

# THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

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Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 27 February 2022

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## Introduction – waypoints 1-7

In this season we are continuing to consider twenty waypoints of salvation. So far, we have considered seven of those points.

The first waypoint is ‘the message’, and that is that ‘God is Light and in Him is no darkness’.

The second point describes ‘messengers who are sent before the face of Christ’. These messengers come from the presbytery, and their work is to prepare the hearts of the hearers so that the hearers can receive Christ, who is called ‘the Messenger of the Covenant’.

The third waypoint is ‘the fear of the Lord’. The fear of the Lord motivates a hearer to draw near to Christ, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, causing them to understand the secret of the Lord.

The fourth point is ‘the freedom of choice’. Under the prevenient grace of God, the hearer has the freedom to draw near or to draw back. They are not being encumbered or inhibited by their own ‘other law’ which results in drawing back. But the prevenient grace of God does not alleviate or remove ‘another voice’. A person has a choice as to whether they want what the word is proclaiming to them as an inheritance; or whether they will turn again and return to continue in the way of the spirit of the world.

The fifth waypoint is ‘the kindness of God’. This is about ‘friendship’. The kindness of God belongs to those who fear the Lord and, through repentance and faith, because they do not draw back under the confrontation of His eyes, they draw near. They receive righteousness as a gift. God Himself considers them to be His friend. It is an amazing point that He extends that friendship to us and reckons us righteous simply because we believe His word.

The sixth waypoint that we have considered in this season is that the believer is exhorted to ‘present themselves for offering’. This occurs on the ‘ground’ of fellowship, which is the fellowship of the presbytery; the fellowship of the Father and the Son.

The seventh waypoint that we considered is ‘cleansing and deliverance from unclean spirits’.

As we come onto the ground of fellowship, which is the context of *offering*, the fountain for sin and uncleanness is being poured out and can be availed by a person. The blood is sprinkling us clean from an evil conscience, and the water of the word is washing our bodies so that we can ‘enter in’ to the context of the house of God where we make offering.

Accompanying this cleansing work of the fountain for sin and uncleanness is our deliverance from idolatry and from unclean spirits. That is the sovereign action of the Lord in our lives.

## Introducing waypoints 8-10

In this session, we will consider the eighth, ninth and tenth waypoints.

The eighth point identifies that Jesus Himself is ‘the Messenger of the Covenant’.

The ninth point explains ‘the adoption’. This is the first implication of receiving Christ Himself when He comes; when the Spirit of Christ comes into our heart.

The tenth point is ‘regeneration’, which is an operation, or a work, of the Spirit of Christ within us so that we are ready to receive the divine nature; for Christ to dwell in our heart. The Messenger of the Covenant is Christ Himself.

The ‘adoption’ is receiving Christ into our heart. He comes into our heart, but He is not yet *dwelling* there. Regeneration is bringing recovery to our spirit, or ‘inner man’. That germination can happen, and Christ can dwell in our heart.

## Waypoint 8 – the Messenger of the Covenant

In Malachi, the Lord said that He was going to send a messenger before Him to prepare the hearts of the hearers. Then He spoke about another messenger, whom He identified as ‘the Messenger of the Covenant’, who would come to His temple.

He was obviously talking about Jesus. The messenger who is coming in the spirit and power of Elijah before the face of Christ bears witness to the light of the gospel. Those messengers are not the light themselves.

Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the world', so those are going before His face and bearing witness to Him, but it is Christ Himself who is the Light of the world.

This is what John the Baptist said about this, which is notable, because John the Baptist was ministering in the spirit and power of Elijah. He was, literally, the person who went 'before the face of Christ'.

'There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light that all through him might believe.' Joh 1:6-9.

The key point that we have been making is that the *faith* that we receive to *believe* does come from God, but it is because we receive 'the messenger' who is coming in the spirit and power of Elijah. There is no faith to be obtained without receiving that messenger. But we can hear what they are saying, and can obtain the faith that comes by hearing.

By that faith, we can draw near to the Light. This is what John taught. This man, John, came *from a witness* to bear witness of the Light that all, through him, might believe. He was not the light, but was sent to bear *witness* of that Light.

This was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. Christ is the Light of the world, and only He can give that light.

The apostle John, in his Gospel, said that this light, or the life, is the Light of men. The point is that the light that is coming is the 'substance' of the life, and it needs a messenger to come, proclaiming faith.

Jesus can come in the spirit and power of Elijah Himself, which is what He meant when He said, 'I don't need someone to come before Me.' But even when He does proclaim the word, as the *substance* of the light, He joins us to *a fellowship, or an administration, of the word*.

The faith that we receive for participation does come through a messenger whom He sends. But that faith is so that we can receive and know Christ personally when the messenger proclaims Christ and we receive that word, and we are caused to draw near to the Son.

We know this is on the ground of fellowship, and there is a washing that is happening.

All of that leads to the key implication, and that is so that *we can receive* 'the Light of life'.

Jesus is the Light of life, and to receive Jesus is to receive the Spirit of Christ into our heart.

### **Waypoint 9 – receiving the adoption**

The first implication of receiving the Spirit of Christ into our heart is to *receive the adoption*. It is *not* to be born of God; it is to receive the *adoption*.

We receive the adoption within the fellowship that is established by a messenger who has been sent by Christ as a representative.

Christ comes with the Father, sowing the seed of a hearer's name in their heart. That seed is the Spirit of Christ. Their name as a son of God is in that seed. It is in Jesus. He is the Seed of the Father.

Jesus does this by proclaiming the person's sonship to them as adoption.

When He comes into a person's heart, they are not changed, at that point. He is coming in the Spirit of Christ that is upon or in them. Because they have believed to receive that ministry from Him, they are considered to be *part of the Father's house*. That is what the adoption is.

When you are part of the Father's house, you have the *right* to an *inheritance*.

The distinction between 'the adoption' and 'new birth' is that the adopted son is considered to be a son by the Father, by faith; but they do not *have* the promise.

When a person receives the promise, which is the Spirit, or the divine nature, within their heart, by which they are *born from above as a son of God*, they are both adopted, and are an 'authentic', or 'newborn' son of God.

We are not there yet; we are just looking at the adoption now.

### **The Everlasting Covenant**

To understand the implications of Jesus coming into our heart as the Spirit of Christ, it is important for us to understand how He became the Seed of the Father so that that Seed, as the Spirit of Christ, could come into the hearts of all those who hear His word.

The Spirit of Christ is the seed that Jesus referred to in the parable of the sower and the seed. He

became the Seed, even before the foundation of the heavens and the earth; even before anything was created within Their own 'covenant fellowship', of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Within Their own covenant fellowship before the heavens and earth were created, Yahweh Father, Yahweh Son and Yahweh Holy Spirit determined together, or counselled together, to create and to bring to glory a multitude of sons of God, who would be in Their image and likeness.

The Scriptures call this 'God's Everlasting Covenant'. God Himself refers to this intention to create and to bring to glory a multitude of sons of God, who are born of Their life and joined to Their fellowship, as 'the Everlasting Covenant'.

The key to following the Everlasting Covenant throughout the Scriptures is that, wherever the Lord says, 'And they will be My people, and I will be their God' or 'I will be their God and they will be My people', that is the summary statement of God's Everlasting Covenant.

It is not a 'nominated' or 'bestowed' position. It is the reality of receiving what is coming from Their own covenant fellowship, and then entering into that fellowship.

They covenanted, before, to bring to pass many sons of God who are joined to Their fellowship. Within Their own covenant fellowship, before, They counselled to bring Their Everlasting Covenant to pass, and each Person of the Godhead laid down Their life.

### **The fellowship of offering in the Godhead**

God Himself is *a fellowship of offering*. They are laying down Their life to reveal another. Each Person of the God had laid Their life down by Their one Spirit in a very specific way. The Son laid down His life; or, He emptied Himself of His capacity to be the full expression of all sonship.

The Father, who is the expression of all fatherhood, is the source of all *names*; of all sonship. However, the Son is completely commensurate with everything that the Father is looking to multiply. The Son, in Himself, can be the expression of that.

The implication is that there is no room for any other sonship or any other son or any other expression.

The Son laid down His life to reveal the Father, who is going to become the Father of a great multitude, by emptying Himself of this unique capacity that the Son has, to be the expression of all glory, so that other sons can be created, and be brought forth.

The Son emptied Himself to reveal the Father.

The Holy Spirit is fundamental to how we become born again. The *Holy Spirit* laid down His life to become the Helper of the Father and the Son.

The *Son* emptied Himself so that there can be *a multitude of sons*.

The *Father* emptied Himself to the Son, so that the Son is now born of the Father.

The only way that that could happen was by the Holy Spirit emptying Himself to be the One who enabled this transaction. That is why Paul said that 'the Spirit gives life'. So, the Father became the source of the life.

It is only possible by the Spirit, who makes this transaction happen. It is important to note that there is no sonship, there is no multiplication of sons, without the Holy Spirit.

The Son emptied Himself to become the Father's Son. The Holy Spirit laid down His life to become the Helper of the Father and the Son. The Father laid down His life by giving of 'His fullness'.

His fullness is the capacity to be the *source* of all life, and all *expression* of that life.

The Father laid that down, so that all the life and names are in the Son. Can you see that each Person laid Themselves down to this covenant purpose to bring forth us?

*Yahweh Son* became the full expression of the Father when He was begotten as *the Son of God*. He was Yahweh Son, completely co-equal with the Father. He emptied Himself of that. He emptied Himself to the Father, and the Father declared, by His word, 'You are My Son; today I have begotten You.'

When that happened, through this birthing action, Yahweh Son, who had emptied Himself of His capacity to be co-equal with the Father, was begotten as the Son of God. And He is still Yahweh Son, because He cannot deny Himself.

Through this order of offering, He became the 'Son of God'. This birthing action was by the Holy Spirit.

### **The work of the Holy Spirit**

When the Father said, 'Today I have begotten You', it was the Holy Spirit who had laid down His life to reveal the Father's life; who brought the Spirit of the Father to the Son. He brought a substantive change to the Son, so that He became 'of the Father'.

The Holy Spirit took what belongs to the Father and substantively enabled the Son to be born of that life so that He is *of* God the Father.

That is an amazing work of the Holy Spirit, and is how you and I become 'of God'. It is by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit laid down His life to reveal the Father, as the life of God brought the Spirit of the Father to the identity of the Son, causing the Son to be born anew as the Son of God.

When that happened, that portion of the Father's Spirit now resided in the Son. The Holy Spirit also resided in the Son, because He had brought all that belonged to the Father, to the Son, so that He was born anew. The Son now has the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

The portion of the Father's Spirit which the Son received through the Holy Spirit is *the seed and name* of every son of God who would ever be created. The seed of it is all now in this one Son. He is the beginning; the Firstborn; the 'start', or the 'seed', of every son who will ever come to pass.

All of that has come from the Father, by the Holy Spirit.

Do you see that this offering established an order by which Their life would be 'multiplied immeasurably'?

### **The cry, 'Abba! Father!' in the heart of a son of God; adoption**

Jesus became the Seed of the Father. When you receive the Spirit of Christ into your heart, you are receiving the *seed of your name* from the Father, which *marks you as a son of God*. As a result of this offering process, the Son is the full expression and image of who a person is to become as a son of God.

For this reason, when Jesus is the Messenger of this Covenant, He comes into a person's heart, and proclaims, 'Abba! Father!' The point is that when He proclaims 'Abba! Father!' in a person's heart, He is not saying, 'Daddy! Daddy!' to the Father.

Rather, the cry, 'Abba! Father!', belongs to that person's identity, because He is the expression of their *sonship*.

He is coming in, and saying, 'You are going to have the expression 'Daddy! Daddy!', and it is unique to your name like "this".'

That is so amazing! He is coming in and crying it *for you*, because it is already fully *finished* and done - all the works of your sonship are *already done*.

He is beginning to proclaim, saying, 'This is what your proclamation will be. You do not have it yet, but you have Me; and I am the expression of your sonship.'

That is what the *adoption* is. How brilliant is that!

Jesus does not come into them declaring His *own* sonship; that is, that God the Father is His 'Daddy, Daddy'.

Rather, His cry, 'Abba! Father!', within the one who has received the seed is what will become the expression of *their sonship-obedience*, once they are born again by the work of the Holy Spirit.

This is *the adoption proclaimed to them*.

Although Jesus, at this point, as the Spirit of Christ, which is the Seed, has come into their heart, He is not yet *dwelling*. When Jesus dwells in a person's heart, it is like a seed.

Jesus said that it is like a seed which has put down roots and has become part of that person.

### **Adoption belongs to everyone who hears Christ speaking, and believes by faith**

The important point is that adoption belongs to *everyone* who *hears Christ speaking*, and *believes by faith*.

Adoption belongs to all those, from Adam, right through to the end, who *receive His word*.

He comes into them, but it is not until *the Holy Spirit is given* to us as a personal possession that the *germination* process can happen, because the Holy Spirit takes that life, and He makes it 'our life'.

That is when we receive 'the inheritance'. Again, I am getting ahead of myself, but I want to highlight the point that *whoever believes and receives Jesus receives the adoption*.

Our brethren under the Old Covenant *received*. But we have this amazing treasure that we now can actually *have* the inheritance. *You* can have the treasure, right now. In fact, if you do not get it, you lose the adoption!

### **Adoption is a feature of prevenient grace on wayside ground**

The ministry of adoption is a feature of the prevenient grace of God, which is characteristic of 'wayside ground'. We still have not got off wayside ground, and yet it is amazing just what the glory of the provision of God's grace is on wayside ground.

One of those elements is adoption. Because of that, it is part of the 'wayside' element. It was available to those who were under the Old Covenant, and we see this in so many passages.

### **Called and known by name**

In this regard, the Lord said to Moses, 'You have found grace in My sight'. Exo 33:17.

Moses had responded to the Lord's initiative to have fellowship with Him, under the prevenient grace of God.

'You have found grace in My sight, and *I know you by name*.' It is amazing, is it not?

That means that Moses had received the Spirit of Christ in his heart, which granted to him his name. Moses himself could know his name, even though he did not have possession of it as the divine nature. However, he could *walk in the faith of it*.

'Faith is the substance of things hoped for', which is the *promise*. But he was able to *walk* according to his name by being *obedient to the word* that was coming to him from Yahweh. The Lord said, 'You have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.'

That was also proclaimed to the whole Jewish nation, in Isaiah. 'But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine".' Isa 43:1. I love that passage!

This was before Jesus came. There was redemption, which means that He gathered them to Himself. They were 'called by name'.

The only way in which you can be called by name is if that call *enters your heart*.

### **The new birth is the blessing of the New Covenant.**

He said to them, 'I am coming to give you your adoption, the promise that I made to your father, Abraham, which belongs to those who are of the same faith as Abraham.'

Then He said, 'For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.' Isa 45:4.

Within this dimension of God's prevenient grace, a person who has *received the adoption is entitled to the inheritance*.

Those who received the adoption only under the Old Covenant were illuminated to see that they belonged to a heavenly city.

Those who are *born of God* are already citizens of that city.

Those who have received the Spirit of Christ by hearing His word as He comes as the Messenger of the Covenant have received adoption.

However, for those who were under the Old Covenant, adoption *entitled* them to an inheritance.

You and I are entitled to the inheritance, which we get if we will forsake our own understanding and, instead, receive the understanding that comes by the Spirit, because He is the One who makes known what belongs to the Father and Son to us, so that we can be 'germinated' as a son of God.

As we have been considering, this inheritance is the promise of the divine nature, which becomes a person's possession when they are born of the Spirit.

The distinction between 'the adoption' and 'obtaining the promise of the divine nature' was described by the apostle John in his introduction to his Gospel.

'But as many as received [Jesus] as many as received Him, He gave the right to become children of God'. Joh 1:12-13.

We have first to *receive Jesus*, which is receiving the Spirit of Christ as a seed into our heart.

Then He said that, as many as have received that, He gave them the right to become sons of God.

Adoption entitles a person, or gives them the right, to the inheritance that belongs to a son of God.

John went on and said, 'To those who believe in His name'; so there's another step. There are those who have 'the right', and then there are those who are 'believing in His name'.

Something has shifted here. 'Who were now not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but are *born of God*.'

The new birth is the blessing of the New Covenant.

### **Waypoint 10 – the hearer needs to be regenerated**

For this germination to happen, the identity of a hearer needs to be *regenerated*. This is the second aspect of the ministry of the Spirit of the Son.

Waypoint eight is that *the Messenger of the Covenant* is coming, who is Jesus.

Waypoint nine is that, when you *receive the Spirit of Christ into your heart*, you are receiving the *adoption*, which is granting to you your name as a son of God, and the right to become the son that you have been predestined to be.

Waypoint 10 is 'regeneration', which is necessary so that the seed that you have received can *dwell in your heart*. He comes *into the heart* through adoption; then regeneration happens so that Christ may *dwell* in our hearts through faith.

### **Illumination of one's identity**

The illumination of one's identity is the next effect of the Spirit of Christ entering hearts.

The point I am making is that, to be *illuminated*, we are receiving the light that is coming from Christ. The eyes of your body need to be enlightened.

That happens through regeneration, because your spirit, or your inner man, is 'the lamp of your body'.

If it is not regenerated, not only will Christ not be able to continue to come into you, but, also, *He will not be able to dwell there*.

The illumination of one's identity is part of the regeneration process.

Remember, a person who is making their way from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light has been 'dead in trespasses and sins'. Their identity, or their spirit, has been affected; it has been 'lying dead'.

Having been dead in trespasses and sins, the believer's spirit is made alive by the Spirit of Christ. This is not birth; this is *regeneration*.

It is regenerated so that they can receive the light of life, which is the divine nature.

This also belonged to those who were under the Old Covenant.

### **Born to see the kingdom**

Through regeneration, a believer is born to *see the kingdom*, because the identity of a person is the 'lamp'; and it is 'the eye' of their body.

When it is being regenerated, it is enabling them to *see the kingdom*.

We know that that belonged to the Old Covenant believers as well, because they were able to look and see a heavenly city. They could not get there yet, but they could *see* it. They lived as though they were citizens on this earth, considering themselves to be pilgrims, because that was the city of which they desired citizenship.

You and I can see that city as well. But we are seeing it so that we can become part of it.

Paul said that the purpose for this regeneration in the New Covenant is so that Christ may dwell in a believer's heart through faith. This is so that the person may be born again as a new creation.

### **Regeneration – the Spirit of Christ breathing on us, making alive; not yet born again**

Regeneration is the impact of the breath of the Lord.

When the Spirit of Christ comes into you, the regenerating work is because He who is in you is 'breathing' into you. He is actually breathing and causing your spirit to be made alive, in the same way that he had made the body of Adam, and then

'breathed' into his nostrils, making him a living soul.

We see that when Adam and Eve were separated from Yahweh, they were dead in their trespasses and sins. They actually had to be regenerated as well.

The point is that regeneration is a 're-breathing', and 'making alive' of the spirit and soul of the person.

Regeneration is the effect of Christ breathing on a hearer. We know that is what Jesus did on the evening of His resurrection when He came to the upper room.

He stood among them and, 'He breathed on them, and then said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."' Joh 20:22.

The 'breathing' is *regeneration*.

The 'receiving' of the Holy Spirit is the ministry of the Spirit so that a person can be *born again*. They are two separate elements.

The breathing gives regeneration so that Christ can dwell in the heart when the Holy Spirit comes in and makes them alive. That is another step to go.

The point is that the breathing was what Jesus did initially, so that they *could receive* the Holy Spirit who was enabling this birth.

Regeneration is the effect of Christ breathing on the hearer, and we know that man became a living soul when the Son breathed the breath of life into his body. By this same breath, the inner man of the hearer, which is otherwise dead, is being regenerated.

The prophet Ezekiel also spoke about the breath of the Lord doing this work. It made all those dead people alive. This is the same terminology that was used in relation to Adam being made a living soul; and when Jesus *breathed on* the disciples.

The prophet Ezekiel prophesied regarding the effect of regeneration through the Spirit of Christ. It is interesting that he said that 'the hand of the Lord came upon him'. He was a prophet, and he was in the hand of the Lord - the right hand - that is part of a star in the New Covenant expression of this administration.

He said, 'The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord.'

And then the Lord said to Ezekiel, 'Prophecy this to those dead bodies.'

This is still coming from Christ, but it is being sent through a *word*. This is the word that is bringing regeneration.

'Prophecy to these bones [I love that - prophecy to these dead bones - it doesn't even look like a human], and say to them, "O dry bones, hear the word of Yahweh." [Hear the word of the Lord] 'Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live".' Eze 37:4-5.

### **Born to see**

When there is a 'living' happening, that is within a person who is being 'born to see'. They are not yet 'entering'; they are simply being 'made alive'.

This regeneration necessarily happens before a person's entering in can occur.

Regeneration itself is *not* 'entering the kingdom'. It is simply making them alive.

Once the bodies of the dead were reformed, in this sequence that Ezekiel saw, the Lord then directed Ezekiel to say, 'Thus says the Lord: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live".'

### **Made alive and functional**

The bodies were actually *made alive*. He said that they had to be 'functional'.

The word has to keep coming so that the identity is actually functional, and able now to act, or to participate, by faith.

That was to all those who were under the Old Covenant. That participation by faith needs to proceed to birth. Otherwise, that seed is taken away.

### **The way ahead**

These are the ten points that mark wayside ground. We will make one more comment in our coming session about wayside ground, and about where the dilemmas occur.

In our coming series, we will speak about the implications of new birth, and how we proceed to enter into the kingdom as those who are born of water and of the Spirit.