

Receiving the Promise  
*of*  
Eternal Life

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Prepared for the International Youth Convocation - January 2015

Scriptures are quoted from NASB, NKJV, KJV and LITV.

Where italicised emphasis is used in Scripture references, these have been added and do not appear in the original translations.

Published by visionone

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# Overview

- The central message of the gospel is the promise of becoming a son of God by receiving eternal life. The apostle John declared, 'This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life'. 1 John 2:25.
- We can receive the promise of eternal life as sons of God because the offering of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit has given us a complete 'package of salvation'. This 'package of salvation' is the gift of God. It includes the seed of the divine nature which is given to us so that we are born as sons of God. It also includes the talents which are given to us as slaves of Christ, and the grace which comes to us in the fellowship of Christ's body, the church.
- The evidence that we are receiving this package of salvation will be our sanctification as a son of God. Our sanctification is seen as we live exclusively and obediently as sons of God, fulfilling the personal predestination to which we have been called. On this point, the apostle Paul wrote, 'For this is the will of God, your sanctification'. 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

## Born of the life of God

- The parables of Jesus speak of the seed of the divine nature that is planted in us by the word of God. Luke 8:11. This is the seed of our sonship. We are to nurture this seed so that it multiplies within us and bears the fruit of God's life.
- The apostle Peter detailed the elements of being born again as a son of God. He explained that we are born of imperishable seed. 1 Peter 1:23. This imperishable seed is the life of God, and the life of God is also described as the *divine nature*. It is the very essence of who God is. 2 Peter 1:3. We are born again of this seed to a *living hope*. 1 Peter 1:3. This means that once we are born of God's life, we actually become sons of God in this world. It is important to note that being born again does not make us God. Rather, we are 'of God' when we become sharers of the divine nature. How does this happen?
- Peter says that we are born of imperishable seed through the word of God. 1 Peter 1:23. It is important that we understand both the distinction and the relationship between the living word and the life of the divine nature which we receive as a seed. As we receive and believe the living word, God sovereignly acts and we are born from above *by the work of God*. We are illuminated to behold the promise of sonship by the word, but it is the work of God which brings us to birth from the seed of His own life. This is what the apostle John was saying when he wrote, 'As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God'. John 1:12-13. This statement is the fundamental proposition of the Scriptures.

- Peter was aware that the Christians he was writing to about the new birth were already born again. 1 Peter 1:23. He was explaining the process so that his readers would continue to 'grow in respect to salvation'. 1 Peter 2:2. This is the case for many of us. It is essential that all those who have been born again continue to grow and reach full maturity as sons of God. This is the focus of Peter's letter.
- The parable of the sower and seed teaches us that the divine nature is to develop and mature within the sons of God. This maturity is likened to a harvest. Matthew 13:23. The harvest is the full glory of our identity as a son of God. It is revealed on the day of resurrection as the multiplied seed of God's own life that has become our life. Colossians 3:4.

## Trading with talents

- There is also an individual work we are to do that belongs to our name. In this regard, the parables also speak of talents and minas that are given to us as sons of God. Matthew 25:14-28. Luke 19:12-27. These talents are our inheritance as God's children. They are resources given by God that we are to labour and trade with so that our talent increases. The increase that results from our work is a profit for God from His investment in us. God gives us the ability to make a profit, and the duty and privilege of giving the talents and their increase back to Him. King David said, 'Of Your own [i.e. that which You have given to us, we have multiplied] we have given back to You'. 1 Chronicles 29:14.
- Jesus taught that talents are given by God according to each person's *several* abilities. Matthew 25:14-30. These abilities are a part of a person's identity and will vary in type and number from person to person. It is not hard to see that some people have many abilities, while others have less.
- A talent is the work, authority and mandate given by God. To trade with our talents is to invest ourselves in serving with the abilities that we have, according to the mandate we have been given. Our abilities and talents are for the building up of the body of Christ. On this point, Paul explained that there are a variety of functions in the body of Christ that require the different abilities and talents of the body members. Each person in the body of Christ has a specific contribution to make to the operation of the whole body. It is for this reason the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', or the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'. 1 Corinthians 12:14-21.
- To highlight the distinction between abilities and talents, let us consider an example. A person may have an ability to play a musical instrument. The talent that God gives to them could be a mandate to serve and even lead in worship in the house of God. This is the work they are given to do in God's house, according to their ability. As this person invests themselves in their work of playing and leading in worship, worship is *multiplied* in the body, and thanks abounds to the glory of God. 2 Corinthians 4:15.

## Grace in fellowship

- As we participate in the fellowship of Yahweh through offering, we receive grace as capacity to serve as sons and slaves with the talents we have received. Grace enables us to work according to our name in the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 15:10. Our name is revealed by doing the works that God foreplanned that we should do. Romans 5:1. 2 Peter 1:3. When we live this way, we are demonstrating our sanctification.
- There is only one offering, that is, Yahweh's offering, and we can only receive grace to trade with our talents as we abide in the fellowship of this one offering. Hebrews 10:14.

- In summary, the elements of our sanctification as a son of God include the seed of God's divine nature that enables us to be a son of God; talents that we are given to work with in order to bring forth a profit for God; and grace that we receive by participating in the fellowship of offering that comes from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

# The elements of sanctification

## The work of God's Holy One – Jesus Christ

- Jesus Christ was sanctified to be made like us so that we could receive the divine nature from Him, be taught by Him, and become a son of God in Him. Hebrews 2:17. Because He was sanctified to this specific task, the Scriptures describe Him as God's '*Holy One*'. Isaiah 47:4. John 6:69.
- God the Son, whom the Father sanctified to become His only begotten Son, was sent to us as 'Immanuel'. The name 'Immanuel' means 'God with us'. Matthew 1:23. John 10:36. We become sons of God in the same way that He became a Son of God the Father. This is achieved as we follow Him on the pathway that He journeyed. Matthew 16:24. As Immanuel, He is *with us* on this journey. Moreover, we are in Him and He is in us. 1 John 4:13.
- God the Son became the Son of God through offering. The offering of God is the work that was accomplished for us by Christ on the cross. Isaiah 53:11. John 10:36. Philippians 2. We remain or abide in the fellowship of His offering as we spiritually eat and drink the very substance of Christ. We do this through prayer, fellowship and receiving the word of God. Unless we do this, we have no life in ourselves and will not receive an eternal reward. John 6:53-56.

## The knowledge of God's Holy One

- God's Holy One is also called the 'Righteous One, My Slave'. Isaiah 53:11. The knowledge of the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, was His *experience*. He learnt this knowledge through the things which He suffered. Hebrews 5:8-9. He was then able to teach everyone who came to Him, seeking to become sons of God and be justified before Him. Matthew 11:29.
- Isaiah, speaking for the Father, said, 'By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Slave, will justify the many'. Isaiah 53:11. We are to join Christ in the fellowship of His offering and *learn His knowledge*. John 10:36.
- God the Father sanctified God the Son, making Him the Son of God and then sent Him as a Slave into the world. Jesus acknowledged that He had been sent by the Father into the world and, likewise, was sending His disciples into the world. John 20:21. He said, 'For their sakes *I sanctify Myself*, that

they themselves also may be sanctified in truth'. John 17:18-19. He had no self-interest, but rather, was completely obedient to the will of the Father and completely sanctified for our sakes. His sanctification demonstrated that He was righteous.

- In all of Christ's sufferings when He became God's offering on our behalf, God did not abandon Him. He remained God's Holy One. The Father did not allow the Son to suffer decay when He finally died for us on the cross. Psalm 16:10. Acts 2:31-32. This is also true for us as we follow in the pathway of sanctification. The Lord has said that He will never leave us or forsake us. Hebrews 13:5.
- The prophet Agur said that he did not have the knowledge of the Holy One. Proverbs 30:3. By this, he meant that he did not fully understand the measure of the sanctification of Christ, or His knowledge, or the knowledge that He received when He was made an offering on our behalf. Saying it another way, Agur did not understand what Christ came to teach us about our sonship. Proverbs 9:10.
- The prophet Isaiah asked the question concerning Yahweh, 'To whom will He teach knowledge and to whom would He interpret the message [of sonship]?' Isaiah 28:9. It is to those who are born again of the divine nature of God. It is to those who have been weaned from the milk, and taken from the breast. Isaiah 28:9. This is speaking of those who are born and are *growing up* as sons of God. Isaiah further explained that by speaking in tongues, that is, through stammering lips likened to baby talk and a foreign tongue, God would speak to His people. Isaiah 28:11. God would say to them, 'Here is rest; give rest to the weary'. Isaiah 28:12.
- When writing to the Hebrews, Paul connected the dullness of their hearing to their need for the milk of the word. Hebrews 5:12. He wanted to speak to them about the 'solid' word of the Melchizedek order. However, they were not spiritually mature enough to receive the word of righteousness. Concerning their spiritual immaturity, Paul wrote, 'Everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.' Hebrews 5:13-14. The Melchizedek order is about participating in the kingship and priesthood of Yahweh, by the power of God's endless life. Hebrews 7:2, 16. Being sanctified to our name and work connects us to kingship. Participating in offering by the power of God connects us to priesthood.
- If we are to enter into the fullness of our inheritance as sons, we must continue to grow up. Our maturity will be evident as we make offering and trade with the talents that are given to us by the Lord.

## The work of the Holy Spirit

- Paul explained that the 'rest' spoken of by Isaiah is the privilege and ability of receiving the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:20-22. The Holy Spirit's work is to give us power to become sons of God. Acts 1:8.
- Jesus, the Holy One, said that the Father would send the Holy Spirit in the Son's name. The Holy Spirit would teach us all things and bring to remembrance what Jesus had spoken. John 14:25-26. Jesus also said that He would send the Holy Spirit from the Father, and the Holy Spirit would testify of the Son. John 16:7, 12-15. Having received the Holy Spirit, we would be able to testify of the Son because we are connected *with Him* as the sons we were predestined to be, from the beginning. John 15:26-27.
- Under the Old Covenant, the Israelites were unable to personally receive the knowledge of their sonship because they were locked up under law and only had the understanding of spiritual babes. This reality was evident when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, 'the teacher of Israel'. John 3:10. Nicodemus was shocked to hear that the only way a person could enter the kingdom of heaven and receive resurrection life, was to be born again of water and the Spirit. John 3:3-5. Jesus marvelled that Nicodemus was unable to



understand what He was saying. John 3:10-11. This was because Nicodemus was still locked up under law and unable to understand 'heavenly things'. John 3:12.

- Paul connected our deliverance from the law directly with receiving the promise of the Holy Spirit. He explained that 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us – for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" – in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the *promise of the [Holy] Spirit* through faith.' Galatians 3:13-14.
- The Holy Spirit has come to make a breach upon our childish and even adolescent ways. In so doing, He gives to us the knowledge of our sonship and the power to walk in that knowledge. Galatians 4:3-7. Romans 8:13-17.
- Our immaturity was breached when we experienced Pentecost as we were baptised in the Holy Spirit. Whether we are young or old, once we have received the Holy Spirit, we have come into the dimension of 'the eternal'. When the Holy Spirit is given to us, we are able to come out from under law and cease striving to be acceptable as Christians before God. Instead, we are given the right, privilege and power to enter into the fellowship of God's rest. 2 Corinthians 3:5-6.
- The word of our sonship began to be made known to us when we received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The true meaning of Pentecost is made known to us when the Holy Spirit gives to us the ability to receive the word and power that belongs to our sonship. The word of sonship is about our predestination. This word is made known to us as we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and listen to what He has to say to the churches. Romans 8:14. Revelation 2:7.

## A spiritual house

- Through Isaiah the prophet, the Lord continued to say to the rulers of the Jews who lived in Jerusalem, that He was laying in Zion a *tested stone* for a foundation. Isaiah 28:14. By this, He meant that Christ, His Holy One, would be a *tried and approved* Son of God. God's Son would be a costly cornerstone, established as a foundation for a new temple of living stones that He would build together as a place of spiritual offering and worship. 1 Peter 2:4-7.
- Isaiah further declared that Christ, as the foundation of this new spiritual house, would be '*firmly laid*'. Isaiah 28:16. This meant that the gates of hell would not be able to prevail against Him or His church. Matthew 16:18. Those who believe in Him, and are built on Him, will not be disturbed or moved. Christ's church is the place where believers can receive their inheritance as sons of God and find rest for their souls.

## The promise of God

- God promised to give us His divine nature. This would make us sons of God. There were two immutable, or unchangeable, things that guaranteed we could have what God promised. These two things were God's *word* and His *oath*. Hebrews 6:17-18.
- The promise of God needs to become a *personal revelation* for us so that we can believe the word of promise and receive the divine nature. Through God's messengers, the word was proclaimed to each one of us. Their message was that the sons and daughters of men were predestined to become sons of God. We heard about this hope and understood that the divine nature of God was to be given to us. The promise that we could partake of the divine nature was not just an idea, but was given as a covenant. This is what God's promise is; it is a covenant that He makes with us.

- The message of the gospel that was preached to us was about the hope of eternal life, which God promised beforehand to give to us in Christ. We also heard from God's messengers that destruction and death were coming upon the old creation into which we had been born. The body of Christ was declared to be a place of refuge and an ark of safety, like Noah's ark, for saving mankind from destruction. 1 Peter 3:20-22. When we heard and received this living word, we fled to Christ for refuge to receive the promise of sonship, and committed ourselves through baptism to become part of Christ's body, the church.
- The promise of eternal life was more than eternal human life. Eternal human life could not save us because God has already passed judgement upon it. The promise was that He would give us the *divine nature* as the means by which we would receive eternal life. 2 Peter 1:4.
- This eternal life is also called an 'eternal reward'. Hebrews 10:35. Colossians 3:24. Hebrews 9:15. Eternal life is only possible if we become a son of God. This, of course, is a great reward. As we draw near to God, we see with wonder the kind of love that God has for us. We behold the love that chose us as His sons. As the apostle John wrote, 'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!' 1 John 3:1.
- Sons of God are not of this world. John 17:16. They belong to the new creation. They are seeking a city which is to come. Hebrews 13:14. The sons of God receive their sonship in this world by being born of God. And then, like Abraham, they seek a kingdom which is to come down to us 'out of heaven, from God'. Revelation 21:2, 10.

## Glory in the resurrection

- The hope of the Christian faith is to be raised up from the dead in the resurrection as sons of God, and to receive an eternal reward. Revelation 22:12. If the dead are not raised, then Christians are most pitiable. 1 Corinthians 15:19.
- When we were born again, we were made sons of God. Because we are 'of God', we manifest or demonstrate the life of God, which is the divine nature of God. This means that we are already living in the power of Christ's resurrection. Philippians 3:10-11. Like the apostle Paul, our testimony is that we are 'always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.' 2 Corinthians 4:10-11.
- As we journey with the Holy One, and are faithful in our works of sonship, we are being 'transformed into the same image [of the Lord's glory] from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit'. 2 Corinthians 3:18.
- At the end of our journey, we will manifest the divine nature in varying degrees of glory in the resurrection, depending on how we served Christ on the earth. 1 Corinthians 15:41-43. In the future kingdom of God, this glory will be our reward. Revelation 21:10-11, 23-24. It will be the fruit of our sanctification which we attained to within the church, the body of Christ, while here on earth.

# Summary

## Our unique sonship

- After God had created us, He further demonstrated His love for us by giving to us His only Son. Romans 5:8. And as many as received Him, He gave to them the right to become sons of God. John 1:12. However, before the Son gave us the right to become a son of God, He gave us identity by creating us in Adam as the children of men, with a predestination of becoming children of God.
- Each predestined son of God is designed to be unique. Psalm 139:13-16. Furthermore, each person is to have a personal encounter with God where they make a connection with God the Father. 2 Corinthians 5:20. From this connection, a relationship with the Father is formed. Moreover, the secret of who they are to be, begins to be made known to them. Matthew 6:6. Psalm 25:14. The word of God comes to them in a personal way. This word is the word of their calling. They see it with the eyes of their spirit, by the illumination given by the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:18. From here, they begin to be aware of their own personal pilgrimage through this world. This can happen even to a child.
- Our human identity was given to us by the Father. Hebrews 12:9. However, God the Son was our Creator. It was from the Son that the breath, or spirit, that comes from God was breathed into our physical bodies. Our identity is in this breath. This happened to Adam when God formed his body from the dust of the earth. And, as the Son breathed identity into his body, Adam was transformed into flesh and blood and became a living person. Genesis 2:7. This process of creation continues in what is now called 'procreation'. This process has been extended from Adam so that we receive spiritual identity in our mother's womb. Psalm 139:13. Zechariah 12:1.
- Out of His great love for us, God the Father sent us His Son to be born as a Man. This was so that in Him, and from Him, we could receive the divine nature that He possesses. Once we receive the life that is in the Son, which is the life of the new creation, He then trains us within His body, the church, to grow up and mature as sons of God the Father.
- The word of sonship is also what Jesus described as the 'word of the kingdom'. Matthew 13:19. A person who receives this word is receiving the divine nature as a seed and is being born again. And unless they are born again, they are unable to enter the kingdom. John 3:5. Those who are born from above are able to learn the knowledge of the Holy One; that is, the sanctified One, the Son of God.

## Receiving talents

- Our identity and the divine nature of God that make us a son of God are given to us by God the Father. To this sonship, the Son further gives us a personal inheritance to work with. This inheritance is called, in the parables of the New Testament, a 'talent' or 'mina'. Matthew 25:15. The talent is a resource that is given to us to trade with. Luke 19:13. 'Trading' describes the work we are to do as a son of God.
- The aim of our work is twofold. Firstly, it is for our development and maturity as a son of God. We are learning the skills that belong to our name so that the authority that is to be given to us will be guided by wisdom and trained by experience. This training is for our work and service in the kingdom of God, both now and in the age to come.
- Secondly, there is to be an increase or multiplication from our labours that we produce for God. God is seeking to fellowship with us and receive from our hands the fruit of our labour that comes as increase from the talent or mina that He has given to us.

## Receiving grace

- As we fellowship with God in the body of Christ, the favour and kindness of God, which is called 'His grace', is made available to us in specific ways and actions. God speaks graciously to us, giving us direction and understanding so that we can conduct ourselves as sons of God with wisdom and knowledge. This word that teaches us is called 'the word of His grace'. Acts 20:32.
- The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of grace, and He gives us gifts of power that motivate us and enable us to do the will of God. Hebrews 10:29. He goes before us, and as we are led by Him, He opens doors for us and guides us on the pathway of life that we are to follow. Romans 8:14.
- All this loving fellowship and activity of Yahweh on our behalf is called 'His offering'. We have been called by God to receive His offering and to join the fellowship of His offering. We are to demonstrate His love by serving one another, using the grace of God that has been given to us. 1 Peter 4:10. This is the power by which we serve God with the talent that we have received from Him. 1 Peter 4:11.
- Once we are living in our sanctification, we are ministers of grace. This is because we are part of the fellowship of Yahweh's offering.

## Grace for life

- The capacity to do the works that belong to our name is given to us by Christ. This happens when we come into the body of Christ, and are fully identified with Him as His disciples and slaves through baptism and participation in the elements of the communion table. We see that grace is given in three dimensions:
  1. Grace is God's unmerited favour through which we know forgiveness, redemption and restoration to relationship with Him. Ephesians 1:7.
  2. Because we have been restored to fellowship, God's grace strengthens us and helps us in relation to our human abilities. Hebrews 13:9. The fellowship of the body of Christ is the context in which our abilities can be enabled by grace.

3. The grace of God gives to us power and wisdom to use the talent that He gives us, according to the abilities that are strengthened by grace, with a view to an increase for God. Ephesians 4:7. Romans 12:3-7.
- Unless we receive grace for our abilities and grace for trading with the talents we are given, the expression of our abilities is nothing more than what the Scriptures describe as 'the glory of the flower of the field'. No doubt, the excellence of these works will be admired and valued by others in the world. However, they are *perishable*. They have no enduring reward, and fade when the breath of Yahweh blows upon them. Isaiah 40:6-8. 1 Peter 1:24.

## In conclusion

- Our sanctification is the possession of the package of our personal predestination as sons of God. And this possession results from committing ourselves, as the apostle Paul said, to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling'. Philippians 2:12. The moment that we speak of 'working out our salvation', we are speaking of the industry of trading with the talents that He gave to us, once we became sons of God in the body of Christ.
- We have been given everything that pertains to life and godliness 'through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence' 2 Peter 1:3. We must therefore be diligent to make our calling and election sure, 'for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'. 2 Peter 1:10-11.