

EASTER SESSION 5

David Baker, Word for Easter Seminar 2025
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Good morning. It is great to be together again. Greetings to all of those who are watching on live stream. We have been rejoicing in the word over the weekend and understanding the multiplication of the seed and how we are born again and rejoicing in its impact upon us as we are hearing this word.

We received a report from Papua New Guinea this morning that a young lady listened to Vic yesterday and said at the end of the session, 'I need to be born again.' The brethren encouraged her that she had been born again as she was there listening to the word and that the Father had placed her in the fellowship of the body of Christ. They laid hands on her and she was immediately filled with the Holy Spirit. We are rejoicing in the power of God for salvation. We are understanding these steps of new birth; but also appreciating that this does not need to be a long, drawn-out process.

Vic asked me this morning to make one point concerning the sign of the Son of Man as we begin. He said that the sign of the Son of Man is also the witness of water, blood and Spirit. We find a very succinct summary of exactly what that looks like in the book of Revelation chapter 12 where it says that they overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb. It is the blood, so it is their connection to the seven wounding events of Christ. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony which is the water of the word. That word is in their heart and in their mouth as a testimony of the obedience that they are learning - the testimony of their regeneration. They also overcame by loving not their lives to the death which is by the Spirit. It was by Eternal Spirit ministered to Christ (that is the sevenfold Spirit of God ministered to Christ) in the garden of Gethsemane by the Holy Spirit that He offered Himself to God. It is the same capacity of the sevenfold Spirit of God

that is ministered to us by the Holy Spirit to also join the fellowship of that same offering which is the offering where the seed is multiplied.

We are overcoming by the blood of the Lamb; water [which is] the word of our testimony; and by loving not our lives to the death (by the Spirit). That is the sign of the Son of Man - what it looks like in us. Of course this is powerful. It is effective to harvest a great multitude from the nations. They are joining that then. We are overcoming Satan and seeing him finally cast from the heavenly places. This probably a good introduction to what I want to talk about this morning as well, which is 'the overcoming church'. We know that Christ is presently seated at the right hand of God in the middle of His lampstand churches and He is seated as our Great High Priest, and also our King.

I do want to emphasise His kingship this morning and the fact that He is judging in the church. This is as we have just heard. I will focus a bit on Psalm 99 in this first session as well. It is the province or the prerogative of the King to forgive and to take vengeance on our deeds. Christ is seated. We know He is not yet judging in the world, but He is judging in the middle of His lampstand churches, and He is proclaiming His word to us. That word is being proclaimed by the messengers in His right hand, and it is being proclaimed by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus finishes each admonition to all the churches saying, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.' I am sure you would agree that the Lord has been speaking by the Spirit very individually to us over the course of this weekend. He is addressing every individual; He is speaking to every family. It is incumbent upon us to take heed to what the

Spirit is saying to us. The word of present truth that is ministered to us by the Spirit is equipping us to overcome. A big part of our overcoming is in our response to that word. We are joining a repentance, and we are joining a faith obedience.

Jesus finished each admonition again with a promise to the overcomers. We are called to be an overcoming church. What are we overcoming? When you read those seven letters, it is quite a list. I am sure you can inventory that for yourself - all the way from overcoming the loss of first love (which is the first and foremost issue that Jesus addressed in the Ephesian church) through those various issues.

I am saying that to make the point that this book [*The Overcoming Church*] is not exhaustive. We are not particularly considering the loss of first love. We are not necessarily looking at all the false doctrines like the doctrine of Balaam. We have looked at that in the past. We have looked at the doctrine of Jezebel in the past as well. We are not focusing on that in this book. We are taking a reasonably selective look at a couple of issues. I will orientate us to where we are receiving some more clarity in terms of what we are overcoming. We know *how* we are overcoming (which is by the blood of the Lamb, the word of our testimony, and loving not our lives to the death), but what are some of these *issues* that we are overcoming?

The first one I will comment on is the Nicolaitans. We have written a chapter on the Nicolaitans. Jesus said to the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2 verse 6, '... but this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.' Then He says to Pergamum in Revelation 2 verse 15, 'Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.' In the past, we have had a reasonably narrow interpretational view on the Nicolaitans. I think you will find in this book, it is a much broader view. The key to understanding the

profile of the Nicolaitans is the fact that Jesus says, 'I *hate* their doctrine and their deeds.'

That connects us immediately to the word concerning Esau. Remember the Lord said, 'Jacob I have *loved*, but Esau I have *hated*.' Rom 9:13. The Nicolaitans are manifesting the same spirit, attitude and behaviour as Esau. The book of Malachi is where Paul is quoting from when he says, 'Jacob I loved, Esau I hated.' Malachi prefaces that statement by saying, 'Were they not brothers?' Mal 1:2-3. That is the key: 'Were they not brothers?' They were - they were brothers - same father, same mother, same covenant house. Both were called and yet God chose Jacob to receive the blessing of the firstborn, and He chose for Esau to serve his younger brother. Esau in the end refused to choose what God had chosen for him. Jacob had all his issues we know, but in the end he chose. We get the principle of election demonstrated in Jacob and Esau.

To orientate ourselves here, Paul summarises this by saying in Hebrews chapter 12 verse 16, 'Lest there be any fornicator or profane... [that means 'worldly'. He is saying we need to look carefully at ourselves to ensure] ...Lest there be any fornicator or profane [worldly] person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.' He despised his birthright.

We have been rejoicing this weekend to hear the nature of our birthright - what it means to be born as a son of God. There is nothing more precious than being a son of God. And when we are born as a son of God, we receive our citizenship in the heavenly Jerusalem. Jerusalem is our chief joy. We are born of the love of God; we have a desire to abide; to dwell; to live forever in the heavenly Jerusalem; to engage in fellowship with one another in the *agape* meal. If that is not our chief joy and we are prioritising something else in the world, then we are in danger, like Esau, of despising the birthright - despising what it means to be born as a son of God.

Equally, as we heard yesterday, we have received the birthright when you are a son of God. This is the right to an inheritance which is the glory of a heavenly body from the Father. We also receive an immortal and incorruptible resurrection body from Christ - made from His DNA composed by His word. The union of that heavenly body and the physical resurrection body is a spiritual body which is as physical as it is spiritual, and as spiritual as it is physical. It is perfectly suited for our everlasting fellowship as a temple of the Holy Spirit in the new heavens and the new earth and everything that that means for us. We are rejoicing again yesterday in that principle of 'forever new'. 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man everything that God has prepared for those who love Him.' 1Co 2:9.

Paul says that that inheritance is on the condition that we are willing to suffer with Christ and join the fellowship of that offering journey. Php 3:10-11. If we are recoiling from that, we are despising the birthright and the inheritance that we have received. That was Esau's issue. He despised the birthright (the family inheritance), and he exchanges it for one bowl of red stew.

Let us just go one step further. He despises the birthright; finds no repentance in relation to that; but still wants the blessing. That is the next verse. Heb 12:17: 'For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing...' We could apply this to us - we still love the blessing; the dew of heaven; the rain of righteousness; the blessing of the word; we love the blessing of the community of the church; desire the blessing of going to heaven — whatever the blessing is in our mind. The biggest issue is, if we despise the birthright, we create a projection for ourselves and we want everybody else to bless that. That is what Esau wanted. He despised the birthright. He was not choosing what God had chosen for him; but he still had in his mind the blessing that he wanted

from his father, and then from his heavenly Father. The Scripture says, '...he found no place for repentance.' Heb 12:17. 'For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.' That is not talking about his own repentance. We know Esau found no place for repentance in relation to despising the birthright, but when it says he is looking for repentance - diligently, fervently, earnestly, with tears — it is not talking about his own repentance; it is talking about his dad.

When Isaac blessed Jacob, and then Esau comes in, he is earnestly desiring that his father revoke the blessing upon Jacob and change his mind. By implication, he wanted God the Father to change His mind. In the end, Isaac *did* bless Esau; and he blessed Jacob. He blessed them in faith concerning the things to come. It was according to God's sovereign choice; but that is not what Esau wanted. He was seeking for that [Jacob's blessing]. You can read that. He begins to weep, and he is crying great and bitter tears, wanting God the Father in the end to bless his projection.

In relation to God's choosing of you, there is no place for repentance. God does not change His mind. This is the story of election, and our salvation is completely dependent upon choosing what God has chosen for us. Esau could have done that; there was grace for that; but he refused it. He becomes bitter and he is angry with God, but all of that fury against God is all redirected to anger toward his brother. He goes out in bitterness, and he is consoling himself with the thought that he could kill his brother and that was going to resolve his anguish. What we see in Esau is the spirit of Antichrist. That is the point I am making. It is the spirit of Antichrist that goes out from the church and then persecutes the church as if they are going to find some kind of solace or consolation in doing that.

We see the ancient hatred. It is good to remember that the ancient hatred is not what we see in the Middle East. It is not between the natural descendants of Esau and the natural descendants of Jacob. It has all now shifted with the Nicolaitans in terms of what goes out from among us. That is the Nicolaitans; that is the profile of Esau.

We have also commented on the 'synagogue of Satan'. I am trying to briefly orientate ourselves here as we begin. Jesus said to the church in Smyrna in Revelation 2 verse 9, 'I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not but are a synagogue of Satan.'

When you are looking at Esau or when you are looking at the Nicolaitans, the key statement is, 'Were they not brothers?' Were they not brethren? When we are looking at the synagogue of Satan in contrast to that, it is a false church saying that they are Jews. We are talking about a false circumcision here - not the true circumcision, not true Jews. In the past, we have probably used this term 'synagogue of Satan' as something of a summary term. We have talked about the doctrine of the Nicolaitans; we have talked about the doctrine of Balaam; we have talked about the doctrine of Jezebel; we have talked about the doctrine of the Laodiceans. Then we have said, 'Okay, all of those four things together equal the synagogue of Satan.'

Regarding the synagogue of Satan, we need to be a bit more specific. It is a unique group in its own right. Again, it is persecuting. There were two manifestations of it in the days of the apostle Paul. The first one was the Jews who rose up from the synagogues - all the Jewish synagogues. As Paul is preaching everywhere (and particularly on his first missionary journey), he began in every place preaching in the synagogue. He did need to do that. Obviously, many are listening to him, and they are saved; but at the same time you have a big group who immediately

perceive that what Paul is saying is a threat to their whole understanding of salvation. There is a group of Jewish zealots that vehemently opposed him everywhere he went and persecuted him. They chased him from city to city. Paul described them as a 'thorn in the flesh' finally and a 'messenger of Satan sent to buffet him' to stop him becoming puffed up in pride. This is still doing a circumcising work in Paul's heart. He recognised this was all part of the righteous manifestation of the judgement of God upon him. But nevertheless, he had this group chasing him around.

In Lystra, on his first missionary journey... (I will comment on this and its connection to the sign of the Son of Man.) ...In Lystra, the Jews from the previous two cities, Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium follow him, and track him down. They turn the whole city against him. They stone him and they drag him out of the city presuming that he is dead. I am assuming that if they are presuming that he is dead, he was pretty close to dead or as good as dead, unless they are very poor judges of what dead looks like. Act 14. They drag him out of the city presuming that he is dead and all the disciples gather around. It does not even say that they are praying; they are all gathering around and possibly wondering how they need to care for the body, thinking about a burial and crafting a thanksgiving service or something. The next second, he stands up again and walks straight back into the city. That is a powerful manifestation of *exanastasis* in a mortal body. Paul refers specifically to that when he says, 'I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my physical body.' Gal 6:17. By the power of resurrection life, he stands up again and he walks back into the city. You could not argue that that was an amazing sign of the Son of Man, right there in Paul the messenger and in Paul the Son of God. You have that group and of course the Lord is using all of that.

You have also this group that was internal (or in the church). That was a different manifestation of the synagogue of Satan again. The second manifestation of the synagogue of Satan comprised the Judaisers who were in the church. They believed that a person could be a law-keeping Jew and a Christian. They are trying to harmonise and assimilate an old gospel with a new gospel and believing that that could be done. They believed that you could be a law-keeping Jew *and* a Christian and in this regard, they believed that Paul's gospel was built on the foundation of their law-based gospel. They did not accept that Paul was coming to lay a completely new foundation as he did in every place. They thought he was just taking it a little bit further than what they already had.

Because the Judaisers believed that they were saved by circumcision as prescribed by the Law, they did not view obedience to Paul's gospel to be necessary for salvation. I am sure they enjoyed listening to him preach but it was all an optional extra. They already had their own foundation. They had their own baseline and that was their fallback. They did not believe that they needed to be obedient to the gospel that Paul was proclaiming. It was not necessary; they are already circumcised.

We look at that today, and that could be any number of different sacramental views of the gospel. A big one is the view that forgiveness is based on a legal transaction - as if the offering of Christ was just a slightly better animal sacrifice that gave us a slightly longer lasting forgiveness. It is all a legal transaction that gets us back to the garden of Eden or gets us to becoming an angel or some other thing. That is the basis of salvation. When we come and proclaim that you have to be born again, that undercuts all of that completely.

These two things cannot be assimilated. I might comment a little bit more on that. The Judaisers viewed themselves to be Jews first

and Christians second. They proclaimed the need for circumcision because they were fearful of alienation from their Jewish friends, family and community. That was their number one priority. That was a higher priority than obedience to Christ. It was certainly a higher priority than obedience to the gospel proclaimed by Paul (which of course was the word of Christ to them).

They were also fearful of suffering persecution at the hands of the Jewish leaders. In a lot of ways, this internal group caused Paul a lot more problems than the external group. Even though it was the external group that stoned him, the internal group caused him no end of problems because they were promoting another gospel in the church. You can read that even Peter was caught up with this hypocrisy. Paul needed to rebuke Peter to his face because he did stand condemned on this point. Gal 2:11-13. The whole letter to the Galatians is the content of Paul's personal rebuke to Peter and he was addressing the same issue among all of the Galatian churches.

I am orientating ourselves that way as we begin. I might read one verse. I want to come to Psalm 99, but I do want to read a verse in the book of Acts on the way through. It is Easter Sunday after all, and considering the resurrection of Christ, we have been certainly rejoicing as we read yesterday. I will quote this on the way through. 1 Peter 1 verse 3: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an incorruptible inheritance.'

That is point one concerning the resurrection. We are able to be born again as sons of God, and we are rejoicing from that perspective of sonship. That is point one - absolutely. Point two then: We rejoice that Jesus Christ has fully completed the offering journey. As Paul says in Hebrews, '...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 Melchisedek.' Heb 5:9-10. That is also guaranteed by Christ's resurrection from the dead. We have a Great High Priest who has been fully glorified. It is a finished work, and He is now seated at the right hand of God and He forever lives to make intercession for us to minister to us a participation in His finished work. Hallelujah! We can be born as sons of God, and we are being conformed into the very same image of Christ. He is the first Man in the image and likeness of God. We have a Great High Priest who 'forever lives to make intercession for us'. Heb 7:25.

I want to add to that - one further point concerning the resurrection of Christ. We will read in Acts 17:30-31 where Paul is preaching in Athens. 'Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He [that is the Father] has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [that is Christ — the glorified Son of Man] whom He has ordained.' This 'day' - this is the day of the Lord. It begins when the Father takes His seat, and judgement begins in the world. We see that in quarter measure with the seals, a third measure with the trumpets, and then in full measure with the vials. The day of the Lord extends all the way to the judgement of the great white throne at the end of the millennium. There is a day that has been appointed, and God the Father is the Judge. He is the King, but He has ordained that this judgement will be by Jesus Christ the Man.

Then Acts 17:31 continues, 'He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.' That is the third point concerning the resurrection of Christ. It is the guarantee - He has given assurance to all that this Man has been ordained by God to judge the world. He is judging now in His lampstand churches.

That brings me to Psalm 99, appreciating His kingship, which is His prerogative to judge. I am not so much focusing on a king leading an army into battle today; I am focusing on a King judging His people.

Psalm 99 is often referred to as one of the 'royal psalms. It is fantastic to sing this this morning. We have already sung all the words of this psalm. It is often referred to as one of the royal psalms because it is focused upon the Lord's kingship. It was almost certainly written by King David. King David ruled over the whole kingdom of Israel. However, he understood that his throne on the earth was beneath and subject to the throne of the Son on the top of Mount Zion. We observe that the Psalm is divided into three sections. Each section finishes with that statement, 'Holy is He'.

The first section focuses on the Lord's sovereignty over the entire creation and all the inhabitants of the world - all the peoples, every nation. 'Let the nations tremble.' The second section of the Psalm focuses on the Lord's kingship and judgements among His own people. He is executing justice and righteousness in Jacob (that is His people). The third section of the Psalm focuses on His mercy and judgement in relation to every individual leader and believer. He picks three of the Lord's greatest servants to use them as examples (Moses, Aaron and Samuel) of this principle.

Most importantly, each section of the Psalm concludes with a declaration of Yahweh's holiness. The conclusion of the third and final section is, 'Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His holy hill [that is Zion] for the Lord our God is holy.' Ps 99:9. It is talking about the holiness of Yahweh *Elohim*. Every son of God has been called. We are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. We have been called to come to Mount Zion for the purpose of worshipping and exalting the holiness of Yahweh *Elohim* and the holiness of the Father's name, the Son's name and the Holy

Spirit's name. Jesus taught us to pray, 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.' Mat 6:9. We are worshipping and exalting the sanctification of the Father's name when we pray that way.

When the apostle John witnessed the throne room of the Father, once the Father takes His seat, he saw the apostolic administration that is in and around the throne. They are all proclaiming, 'Holy, holy, holy'. When they proclaim 'Holy, holy, holy' and worship Him who sits on the throne in that manner, the presbytery (the worldwide presbytery around the throne), all fall down on their faces, cast their crowns before Him, and join that worship, 'Holy, holy, holy'. The whole firstfruits company that is gathered around the throne in that day will worship in that manner. This is what we are learning in our day.

The fellowship of Yahweh is the holy ground on which the love of God is expressed by offering. In this fellowship, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each enabled by the capacity of Eternal Spirit to make offering for the purpose of revealing one Another. We have heard all of this over the last two days. They do not reveal Themselves. However, by offering (which is the expression of Their love), the unique sanctification of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is fully revealed. In this regard, Their love reveals Their sanctification. In fact, Their love is only expressed in sanctification. It is an expression of Their sanctification. Their love reveals Their sanctification and Their love, as an expression of Their sanctification, is also revealing Their love for *our* sanctification. We are just thinking of love here. It is always an expression of sanctification, and it is always focused toward sanctification. It is the expression of love for the sanctification of another. Their love is expressed for our sanctification.

When we are illuminated to behold the love of God, what we see is Their jealous love for

our sanctification. We are looking at an enfolding fire here when we are looking at the love of God. Their jealous love for our sanctification is also their wrath upon our sin or everything that is not sanctified. These two things [love and wrath] you cannot separate. You cannot separate the fire of God - those everlasting burnings with the lake of fire which will continually burn on a person's corruption. They are one in the same thing.

We first come to know this in a very real way when we meet Jesus Christ eye to eye. His eyes are like a flame of fire. In that interaction, He is revealing to us His wrath upon our sin, while at the same time revealing His jealous love for our sanctification. The fruit of that illumination is the fear of God. I am making a very simple point. If we do not have the fear of God before our eyes, we have not yet been illuminated concerning the love of God.

We need to be careful then as we approach the holy ground. Their sanctification is holy. We need to take our sandals off and make sure we are not bringing our own view of what His love should look like onto that holy ground. By illumination, we understand that the fire of the jealous love of God for our sanctification is also the fire of His wrath that burns against our sin.

The first section of Psalm 99 focuses on the Lord's sovereign kingship over all the people in the world. As we have sung, 'The Lord reigns; Let the peoples tremble! He dwells... [One translation says *between*. Another translation says *above*. I am going to run with 'above' first because that is the foremost.] ...He dwells above the cherubim.' When Ezekiel saw the angelic administration... (the cherubim carry the authority of the throne of the Son in the angelic administration) ...When Ezekiel saw the cherubim, he saw a firmament above their heads. Far above the firmament was a throne and far above the throne, the likeness of a Man. 'He dwells above the cherubim.'

I will comment on Mount Zion because that is the place of His throne. Mount Zion is the spiritual mountain. Psa 99:2 says, 'The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above the peoples.' Mount Zion is the spiritual mountain that was established at the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant right where Yahweh the Son, by the capacity of the seven Spirits of God, ministered to Him by the Holy Spirit. This is right where He emptied Himself to the Father and was begotten by the word of the Father as the Son of God. Right there we have the beginning of Mount Zion. It is established by the word of the Father — the same word when He says, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' Psa 2:7. That word is proclaiming the end from the beginning. Everything that will ever be is all part of that word proclaimed by the Father. But the beginning is Mount Zion, and it was established by the word of the Father. It is His holy mountain. It is the place of the Son's throne because the Father immediately installed Yahweh Son who had become the Son of God as the King on the top of Mount Zion. Psalm 2:6. This is the Father speaking. He says, 'I have set my King on my holy hill of Zion.'

From the beginning of the Everlasting Covenant, the Son's throne has been on the heights of Zion. He is proceeding from there to create the angelic administration and create the physical heavens and earth. His throne is far above the cherubim. The Son of God, whose throne was far above the cherubim in the heavenly sanctuary, then also descended. We see this after the fall of man. The Lord is speaking to them through the cherubim at the gate of the garden of Eden. He is speaking through the angelic administration to us, and He descends to the top of the mountain to speak to Moses through the angelic administration. The glory of the Son's presence (which is called the Shekinah) dwelt above the mercy seat and between the cherubim on the ark of the covenant.

It is absolutely true to say it is between the cherubim as well. The Lord promised Moses that He would meet him and speak to him from between the cherubim. King David also saw by prophetic revelation that Jesus Christ (after His offering journey, after His death, burial and resurrection) would ascend far above all principalities and powers. He is now seated at the right hand of God in His own intrinsic throne. 'The Lord said to My Lord, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."' Psa 110:1.

Christ is seated there now - still far *above* the cherubim - but no longer speaking to us *through* the cherubim. He is now speaking to us through the stars (or the presbyteries) that He has in His right hand. Unlike the cherubim who are great in might and power, the presbyteries of Christ's lampstand churches minister in the weakness of Christ. A presbytery is not proclaiming the word with great skill or with words of persuasive wisdom or any of these things. It is not the craft of the sermon. The gospel is being proclaimed in weakness so that a hearer's faith is not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Paul says, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel.' He is ministering in weakness. 'I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.' Rom 1:16. We received a testimony of how that works yesterday. 'It is the power of God for salvation.'

The mandate of a presbytery in the right hand of Christ is to proclaim the gospel of sonship and the 'so great a salvation' that is available to every son of God who embraces their participation in the seven wounding events of Christ. If we reject the gospel that is proclaimed by Christ from heaven through His messengers, our judgement will be far worse than those who rejected His word which was spoken on earth through the dispensation of the angels. That is a very sobering point. Paul is very clear on that point. In Hebrews 2:1 he said, 'For this

reason, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, after it was at the first spoken through the Lord, and it was confirmed to us by those who heard?

We rejoice, as I said, in Christ's priesthood to us. The evidence that we are on the pathway of salvation as sons of God is that we are learning the obedience that Christ has already learned for us as the Pioneer of our eternal salvation. He is our Great High Priest and on His offering journey, He fully identified with us in all of our infirmities; all of our weaknesses; all of our struggles; all of our issues; all of our sin; and overcame every temptation and fulfilled the works of our obedience for us. He has finished it all. The obvious implication of that now is... (knowing that we have a Great High Priest who forever lives to make intercession for us and minister to us a participation in that finished work) ... the obvious implication is that we have no excuse for disobedience.

If we are disobedient and spurning and rejecting the ministry of Christ as our Great High Priest, we will run into Christ the King, who is judging in relation to our obedience, disobedience, our sanctification. Every provision has been made for us. We are without excuse. Christ is judging as King. I will read another verse on this same point. Hebrews 12:25: 'See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those who did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on the earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.'

I want to make a point, but if I do not quite get there, I will say this: We are delivered from the judgement of the Law to the cross of Christ. We are judged in relation to our obedience to Him. That is the key point. Jesus

Christ is presently speaking from heaven through His presbyteries to His lampstand churches. He is not yet speaking to the world. However, when the Father takes His seat on the top of Mount Zion and He puts His throne there next to the throne of the Son, He puts it there for the purpose of judging the world, establishing His kingdom on the earth, dwelling among us, tabernacling with us. The Son will stand up and shift His throne and His entire administration, so it is in and around the throne of the Father.

The Father then gives Christ the scroll with those seven seals that contains the fullness of the Father's will in relation to salvation and also judgement which will be revealed in the end of the age. As Christ begins to open those seals, we begin to see the judgements of God manifest in the earth. At the same time, the nations will learn righteousness.

This really hits a peak at the opening of the sixth seal where the Lord hallows His name. 'I will be hallowed before the eyes of all the peoples. They will know that I am holy and let the nations tremble.' King David declared, 'The Lord reigns, let the peoples tremble.' So His judgements will be in the earth. At the same time, the testimony of the 144,000 will cause a great multitude to be born as sons of God and then saved through regeneration by embracing their participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ. We get to the end of the first section which says, 'Let them praise Your great and awesome name.' This will happen. The nations will praise His great and awesome name. We do see a great multitude there, coming out of great tribulation having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. They are proclaiming before the throne of the Father as they serve Him day and night in His temple. They are proclaiming, 'Salvation belongs to our God and to the Lamb.' Rev 7:10. The nations will praise Him.

The second section of the Psalm then - I will see if I can do this in five minutes. It focuses on the exercise of the Lord's kingship and judgements among His own people. I want to make a point concerning forgiveness. In verse 4 it says, 'The strength of the King loves justice.' That means that a verdict (or a sentence) has been passed. The King is sovereign. He judges. 'The strength of the King loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.' This is speaking about the new house of Jacob that has come forth from the wellsprings of Judah. Verse 5: 'Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool - He is holy.' Verse 6: 'Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His name. They called upon the Lord, and He answered them.' This is an amazing statement. They are joining the prayer meeting, and the Lord is answering them. He is expressing His jealous love for their sanctification. King David referred to three of the Lord's greatest servants to emphasise that every individual, leader, believer, every person, regardless of their ministry profile, will interface with the mercy and judgement of God that belongs to the cross of Christ in relation to their deeds.

Verse 7: 'He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar; they kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them. [Verse 8] You answered them, O Lord our God [This is how He is answering them]; You were to them... [This is speaking to them personally], ...You were to them [to them and then to all of us], God-Who-Forgives, though You took vengeance on their deeds.'

Jesus is addressing all the lampstand churches and saying, 'I know your works.' The name *El Nasah* here means 'God who forgives'. The reason that David recognised that the Lord God was *El Nasah* to Moses, Aaron and Samuel is that that is the way he personally knew Him.

In Romans 4 Paul asks, 'What did Abraham find according to the flesh?' What did he find in his mortality? We know that he found the faith of God and the faith of the Son of God to believe for sonship in his mortality. That is what he found in his flesh quite apart from the Law - well before the Law - Abraham found that. Then Paul says (and you could ask the same question), 'What did David find?' Well, David found forgiveness from the Law. He writes there quoting from Psalm 32, 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are covered.' That is talking about being included in the offering of Christ - all gathered up into Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, where He became the embodiment of sin. 'Whose sins are covered' - or included in that offering. 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.'

This is the first dimension of forgiveness. We know that David should have been judged according to the Law. He should have been taken out and stoned for his adultery and his murder; but he wasn't. He does cry out to the Lord for mercy and the Lord did answer him as *El Nasah*. He says, 'You are not going to die, but nonetheless, I am taking vengeance on your deeds and your son will die and there will be a sword in your house, which will trouble you.' The first dimension of forgiveness (I want to finish on this point) is that it is the remission of the debt that has been accrued because of our sin under the Law. Forgiveness delivers us from the requirement to repay the debt to God under the judgement of the Law.

You can look at the king in Matthew 18:21-35. The man owed 10,000 talents and he begs for mercy. The king has compassion on him, and he releases him from the debt. (We know that man then goes and tries to get a hundred denarii from the other servant.) In the most basic level, it is the forgiveness of the debt.

At the same time, forgiveness delivers us to our participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ. This first dimension of

forgiveness is important (the forgiveness or the remission of the debt) but the forgiveness of sin delivers us *from* the judgement of the Law and delivers us *to* the mercy and judgement of the cross.

Paul says, 'I through the Law died to the Law.' Gal2:19. The death that Christ died by fully identifying with us in our sin to deliver us from the judgement of the Law, that very same death (because He fully identified with us) has joined us to that death. You cannot separate those two things. This is the judgement we make when we are illuminated by the Spirit - that 'if one died for all, therefore all died.' 2Co 5:14. I am delivered from the judgement of the Law, but I am delivered to be crucified with Christ. That was Paul's reckoning. When David said that *El Nasah* still takes vengeance upon our deeds, he was not referring to the punishment of the Law. He was referring then to the righteous judgement of God upon us in the offering of Christ.

I will read this to finish. When we consider the lesson of the two thieves, Christ is getting crucified, and they throw Him down onto the cross. As they are driving the nails through His hands and His feet, He is praying. He is saying, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' But right there as He is being crucified, we are all being crucified with Him. That is the forgiveness (or the deliverance) from the judgement of the Law as it is nailed to the cross. It is delivering us to the mercy and judgement of the cross. This is a massive deliverance for us, but we have to be very clear that forgiveness (or the remission of the debt) cannot get you to heaven. It gets you to the cross. That is a wonderful reality if we will lay hold of it.

We are then crucified *with* Christ and given the opportunity by prevenient grace to make a choice in relation to His merciful offer to us to become sons of God. When we consider the lesson of the two thieves who were crucified on either side of Christ, we learn

that there are two sides of the cross in relation to God's vengeance upon our deeds.

The unbelieving thief wanted forgiveness from the Law, but he did not want to be delivered to the cross of Christ. When he rejected his participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ, the cross became the instrument of his eternal judgement. It confined him to the lake of fire where he will forever suffer under the wrath of God upon his sin. In contrast to that, when the believing thief embraced his participation in the offering and sufferings of Christ, the cross became the instrument of his salvation. Christ took his sin out into the sea of God's forgetfulness.

This is a further dimension of forgiveness now, but it is only operative in the cross of Christ. He was then redeemed from the death of sin by the power of God's resurrection life in the blood of Christ. I will read this final statement. There is a further dimension of forgiveness which is operative only in the fellowship of Christ's offering and suffering. There are two dimensions of forgiveness.

In *The Pathway of Pilgrimage*, we have identified three dimensions of redemption. That is in chapter one (page 21). You need that framework for what I am saying now. We consider three dimensions of redemption: redemption from the Law to adoption as sons; the redemption that is in Christ; and the redemption of our body on the day of resurrection.

There are two dimensions of forgiveness which accompany the first two dimensions of redemption. The first dimension of forgiveness is the remission of the debt and our deliverance from the judgement of the Law. The evangelical gospel only goes that far and as I have said, that cannot get you to heaven. That gets you to the cross and you are crucified with Christ. The second dimension of forgiveness is the remission of sin itself and our deliverance from our sin by the blood of Christ through our fellowship in

Christ's seven wounding events. That is what Paul is talking about when he says, 'In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.' Eph 1:7. It is the remission of sin itself - not just the remission of the debt.

If the first dimension of forgiveness delivers us from the judgement of the Law to the mercy and judgement of the cross, the second dimension of forgiveness is delivering us through the cross to our priestly service in the kingdom of God. We wash our priestly robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb as we continue to embrace our fellowship in Christ's seven wounding events. As we serve as priests in the household of God and call upon the name of the Lord in prayer, we continue to interface with the Lord as *El Nasah* for the entire duration of our life.

We know Him as God-Who-Forgives, while at the same time He takes vengeance on our deeds. His chastening upon us is the expression of His mercy and judgement together to deliver us from our sin so that we are not condemned along with the world. We know Him as 'God-Who-Forgives, but who also took vengeance upon their deeds'. Psa 99:8. His chastening hand upon us is the expression of His judgement and His mercy in the cross for the sake of our sanctification as sons and priests. We will leave it there for this first session.

Thanks.