

THE MINISTRY OF ELIJAH PART 2

Peter Hay, prepared for the Presbytery fellowship word, 19 October 2021

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Two messengers

In our last session we considered the work of the messengers of the Lord to proclaim to us the Everlasting Covenant.

The first messengers who do this work are part of a presbytery fellowship, and they minister in the spirit and power of Elijah. They go 'before the face of the Lord' to prepare the hearts of their hearers to receive Christ.

Christ is the second Messenger. He is described by the prophet Malachi as 'the Messenger of the Covenant'. He ministers the light of life to those who receive His word.

The point is that there are two messengers.

One group of messengers is sent before the face of the Lord to prepare the way, or the hearts, of those to receive the second Messenger, who is Christ.

He comes to proclaim the light of life to them. That is the *substance* of the life of God.

The ministry of 'the spirit and power of Elijah'

Following Christ's ascension into heaven, the ministry of 'the spirit and power of Elijah', which was exemplified by John the Baptist, was committed to the *apostles*. The Lord said that they would become His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Act 1:8.

'All the Law and prophets' ministered before John the Baptist. Then John the Baptist came, and Jesus said that he ministered in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Christ said that everyone who enters the kingdom of heaven, who are born of God and joined to the body of Christ, would be greater than John the Baptist.

God's messenger administration – the *aggelos*

The first, or the foundation, of His messenger administration that He established was the twelve apostles.

We see in the book of Revelation that the apostle John, who was obviously one of the twelve, was in

the Spirit on the Lord's day. He was oriented, as he prayed, towards the table of shewbread. This piece of temple furniture was symbolic of the messenger administration of the twelve apostles. We know that he was looking, or oriented, in this way, because he heard a voice behind him.

When John turned to see the voice, he saw Jesus seated in the midst of 7 golden lampstands. Jesus said to him, in relation to this vision that John was having, that the 7 lampstands were the 7 churches, and the 7 stars in His right hand were the 7 angels, or *aggelos* presbyteries, of those seven churches.

This was the messenger administration that the apostle Paul had established, and to which John was now being joined by Christ.

Remember, John was the last remaining apostle. He was the last one alive of that group of twelve who were set apart to that work by Jesus. John was joined to this lampstand administration.

Through this administration, the message of sonship would be proclaimed to the world *until the time of the end*.

We know that the apostle John was established in this administration of light because he opened his first letter, which was written after the book of Revelation, writing, 'That which we have seen and heard we declare to you that you also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ'. 1Jn1:3.

'We' here refers to a *fellowship* of leaders, but none of those men, whom John was part of, had actually *seen* Jesus. John was the last of the apostles and the direct eyewitnesses, so he testified as part of a different administration - a presbytery, or lamp - that was reflective of the one that he saw in the book of Revelation.

The light of His lampstand administration

Each presbytery in the lampstand administration that Paul established, and then Jesus was writing to in the book of Revelation, provides the lamp-light for all of the congregation 'flowers' of a lampstand.

The point is that there are 7 stars in Christ's right hand, and they are the stars for all 7 churches.

Each star is a presbytery, or an *aggelos*, that belongs to a lampstand. The lamp-light that goes in the lampstand comes from the one presbytery for all of the congregations, which are symbolised by flowers on that lampstand.

Importantly, when that light is placed in the flower, *all* of the 'petals' of the flower have a participation in the shining, or focusing, of that light.

Each presbytery provides the lamp-light for all of the congregation flowers of a lampstand.

A presbytery is a *fellowship*. It is a fellowship of overseers, of elders, and deacons who are full of the Holy Spirit. They have been set apart by the Father for the ministry of the word of God, who is Christ, to the church and to the whole world.

The ministry of Elijah restored to presbyteries

We have spoken about the ministry of the spirit and power of Elijah, and it has now been committed to the 'stars' in Christ's hand, which are the *presbyteries* of lampstand churches.

In Jesus' letters to the seven churches, He addressed the ministry of Elijah quite specifically in relation to what is necessary for *a presbytery to be restored*, or to have this ministry restored to them.

The spirit and power of Elijah – 'the morning star'

Significantly, in his letters to the seven presbyteries, Jesus promised that He would give 'the morning star' to those who have not known 'the depths of Satan'.

The point is that the reference to the morning star is to *the ministry of Elijah*. It is the spirit and power of Elijah.

Presbyteries to overcome the doctrines of Satan

'Now, I say to you and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put no other burden. But hold fast what you have til I come.

'And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations - "He shall rule them with a rod of iron;

they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels" - as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.' Rev 2:24-28.

The point is that there is to be the overcoming of a doctrine which belongs to the depths of Satan. To obtain the morning star, a presbytery has to *overcome these doctrines*.

Jesus was saying that He would give to them the ministry of Elijah. Receiving this capacity is necessary for *aggelos* presbyteries to function as burning and shining lamps in the same manner as John the Baptist did during his ministry.

Remember, we are talking about stars that are presbyteries, that are supposed to provide lamp-light for congregations called 'flowers', in a lampstand church. They have to overcome some things to obtain this capacity which is to *shine as a burning lamp*.

The witness of His messenger administration as the lamp-light of the lampstand church

In this regard, we note the symmetry between Jesus' description of John the Baptist, and the work of presbyteries as the *aggelos* of a lampstand.

This is what Jesus said about John. 'You have sent to John, and he has *borne witness to the truth*.' Joh 5:33.

The point is that there was *a witness* that John brought in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Then *a messenger administration* was established by Jesus after His resurrection; after He birthed them again, and they had been established as members of His body.

They were also called 'witnesses of Christ to the end of the earth'. Jesus referred to the nature of this witness.

'You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive the testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was *the burning and shining lamp*, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.' Joh 5:33-34.

The ministry of John which was in the spirit and power of Elijah is given to presbyteries that overcome the doctrine of Satan.

Where that is overcome, the ministry is given to presbyteries as *the morning star*. That capacity of

the morning star is the capacity to be *the lamp-light of a lampstand church*.

The implication is that, if a presbytery is not established in this lamp-light ministry because they are not overcoming these doctrines, the light that is in the congregations is *not* 'the light of life' at all.

Hence it is important that we understand how this ministry is being established in presbyteries, so that the churches can shine the light into the world.

The morning star bears witness to the Light - Christ

We will consider the morning star a little more in order to understand that which is being restored to a presbytery; and restored to us *all*, because we are all being called to *join that same fellowship*.

In the natural creation, the morning star is visible *prior to the light of the dawn*. It is called 'the morning star' because it is seen early in the morning, but before the light of dawn shines.

The morning star is not the sun. It is not even a star. This is an amazing principle. It is a planet. The light that it shines is the reflection of the light from the sun. It is a planet and it is seen in the sky because it reflects the light of the sun. Its appearance in the sky, before the dawn, heralds the coming day, which is manifest by the light of the sun.

We are waiting for the 'Sun' to come, speaking of Christ. And 'the morning star' ushers in, or appears before and bears witness to, the light of the Sun.

The apostle John described the ministry of John the Baptist in similar terms to the way in which this morning star operates.

He said, 'This man came for a witness to bear witness of the light that all *through Him might believe*. He was not that Light.' Joh 1:6-8.

There is power in this witness, enabling a person to *believe*. This means that the word that comes from the ministry and power of Elijah ministers faith, because we cannot believe without faith.

John was saying that he *bore witness of the Light*, that all, through Him, might believe. John was not that Light, but he was sent to bear witness of that Light.

This is the same process as the morning star in the natural creation. It is not the light of the sun, but it 'bears witness' to the sun. It appears before the sun, ushering in the dawn, or the rising of the sun.

Jesus, of course, is *the Light of the world*. And He was described by Malachi as 'the Sun of Righteousness'. Mal 4:2.

The proclamation of God's word to all men in these last days

With this principle of the morning star in mind, we note that, in these last days - and we are most definitely in the last days - as we make our way to the beginning of the time of the end, the ministry of Elijah, through *aggelos* presbyteries, will prepare *every person* in the whole world for the coming of the day of the Lord.

This is similar to the proclaiming work of the ministry of John the Baptist, before Jesus' coming.

The word of the ministry of Elijah, the word of the cross, proclaims judgement and blessing

It is the proclamation of the word that causes every person to be drawn to the cross, where the work, the offering of Christ, was completely *finished* in all aspects, both in *judgement* and *blessing*, right through to the consummation, or the finish, of that judgement.

That is 'the great and terrible day of the Lord'.

In this regard, Malachi said, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a *curse*.' Mal 4:5-6.

Malachi prophesied that Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, will 'arise with *healing* in His wings' for those who receive this ministry. The ministry of Elijah is coming to prepare everyone for this great and terrible day of the Lord.

Malachi said that those who receive this ministry will receive the Sun, the Dawn, and that it would cause them to arise with healing. They will be 'made alive' as they receive Jesus, who is the Messenger of the Covenant.

He said, 'For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be like stubble [they will be burned

up]. “And the day, which is coming shall burn them up”, says the Lord of Hosts, “That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves”. Mal 4:1-2.

This means that when they hear the word of the ministry of Elijah *those who fear the Lord* will be made alive from the death of sin, through the new birth and by being joined to the fellowship of Christ’s body, which is the outcome of Christ’s ministry as the Messenger of the Covenant.

However, those who reject this great salvation will be *cursed and condemned forever*. That is the meaning of Him coming like a burning oven which is going to burn the stubble.

Presbyteries who do not know ‘the depths of Satan’

As we have already noted, this ministry of Elijah belongs to those presbyteries ‘who have not known the depths of Satan’.

‘The depths of Satan’ does not refer to just the lives of people who are engaged in troubling practices - although that is not quite right, because promoting the doctrine of Satan is obviously problematic. It is not just ‘bad behaviour’.

It refers to the teaching of something that is the ministry of ‘the word of Satan’.

‘The depths of Satan’ refers to the ministries of those who presume to lead the church, but are, in fact, part of ‘the synagogue of Satan’.

It is the church of Satan in the midst of the church that belongs to Christ.

These leaders violate the fellowship of the presbytery, which should be the fellowship of Yahweh; and they do this by holding to other doctrines.

Four doctrines of Satan to be overcome in receiving the morning star

There are four specific doctrines that Jesus identified in His seven letters.

They are the doctrine of the Nicolaitans; the doctrine of Balaam; the doctrine of Jezebel; and the doctrine that is demonstrated by the practices of the Laodiceans.

These are types of *leaven* that are first in presbyteries, and then grow in or scatter among churches.

Unless a presbytery overcomes these doctrines, through repentance and by giving attention to removing them, they will not receive the morning star. They will not have the capacity to bear witness to Christ as the Light, to the ends of the earth.

In relation to these doctrines, then, overcoming is required. That overcoming of those doctrines is necessary to obtaining the morning star, which is the ministry of the spirit and power of Elijah.

Refusing the word of truth; or committed to the word of truth

Those who do not overcome these doctrines exemplify them by proclaiming them. They proclaim them in their *speech*, but they also proclaim them in their *conduct*. That is the nature of our ‘speech’.

They become ‘apostles of Satan’ as they refuse to turn from their doctrinal aberrations or traditions, when the word of present truth is proclaimed to them.

It is not that those in the presbytery are perfect. It is that they are *committed* to, or have laid the foundation of, repentance and faith and ‘washings’, listed in Hebrews Chapter 6.

A presbytery is actually *a fellowship* of leaders who are putting off the things of the flesh, and are putting on the things of the Spirit, progressively, in the light of the word. That is the nature of a presbytery. They should be walking blamelessly in the same way that we all should be walking blamelessly; but that is not sinlessness.

The focus is the easiness of being able to *receive* the *word of present truth*, to *respond* to it, to *walk* in it, and to *exemplify* it.

The word of the cross is a *light that is shining on the pathway* that we are to take the next step on. The only way that we can make that next step is to let go of where we are right now.

When we resist the word of present truth and hold on to our histories, our doctrinal peculiarities and traditions, we become the enemy of that which the proceeding word is proclaiming.

As soon as that division happens, those ones become enemies of the word of the cross, because the word of the cross is bringing that division.

They become apostles of Satan as they refuse to turn from their doctrinal aberrations or traditions when the word of present truth is proclaimed to them.

The ministry of God's word comes as 'the day of visitation' and 'times of refreshing'

The Scriptures refer to the ministry of this word. This is the word that everyone in the presbytery, and everyone in the church, is being called to.

This is 'the day of visitation' and 'times of refreshing from the Lord'.

In coming weeks, we will speak more about the nature of how the word comes. We do know that it comes 'precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little there a little'.

The Lord said through Isaiah, 'This is where the refreshing is.' Where the word comes in that way, like 'the gentle rain' or 'the dew of Hermon', and we turn in repentance, we are exemplifying the light, or the culture of light, that will be a ministry to the world.

This day of visitation and times of refreshing from the Lord are the initiative of His restoration, through the ministry of Elijah, to establish hearers on 'the ground of truth'.

Progressive obedience or progressive hardening of heart

When we will not turn, and will not walk in that light, we demonstrate a different culture.

As Judas did, those who resist what the Spirit is saying through the ascension gift graces of Christ to the church - specifically those who are supposed to be presbyters; but this is true for everyone in the church - become progressively oppressed, and then possessed, by Satan.

Last week I made the point that, as the word of the cross comes, it *progressively* has an effect on a person.

It either progressively *enables their obedience* or it progressively *'hardens' them out of the kingdom*.

Progressive departure from fellowship, the ground of truth

That is no better exemplified than in the life of Judas. It is interesting, though, that where we

reject that word, we become increasingly 'unclean'. And our uncleanness makes us vulnerable to unclean spirits.

Judas was progressively oppressed by Satan until, at the last supper, when he ate the bread that Jesus gave to him, 'Satan entered into him'.

There is a progressive departure from fellowship, which is the ground of truth, bringing a person under oppression. There is an energy and an agitation associated with it, where a person assumes a strong mandate for themselves. Eventually, it results in Satan himself entering into the person.

That one persecutes the fellowship of the church, and particularly the fellowship of the presbytery, which is what Judas did. The outcome was that the Chief Apostle, who is Jesus Christ, was killed at his hand. They persecute those who minister the truth on the ground of the presbytery.

They stray from the truth and gather people to themselves. These are 'sheep' who are led astray and, with those who speak in this manner, they become 'shipwrecked'. Unless there is divine intervention, this leads to spiritual death.

All are called to sonship in the faith

Regarding this principle, Paul said to Timothy, 'This charge I commit to you, son Timothy.' ITi 1:18.

A fundamental point is that *we are all being called to sonship in the faith*.

The evidence of sonship is a commitment to receive the *fatherhood* of Christ through the ministry of that grace in the presbytery.

Timothy was identified by Paul as a son, but he presented himself to be discipled, or disciplined, under the instruction of Paul.

'This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, having *faith* and a *good conscience*.'

Faith comes by hearing the word. A *good conscience* came because Timothy was joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings, where the blood sprinkled his heart from an evil conscience.

Rejection of the fellowship of the word of God

‘Which some having rejected.’ This means that they rejected the word that was proclaimed from the presbytery. And, because they rejected the word, they rejected *the fellowship of the word*, which meant that their sufferings were not *fellowship in Christ’s offering and sufferings*.

They did not have their conscience sprinkled clean. Their sufferings became the harbinger of their condemnation.

‘Which some having rejected, concerning the faith, have suffered shipwreck.’ This means that ‘the ship has gone down’. It is, if you like, under ‘the sea of God’s forgetfulness’.

‘Of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander [Alexander the coppersmith; he wrote about Alexander again in his second letter to Timothy], whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.’ 1Ti 1:18-20.

Joining the fellowship of the proceeding word

We need to understand how we are to interface with the messengers who go before the face of Christ, and Christ the Messenger of the Covenant. We do have to relate to both of these messengers in order to obtain *the message of the Everlasting Covenant*.

Confusion regarding the role of Christ’s messengers, and our response to the ministry of Elijah, can cause a person to stall in the steps of salvation.

Rejecting the fellowship of the messenger and of the proceeding word

Some people presume that they can hear and receive from Christ apart from His messengers whom He sends before His face. They presume that they do not need to hear a messenger administration, because they hear from Christ directly.

They are deluded by the lie that they can know the Lord and have His life *apart from the fellowship from which Christ’s word proceeds*.

In their presumption, they name themselves and presume to minister in the church, and from house to house, from the basis of what is, in reality, *idolatry*. It is a ‘god of their own imagination’, because the Scriptures are quite

clear that there is a messenger administration that Christ Himself has established.

Christ Himself, said ‘Whoever *receives him whom I send receives Me* and receives Him who sent Me.’ Mar 9:37.

There is a messenger administration that we are called to interface with.

When we claim to hear from, and receive, Christ apart from that, it is evidence of *delusion*; it is evidence of an idol in our life.

Clinging to the messenger in deceit – connecting in delusion and fleshly expectation

Others stall in their pilgrimage because they ‘cling to the messenger *with deceit*’. As we have said, this does not mean that they necessarily ‘cling to the messenger’ in such a way as to trick or delude the messenger regarding their true attitudes and motivations.

It means that they cling to the messenger while still being deluded by their *own, fleshly* expectations of the gospel. They do not fear the Lord. They do not turn from their own way, because they are still deluded.

They cling to the messenger because they want to receive some sense of *identity verification* because of that connection.

This sort of connection to a messenger is an alternative to meeting Christ heart to heart and eye to eye, through which they can receive the word of their name, and can obtain grace for participation in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

The point is that, because of shame, they remain covered, which is ‘a veil on their eyes’, because they do not want their heart exposed by meeting Christ eye to eye.

Association with the messenger, not fellowship

They ‘cling to the messenger’ by associating themselves with the messenger, and by having ‘deep and meaningful’ conversations and times of confession with the messenger.

However, they will not stand up and be *accountable*, meet Christ eye to eye, obtain grace for repentance, and actually ‘work out their own salvation with fear and trembling’.

'The fear of death' maintains their deceit, and causes them to hold on to the messenger as an alternative to actually meeting Christ.

These people endeavour to ascertain their name through their association with those who should be calling them to receive Christ Himself. They maintain connection.

They will often say, 'Look, tell me what my name is. What works should I be doing?' In this, they are trying to get someone else to empower them, and to give them confidence to participate in a particular way. That comes from an 'association'; it does not come through a word of faith which is *demonstrated through offering*.

The worship of angels - false humility

The apostle Paul described this form of engagement with the messenger as 'the worship of angels'.

This does not refer to 'up-in-heaven angels'. This refers to the *aggelos*.

In this regard, Paul said, 'Let no-one cheat you of your reward.' Our 'reward' is *the divine nature that we receive as a son of God*, which is to be multiplied as we walk in the pathway of salvation that Christ has pioneered for us.

'Let no-one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false humility and worship of angels*.' Col 2:18-19.

It is false humility to cling to the messenger because we are afraid of proceeding in the accountability of our own name, in the face of Christ.

It is not humility – we are actually too *proud* to receive the grace that God gives to the humble.

It is false humility, giving worship to angels and 'putting them up on a pedestal', and then connecting with them so that we 'get on the pedestal' with them.

'Intruding into things which he has not seen.'

When a person associates in that way, they engage in discussions that are actually none of their business or their accountability. It is being 'puffed up'; and that is exactly what Paul next noted.

'Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and *not holding fast to the Head* [Christ], from whom all the

body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.' Col 2:18-19.

Meeting Christ broken heart to broken heart

The outcome of receiving the messengers sent by Christ is that a believer should meet the Lord personally, broken-hearted.

The word of the messenger has to have a breach on our heart, and we are not then to run to the messenger to alleviate the effect of the breach.

The messenger says, 'No; you need to meet Jesus yourself.' We are to meet the Lord personally, broken heart to broken heart and eye to eye. We should not draw back from the impact of the light as it reveals to us the condition of our heart.

We receive our name from Him, and the anointing of the Spirit by which we present ourself for participation in offering in the fellowship of the presbytery, which is the fellowship of the church. Through *offering*, we will 'prove the will of God', which is our *sanctification*.

Receiving the messenger and the fellowship of truth

We do have to *receive the messengers* who come in the spirit and power of Elijah to make a breach on our heart. We have to meet Christ personally.

We have to *receive an anointing* by which we 'know all things'. We do not need anyone to teach us or to script for us our participation.

When we *receive* our name, and faith in that word, our desire is to join that very *fellowship* from which the word comes, and to participate, or lay our life down, to reveal others. It is entirely personal *accountability*; and the outcome of personal accountability is the entire *commitment* to *fellowship*.

If we say that we do not need the messenger, we are not committed to the fellowship of the messenger word.

If we depend on that fellowship, but *will not meet Christ*, we are not standing in the truth.

Walking in the light

The reality is that there is a messenger word.

It is *the word of the cross*.

It causes us to come into *the fellowship* of the *agape* meal, which is the Lord's table itself, where we meet Him eye to eye and heart to heart.

As we put off our projections, we receive from Him the *light*, or the *word*, of our *name*.

We then stand in that name and *lay down our lives* for others in the very fellowship from which the word has proceeded.

That is how we *walk in the light*.

The least in the kingdom of heaven – born of God and joined to the fellowship of His body

We will return to a key point that we considered in our last session - the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist.

This is a beautiful point. Jesus said this because those who *enter the kingdom of heaven* are *born of God* and *joined to the fellowship of His body*.

This applies to everyone who is born of God, and is joined to the fellowship of Christ's body *by hearing, receiving and walking in the light of the word of the cross*.

There is a messenger administration which John described, saying, 'That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you might have *fellowship with us*.'

We will be joined to that same fellowship, which means that we are also joined to the same *expression of light*.

Everyone is being called to this ministry of the spirit and power of Elijah.

Bearing witness of Christ in our culture – our conduct and conversation

Because we are part of this fellowship, we too, from the least - or from the youngest - to the greatest are all able to *bear witness of Christ* to others.

A messenger is a witness of the things to which they have been illuminated.

As the word comes, we are being *illuminated* and established in it. We are seeing it, and then, in *repentance and obedience*, we are beginning to *walk* in it. It is becoming our *culture*

And, in the things that Christ, by the Spirit, continues to reveal to us as a proceeding word, we are coming week by week, day by day, to walk in the light of that word in our *conversation* with

one another, and in the communities in which we live.

And, through our *conduct*, we are exemplifying the culture of *godliness* that is characteristic of the fellowship of Yahweh.

By this means, Christ is being 'lifted up' among those with whom we are interacting. This is such a wonderful ministry.

Established in His word of sonship to shine as lights

In the current season, the Lord is restoring to us the gospel of sonship, and is establishing this word as our culture of life.

We are not studying these steps of salvation merely to get our theology clear. We are understanding these steps of salvation so that they become our *culture*; so that we exemplify them in our speech and in our conduct. The Lord Himself is establishing us in this word as the culture of our life.

The effect will be that we, as individuals and as households, will *shine as lights* in the spirit and power of Elijah in a world that is increasingly in darkness and in bondage to fear. We are all being called to a great work.

The fellowship of light; the burning fire; the agape meal

Because of our participation in the *agape* meal, we are part of the 'angel' that is in the 'burning bush'.

Previously, we talked about Moses, and recall that an angel appeared to him in the bush. That bush is on fire in our lives.

Because you and I are receiving the word and are joining the fellowship which is with the Father and the Son - which means that our fellowship is in that fire, or in the light - when we speak to people in our community, in our schools, in our workplaces, we are part of that angel to them. How about that for an upgrade in your job for the coming days!

Our *participation* in the *agape* meal is key. The *agape* meal is a meal at the tree of life. That tree of life is *the burning bush*. It is *the fellowship of light* and the *angel* is in it. It is the first thing that appears to a person.

You are that angel appearing to them, because you are eating from the tree of life in an *agape* meal.

The love of God is like 'a vehement fire'. Because of our participation in the *agape* meal, we are part of the angel and the burning bush, which is the tree of life, and the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our expectation of the messenger and of the word that he brings

We are the ones who will appear to our neighbours, our school friends, our work colleagues, our unsaved family members as part of that *aggelos* fellowship. Like Moses, many will turn aside to inquire of this 'great sight' that they see when they look at your life and look at your family.

It is not hard for us to see, even now, how different our families are from the condition of families in the world.

Many people who are turning to see this great sight, and perhaps even in the church, will have expectations of how Christians should be, how they should live, and how they should minister as messengers.

Jesus said this of John the Baptist. 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see?' Remember, Moses was in the wilderness, and he turned to see this fellowship. Jesus asked the people about what they expected John the Baptist to be, because they had heard about him, and went out to see him.

'So, what did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously apparelled. gorgeously apparelled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. But what did you go out to see?' Luk 7:24-27. He said it three times. He was really making a point.

And He is asking us what is the expectation of our heart in relation to this sight that we are seeing.

'A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written: "Behold, I send My Messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you".'

'A reed shaken by the wind' – accommodating other doctrines

What did Jesus mean by 'a reed shaken by the wind'?

A reed shaken by the wind is like a person who bows to, or accommodates, every wind of doctrine.

They bend and flex to everything that comes; to all sorts of views. They are always trying to appease people and to 'accommodate' them as though that flexibility, in sanctification, or simply in embracing of people, is the way to minister the gospel.

Jesus is saying, 'That is not it. John the Baptist was not like that; and neither are My witnesses.'

'Soft clothing' – appealing through sensuality and deceit

What about the 'soft clothing'? The term 'soft' in this passage literally means 'effeminate'; and there is a great deal that we could develop about that. The 'soft clothing' in this passage means 'effeminate clothing'.

This is indicative of a person who endeavours to elicit a response from others through sensuality and deceit. It involves trying to make the gospel seem to be appealing through sensual engagement with people.

This may be through the ministering of a message of *prosperity*. It's not that they say, 'Look, you can have a great life.' It is presuming to have something to share because they believe that they a great life; 'You can be like me, dressed like me; all together like me.'

Ministering in the spirit and power of Elijah – walking in the truth, the word of the cross

A person who is walking *in the way of the cross* is actually in the midst of the mess of that offering.

They are not 'all together' at all. There are many things that need to be put off. There is a mess that is being dealt with. Suffering is happening. Repentance is happening. There are works of faith. There is persecution. It is actually a much more 'messy' reality.

The mode of one who ministers in the spirit and power of Elijah is that they *reveal the light of fellowship in the offering of Christ*.

We do not need to 'aspire' to anything like that. That would be completely an activity of the flesh.

You are a minister in the spirit and power of Elijah simply because you walk in what is *true*.

You have this witness in yourself, because that word of the cross is actually at work in your life.

The mode of one who ministers in the spirit and power of Elijah is that they reveal the light of fellowship in the offering of Christ, because this is *the conduct and conversation of their life*.

We do not need to be afraid of the expectations of our hearers or of the polarising effect of the message that we speak and exemplify.