving to us His Spirit to become the seed and life of our new creation identity as sons of God, Christ has reconnected us to the Law of the Spirit of life. Rom 8:2. He has given us access, again, to the tree of life. Rev 2:7.
- As long as we walk according to the directions that are given to us each day by the Spirit, we are delivered from the judgement and condemnation of the Law of God. 1Co 11:28-32. The Law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin and death. Rom 8:2. We are no longer in bondage to the law of sin because of our fear of death. This is so because the resurrection life that is in Christ Jesus sustains us in our mortality. Php 3:11.
- The other law, which Satan fathered within us, is our biggest problem. It is the source of our iniquity, which is our idolatry. Eze 14:4. Our self-centredness is our 'other law'. Our self-centred desire to have life from, and according to, our own knowledge of good and evil is contrary to the law of love and life that describes the fellowship of Yahweh. 1Jn 4:7.
- Paul, in his letter to the Romans, explained that the law of sin manipulates this self-centred other law within us, by which we seek to control our lives. Rom 7:7-14. Sin, through our fear of death, motivates us to covet life. Life is good, but our covetous motive is evil. What is good becomes death to us because of our covetousness. We break the Law of God, which says, 'You shall not covet'. Exo 20:17. This action brings us under the condemnation of the Law, resulting in sickness and death. In this action, sin, and its motivation, is seen for what it is.

- The desire of sin, motivated by its own intrinsic law, seeks for the destruction and death of mankind. The mode of sin is deception. This becomes apparent when we see it using what is 'good' to produce death in us. The destruction of mankind has unmasked Satan for who he is, and his power and works have been destroyed by Christ in the cross. Life and immortality have been brought to light by Christ, and the word of the cross gives mankind access, again, to the life and fellowship of God.
- In his explanation of how sin and death entered the world and spread to all men, Paul described Adam as 'a type of Him [Christ] who was to come'. Rom 5:14. By this he meant that all men died in Adam under the curse of the Law. Likewise, we now all die in Christ because He gathered our sin, and our death, under the curse of the Law, into His one offering for sin.
- Christ, the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world, came alongside Adam and Eve, even before they were driven from the garden of Eden. Rev 13:8. 1Pe 1:19. His offering on the cross, where He was lifted up and revealed as 'I AM', was efficacious for them. Joh 8:28.
- From the fellowship of this offering, the Lord God provided Adam and Eve with tunics of skin, through the death of animals. Gen 3:21. These garments replaced the fig leaves that Adam and Eve had tailored for themselves to conceal their nakedness and the shame of their fear. Gen 3:7-10. The skins were the 'garments of their salvation'. Isa 1:10-11. Moreover, they were redeemed to God by the shedding of the animals' blood, through which they obtained the forgiveness of sins. Lev 17:11. Rom 4:6-8.
- Significantly, the Lord cursed the ground for Adam's sake, saying, '*Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.*' Gen 3:17-19.
- The ground was cursed *for Adam's sake* because Christ came alongside him and *became this curse*. Through His obedience to the point of death, Christ brought life and immortality to light, not only for Adam, but also for those who died after Adam, even though they had not sinned in the manner of his transgression. Rom 5:14.

Receiving so great a salvation

- Every person still suffers under the curse of the Law as a consequence of their sin, iniquity and transgressions. As we have been considering, when Christ became an offering for sin, He came *alongside* every person and suffered the curse of the Law because of their sin. Heb 2:9. Through the sufferings of death, their sin was destroyed as it was taken out into the sea of God's forgetfulness. However, in doing so, we were all taken out with Him. The only way to return from this eternal death is to receive Christ and to abide in Him.
- The word of the cross, ministered through the testimony and conduct of Christ's witnesses, gives to every hearer the opportunity to obtain the salvation that Christ pioneered for them as an offering for their sin. As they receive this word, are born again, and abide in Christ, their sufferings are no longer the outcome of the curse of the Law upon them. As the apostle Paul so wonderfully declared, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.' Rom 8:1.

- In fellowship with Christ, the sufferings that a person experiences have become a chastening upon them. In this fellowship, the believer is delivered from their sin and iniquity, and Christ's life becomes their life. His life sustains them in the sufferings so that they are able to fulfil the will of God in Him. It quickens their mortal body. Rom 8:11. We note, in this regard, that the thief on the cross who received salvation obtained grace to suffer with Christ in the final hours of his life. He was able to bear these sufferings as a chastening that was leading to peace. In contrast, the agonising sufferings of the impenitent thief were the foretaste of his eternal damnation.
- In this regard, when a person rejects the 'so great salvation' that Jesus wrought through His offering, the judgement of the curse of the Law, which they were already under is intensified. Jesus Himself *swears in His wrath* that they 'shall not enter His rest'. Heb 3:18-19. Instead, they are left with the fearful expectation of judgement and fiery indignation because they chose to remain the adversaries of the Lord. Heb 10:27.
- Let us now further detail the implications of Christ's offering and sufferings for our lives. We will do this by reflecting on Peter's deliverance from iniquity.

The example of Peter

- The experience of Peter helpfully illustrates the implications of Christ's initiative to come alongside us and to bear the judgement of our sin so that we might obtain the salvation that He accomplished for us through His offering.
- At the last supper, Jesus said to Peter, 'Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.' Joh 13:36. In response, Peter said, 'Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.' Joh 13:37. Jesus prophesied, saying, 'Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.' Joh 13:38.
- This interaction demonstrated Peter's self-righteous zeal. He professed to love Jesus as his Friend, yet he would not receive, nor believe, Christ's words. Peter's reliance on the sight of his own eyes, and his readiness to act according to the dictates of his own heart, were iniquity within him. His iniquity was an idol in his heart, which made him vulnerable to the oppression of Satan. Eze 14:4. Notably, Jesus said to Peter, 'Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' Luk 22:31-32.
- Fundamentally, Peter's iniquity was his rejection of God's fatherhood. Peter was self-fathered as he endeavoured to name himself and define his own works of righteousness. On account of his self-righteous iniquity, Peter was in bondage to the law of sin and death, and under the judgement of God. Death was the ultimate implication of this judgement. The same was true for the rest of the disciples and, indeed, is for the whole of humanity.

In the garden of Gethsemane

- Jesus first came alongside Peter and the disciples to bear God's judgement on their sin, in the garden of Gethsemane. This happened when the detachment of troops and officers came to arrest Jesus and His followers. Jesus delivered Peter and the other disciples from the hands of the Jewish council, saying to the cohort, 'I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way.' Joh 18:8.

- Instead of accepting Christ's initiative to bear the sufferings of judgement that were about to be effected in the court of Caiaphas, Peter took it upon himself to combat those who sought to do injury to Christ. Having a sword, he struck Malchus, the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus was prompted to intervene, healing Malchus, and addressing Peter by saying, 'Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?' Joh 18:11. Peter then followed the cohort from a distance as they brought Jesus before Annas, and then before Caiaphas, the high priest.

Bruised for our iniquities

- In the presence of the chief priests, elders and scribes, Jesus was questioned by Caiaphas, who asked, 'Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' Mar 14:61. Jesus answered him, saying, 'I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.' Mar 14:62.
- Upon hearing this confession, Caiaphas tore his garments and accused Jesus of blasphemy. On the basis of this accusation, the Sanhedrin used the Law to condemn Jesus to death. Mat 26:65-66. Mar 14:63-64. Lev 24:16. Jesus was then blindfolded and repeatedly struck in the face, and His beard was plucked from His cheeks. His back was also beaten with rods. Mar 14:64-65.
- Jesus suffered these reproaches as an offering for sin. The iniquity of us all was being laid upon Christ's head as His abusers repeatedly struck His face with their hands, and also took hold of His head to tear the beard from His face. This was a key element of His offering for sin as the *scapegoat*. Lev 16:21-22. Through these actions, everyone who had gone astray because of iniquity was identified with, or joined to, Christ's body of sin. This was, in fact, all of mankind. Isa 53:6.
- Jesus suffered in this manner as the wrath of the Law Covenant was administered to Him by the hands of wicked men. Act 2:23. That is, He was bruised for our iniquities through the self-righteous and iniquitous application of the Law Covenant. Isa 53:5. This *ministry of wrath* had become the role of Caiaphas as the mediator of the Law Covenant.
- Although the Law was being misappropriated by the Jewish council under the direction of Caiaphas, the sufferings that Christ experienced were the *curse of the Law* upon Him and, therefore, upon us all. It was the judgement of God upon our iniquity, which Christ now embodied as the head of the body of sin.
- Jesus was strengthened to endure the sufferings caused by the curse of the Law upon our iniquities, which had been laid on Him. His strength was the resurrection life of the Father in His blood, which was multiplied through offering. With every vicious blow to Christ's face, this *exanastasis* life preserved His bones so that not one was broken. Psa 34:20. Joh 19:36.
- Instead of the abuse breaking Him down so that He bowed before Caiaphas, Jesus fully suffered and exhausted the judgement of God upon our iniquity *so that it was taken away and destroyed*. Isa 53:5. By this means, Christ resolved the full issue of mankind's iniquity in one hour, as His visage was 'marred more than any man's'. Luk 22:59. Isa 52:14.

- It was the curse of the Law that caused the death of sin in Christ. He died this death with each blow that fell upon Him. Through His death, in relation to this particular wounding event, Jesus was taking us, and our iniquity, away into the sea of God's forgetfulness.
- As we considered earlier in these notes, we were already under the condemnation of the Law, because of our rejection of God's fatherhood. This is iniquity. It is the determination to define our own name and the expression of our identity. The full implications and manifestations of mankind's rejection of God's fatherhood caused the Father unimaginable grief. This grief was expressed in the garden of Eden when He called to Adam and, by implication, all the sons and daughters of man, saying, '*Where are you?*' Gen 3:9.
- These reproaches against the Father included the iniquities that were laid on Christ as He was being bruised in the court of Caiaphas. Psa 69:9. As He was dying under the curse of the Law, and was being taken out into the sea of God's forgetfulness through the sufferings caused by our iniquities, Jesus was becoming fully acquainted with the grief of the Father. This grief broke His heart.
- Having fully satisfied God's judgement upon our iniquity, and brought it to an end, He answered the Father's cry, 'Where are you?', by declaring, '*Why have You forsaken Me?*' This was not a complaint, or grievance, expressed by Christ. Rather, it revealed that His obedience had been fulfilled. The iniquity of mankind was judged and destroyed. He was now able to minister consolation to the Father's heart. Through *exanastasis*, Jesus was brought back from the death of sin, bringing us all back to the Father with Him.
- By the life of the Father in His blood, Jesus was brought back from death as the Lamb of God, because of His obedience. Heb 13:20. In this regard, the obedience of Christ was the antidote to the rebellion and lawlessness that characterises iniquity within us.
- The obedience of Christ was sustained by the love of God for mankind, which was poured into His heart by the Holy Spirit. Rom 5:5. This revealed that God the Father was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. 2Co 5:19.
- Christ learned this obedience, as High Priest, through the things that He suffered. Heb 5:8. As the Son of Man, He was made fully adequate as a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek as He endured the punishment of the curse of the Law, for our iniquities. As Christ *fulfilled* the Law, Caiaphas' role was finished. Likewise, the Law Covenant was ended. Christ was glorified as the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.
- The only purpose for the ministry of the Law Covenant through Caiaphas was to focus its curse upon Christ so that, in Him, sin could be destroyed. The apostle Paul taught that the Law Covenant, in its dispensation, had only worked wrath. Rom 4:15. Rom 3:19-20. It had not resulted in the life of salvation for any person.
- The final application of this wrath was upon Christ, through Caiaphas. However, as Christ died in obedience to the Father, He fulfilled the Law and established the New Covenant of the Spirit. As we have already noted, we are no longer under the condemnation of the Law as long as we walk according to the Spirit, in Christ. Rom 8:1.

Peter's deliverance from iniquity

- Following Christ's arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, Peter followed at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest, 'to see the end'. Mat 26:58. As Peter observed the abuse of Jesus over a period of about an hour, he became increasingly agitated and ardent in His denial of Jesus. Luk 22:58. For example, as he denied Christ a third time, he cursed and swore at those who queried him, saying, 'I do not know this Man of whom you speak!' Mar 14:71.
- Peter was cursing and swearing to emphasise his denial that he was a disciple and friend of Jesus. In doing so, he was identifying himself with the Jewish nation and the Gentiles, in their rejection and abuse of Christ. Significantly, Peter was *laying his hands* upon the head of Christ as his sin offering.
- Through this abuse of Jesus, Peter's iniquity was being laid on Him. Jesus embodied Peter's rejection of God's fatherhood, and the wickedness of his self-righteous zeal. As a consequence of the sufferings that He endured at the hands of Peter, Jesus was dying under the curse of the Law; He was being separated from the Father. Peter, and his iniquity, were being taken out into the sea of God's forgetfulness, with Jesus.
- All of the propensities of the other law in Peter, which were fathered within him by Satan, were being judged and destroyed in Christ as He endured the punishment for, and destruction of, Peter's iniquity within Himself.
- Significantly, during the course of His offering journey, the injuries that Jesus suffered caused the shedding of His blood. His blood was *speaking* as it was being shed. The ministry of this word was accompanied by the spirit of grace and supplication. Heb 12:24. The spirit of grace and supplication, which is ministered by the Holy Spirit, brings the conviction of sin. Joh 16:8-9. This conviction is the capacity to see one's guilt and to begin to repent.
- The prophet Zechariah, speaking of Christ's offering and crucifixion, prophesied that a spirit of grace and supplication would be poured out upon those who witnessed Christ's suffering and death. In his Gospel, the apostle John testified as a witness to the fulfilment of this prophecy. He wrote, 'But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced".' Joh 19:34-37.
- The blood that was speaking, accompanied by grace and supplication, enabled those who received it to *pray*. Their prayer was the expression of mourning as they beat their breasts, having been illuminated to see Him whom they had injured. Zec 12:10. We note, for example, the experience of those who witnessed Christ's death on the cross. Luke recorded, 'And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned [to their homes].' Luk 23:48.
- The blood of Christ was speaking to Peter as He was bruised for Peter's iniquitous zeal. Peter began to mourn in the court of Caiaphas because of conviction. Under the conviction of sin, which accompanied the blood of Christ that was speaking to him, Peter looked on Christ whom he had bruised through his iniquity and idolatry. Peter

experienced acute psychological and spiritual pain as he looked on Christ in this manner.

- As he suffered, Peter was joined to Christ *through repentance*. This was the beginning point of Peter's deliverance from iniquity. He began to cease from sin in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. Peter explained this point in his first epistle, writing, 'Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God'. 1Pe 4:1-2.
- Peter's reproach and rejection of Christ was a rejection of God as his Father. This reproach and rejection of the Father was being atoned for, and rectified, in Peter as Christ functioned as great High Priest on the Father's account. Christ's heart was broken as His sufferings for Peter's iniquity were finished. However, Peter's heart was also broken, and the other law was circumcised from him, as Christ looked upon him and revealed to him the loss of his sonship because of his breach with the Father.
- In this regard, the fruit of Christ's offering overflowed to Peter through the ministry of priesthood. In compassion, which could not fail because it was sustained by the love of God, Jesus *looked* at Peter. King Solomon noted that 'the eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge, but He overthrows the words of the faithless'. Pro 22:12. As Christ communicated this knowledge to Peter, when they met eye to eye, Peter received the faith of God that does not fail. He was recovered to the Father as His son, and to Christ as His disciple-friend and apostle.
- Christ's eyes gave to Peter access to the word of God. From that point on, this word would direct Peter's life in the way of obedience. Summarising this point, the gospel of Luke recorded, 'And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So Peter went out and wept bitterly.' Luk 22:61-62.
- Having been illuminated to remember the words of Jesus, Peter began to weep bitterly in repentance. In this regard, the godly sorrow he had begun to experience under the effect of grace and supplication was leading to repentance and to life. 2Co 7:10. Having become poor in spirit, as he looked on Christ who had become his sin offering, he was delivered from the arrogant pride that motivates a zealot. Peter was then able to take up his cross, follow Christ, no longer a zealot, but now as a disciple. His sufferings, from that point on, were joined to these seven wounding events of Christ.

When you return

- Christ's priestly initiative towards the recovery of Peter was the first phase of the directive that Jesus had given to Peter at the last supper. Jesus had said to him, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' Luk. 22:31-32. Because Jesus had prayed for Peter, his faith had not failed in the midst of the trauma of this event. Rather, he had met Christ eye to eye, and was beginning to obtain his salvation.
- Peter fully returned to Jesus on the shore of the of the Sea of Tiberias, when Jesus renegotiated the issue of friendship with him. By the word of Christ, Peter was established in the works that belonged to his name as a son of God, and in the

fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' Joh 21:17-18. The apostle John noted that Jesus was speaking to Peter concerning the death by which he would glorify God. Joh 21:19.

The example of Paul

- The process resulting in Peter's deliverance from iniquity was also exemplified in Paul's life, through the ministry of Stephen. As we considered earlier, Christ was 'bruised' under the hands of Peter, even though Peter did not physically strike Him. Peter's fervent and profane denials of Christ marked his identification with the Jewish nation's rejection and affliction of Christ, by which He was bruised for their iniquities.
- In Paul's experience, Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified before his eyes through the testimony and death of Stephen. Like Peter, Paul did not cast a stone to kill Stephen. However, he observed Stephen's death; and the garments of those who did kill Stephen were laid at his feet. Act 7:58. Luke further noted that '[Paul] was *consenting* to his death'. Act 8:1.
- Paul's actions, in response to the witness of Stephen, identified him with those who beat Christ, in the same way that Peter's protestations in the court of Caiaphas had done. For this reason, what Jesus had achieved for Peter through this wounding event was also achieved for Paul.
- The blood of Jesus was speaking to Paul as he witnessed Stephen's death. This is because Stephen was joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. Like Peter, under the influence of grace and supplication that accompanied the witness of Christ's blood, Paul was caused to look on Him whom he had abused, and he began to mourn. Zec 12:10. From that time, he made havoc of the church, and was breathing threats and murders against the disciples of the Lord as he made his way to Damascus. Act 8:3. Act 9:1-2. This fervour indicated the psychological and emotional distress that Paul was evidently experiencing.
- When Paul met Christ eye to eye, his heart was broken in the same way that Peter's had been broken when he had met Christ eye to eye. Significantly, during this encounter, Jesus revealed to Paul that he was persecuting Jesus by abusing the Christians. In doing so, Paul was kicking against the very word that would bring him salvation and relief from the ravages of his iniquity and sin. Act 9:3-5. Jesus directed Paul to go into the city and to receive the word of a messenger telling him what he must do. Act 9:6.
- The word of the messenger brought sight to Paul's eyes and established him on the pathway of his obedience. Specifically, the Lord said of Paul, 'He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.' Act 9:15-16. Paul's sufferings were now a participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ, through which Christ was now being publicly portrayed among his hearers.