

LAMPSTAND CHURCHES

David Baker, Easter Seminar, Friday 3 April 2026

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Good morning. It is wonderful to be here with you all this weekend. As Nathan said, I will be orientating a little and introducing this book called *The Lampstand Church*. I am going to begin focusing on the preface a little bit, but I am not sure exactly how far we will get today. We will not be under any pressure, but I will do a couple of things before that.

I will draw your attention to the diagrams at the back of the book. It has been quite a number of years since we have prepared new lampstand diagrams, and I am not going to be looking at these diagrams in any detail today. These diagrams were particularly prepared for Papua New Guinea. For the huge numbers of people that we have up there (20 000 plus or whatever it happens to be), there is a real need to understand the Biblical pattern of a lampstand church. They are meeting in 16 different regional gatherings across this weekend while we are gathering here. Many of those gatherings are a lot bigger than what we have here today. There are huge numbers of people. Then the senior leaders from the presbytery are running a week-long fellowship and discipleship training after the regional gatherings. That is happening next week. That is a comment that regarding the diagrams, we did have Papua New Guinea in view, but of course, their application is much broader than that, and it is certainly applicable for us here.

Turn to page 83. This is the only thing I will do with our book specifically today - to draw your attention to some of these diagrams. The diagrams begin on page 81, but what I am going to comment on something of a summary diagram on page 83. As you are turning there, I will make a few preliminary comments. These diagrams accompany chapter one in the book. Chapter one is called 'The growth of a lampstand church'. When we were in Papua New Guinea, we spent four hours going through chapter one with them, and then after a section looking at the diagram that then explains that. We are obviously not going to do that today, but you can do that yourself and we will continue to teach on this. You can read chapter one and as you read that chapter, you do not get to the end of a paragraph and it says 'refer diagram', but when you read

chapter one and you have the diagrams there, you will see that the diagrams accompany that chapter. The content in the chapter explains the diagrams.

When we are looking at a lampstand, we all know that the lampstand in the tabernacle of Moses was crafted from one piece of gold. It was crafted using the symbolism of the almond tree. It is important to recognise that the lampstand is not depicting an almond tree at a static point in time. We have often said that it is depicting an almond tree blossoming in the springtime and there is a good point to be made there - that the almond tree was the first (or among the first trees) to awaken after winter and to bring forth the flowers so you knew that spring was near. But we are not looking at a tree at any static point in time. What it is depicting is the *growth* of an almond tree. Because you do not see the calyx, the bud and the flower all together at once, it is highlighting the stages of growth for us. Even from a botanical perspective, it takes at least a month to go from a calyx to a flower. It is depicting how a lampstand church grows. We have adopted the botanical terms. To explain that, you will note, calyx, bud, flower. Now if we did a survey (which we will not do because we have been studying lampstand for many, many years now), we have probably all had our own terminology that we have used. Many of us will have said, 'knop, bud, flower'. Many of us will have said 'cup, bud flower'. As I said, if we did a survey, there would be a fair bit of variance.

What we have realised is that knop, bud, flower are not actually in any of the biblical translations. Knop is an Old King James term, but it actually is the same as the bud. We have gone back to the botanical terms, and I will quote the verse in the Literal Version as we are orientating. This is Exodus chapter 25 verse 31 and it says here (I am reading from the Literal Version), 'You shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand shall be made of beaten work. Its base [so it has a base]; its shaft [that is the central branch]; its calyxes, its knops [that is the same as a bud]; and its blossoms [which are the same as a flower].' We are reading (whatever translation we are reading here) that it supports the point that they are all a

bit different. We have picked up the botanical terms. It is actually a very simple principle and some of you will be very familiar with this term 'calyx' and others will not be. For the sake of all the children, the calyx is composed of leaf-like, little leaves. They are called sepals and it looks a bit like a cup or a bowl. That is why some of the translations use that. Inside that is the context where the immature bud is forming. The bud is forming inside the calyx. Then the calyx opens and the bud emerges. Then the bud becomes the flower. It opens up to become the flower. With the flower then you will often see the five sepals are then folded over and supporting the flower. That is the very simple progression. The immature bud or the bud is forming in the calyx. The calyx does not become the flower. The bud is forming in the calyx. Then the calyx opens, the bud emerges and the bud becomes the flower.

We will read our definitions first on page 83. The components of the lampstand: Our first one, which we are very familiar with, is that a lamp is an event which reveals the seven Spirits of God. Every lamp is revealing the seven Spirits of God. Then a flower represents a congregation of worthy houses. A bud represents disciple-messengers. Note that we are looking at messengers; but we are looking at *disciple*-messengers. Those disciple-messengers are emerging from the calyx. Now the calyx is the context for the discipleship of worthy houses and messengers.

Let us make a few basic points. We will just stop there to say that this is what we are coming to understand. The first thing is that the fundamental building block of a lampstand church is worthy houses - not the program of a lampstand church; not in the first case the ministry of it; the event. The fundamental building block of a lampstand church is worthy houses. That is what the Lord really arrested our attention towards, using COVID to arrest our attention on this point. You will remember that the presbytery was proclaiming the word directly to every house, and every house was receiving that word and being compelled by the Spirit to respond to that word and to join a fellowship from house to house in that word. The Lord has been focussing on the restoration of the Elijah ministry - to restore us as worthy houses. This is the foundation of the presbytery. Presbyters need

to come from a worthy house. You cannot compensate with ministry grace; you cannot compensate with deaconing capacity; you cannot compensate with organisational ability; you cannot compensate with any other thing. Every presbyter has to first have a worthy house. Paul said to Timothy, 'If a man does not know how to care for his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?' The foundation of a presbytery is worthy houses and the fundamental building blocks of a lampstand church are worthy houses. That is the first big point.

Now in addition to that, when we are looking at this principle of calyx, bud, flower, the clearest and best example is the way that Jesus laid the foundation for the beginning of the lampstand church from the day of Pentecost onwards. That is when we see it fully active. But Jesus Himself did all the work (all the building work) in readiness for that during His earthly ministry. Jesus Himself was firstly the Disciple of the Father. He is confessing that the Holy Spirit is opening His ear morning by morning. He is a Messenger; He is the Light of the world; He is revealing the seven Spirits of God; He is proclaiming 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me' - but His ministry is as a *Disciple*-messenger. Every good work that Christ did through the course of His ministry (every miracle) was a good work that the Father had given Him to do. He is the first Disciple- messenger. Jesus then is discipling. He calls His disciples and it is probably halfway through His ministry when He sends the 12 disciples, and they are sent to go and look for worthy houses. We do not know exactly how He found the 72, but they may well have come from the worthy houses that were found by the 12. What we do know is that about 12 months later there are 72 others - disciples, and Jesus disciples them and then they have been disciplined. This is revealing the calyx.

Now another point to make here is that the calyx has five sepals. This is another example of how the creation reveals the glory of God. Every time you are looking at a calyx, you are looking at the connection to the hand of Christ. It is discipleship in and under the hand of Christ. Christ Himself in the first case is discipling His disciples. That is where we see the principle of the calyx. Then He sends them. You see a bud

emerging from a calyx. They are sent as disciple-messengers, and they are sent out (thinking of the 72) as lambs among wolves. They are proclaiming the gospel of peace. When they come to a house, they first proclaim, 'Peace be to this house' because they have been sent from a fellowship and they are proclaiming a word which is an invitation to a house to join that same fellowship. When their message was received, and when they were received into a house, it established a fellowship then between the messenger and the house. As those who are in the house were responding to that word with repentance and faith, they are learning about the culture of the kingdom of God; they are turning from all their vain family traditions; they are being delivered from their familial spirits; they are then finding a new dimension of fellowship or peace in their house. Peace is resting on the house.

Peace is fellowship in the same way that grace is the seven Spirits of God. We need to keep upgrading our understanding of a lot of these terms which over the years have been watered right down. Peace is not the absence of conflict. Peace is true reconciliation. It is reconciliation to fellowship. In a house of peace, there is a new dimension of fellowship between husband and wife; a new dimension of fellowship between the parents and the children; a new dimension of fellowship then in the extended family; three generations; and from house to house.

We have gone from calyx to bud to flower - a fellowship of worthy houses. In the time after Jesus' resurrection, and before the day of Pentecost, Paul tells us that He met with 500 brethren all at once. They will have been the representatives from all these worthy houses. Houses like Mary, Martha and Lazarus are our example.

Jesus sent the 72 to find the worthy houses and the 72 went ahead of Him - before His face to every place where He Himself was going to come. The 72 find a house like Mary, Martha and Lazarus and then Jesus Himself comes and stays with them and there is a whole new season of discipleship for that house. We have been studying that as Jesus is addressing the unbelief in their house. We have the calyx. The messengers went from the calyx (from the hand

of Christ), a bud goes and finds a worthy house. Then the principle of the calyx jumps up, and it is in the flower, and Christ is then discipling those houses so they become firstfruits houses and they can become messengers. This is a very simple principle.

This is really highlighting the importance of discipleship. These are big lessons that we are learning in this season. This is not a semantic point concerning the calyx. The Lord is emphasising to us how significant and central the whole principle of *discipleship* is in the growth of the lampstand church. That is why we are all committing ourselves to a discipleship, fellowship and training initiative to grow from worthy to firstfruits houses.

The focus of discipleship is consistent with what the Lord has been saying to us in terms of the word as we are understanding the great commission and the whole meaning of baptism, which is being taught the culture of what it means to abide in the name of the Father, the name of The Son and the name of the Holy Spirit. This is the focus of discipleship.

The first point regarding the growth of a lampstand church is that it grows from its root. I will come back to our definitions. We have just read the first four - lamp, flower, bud, calyx. Let us continue to read now, just going down the left-hand side of the page. The 24 buds represent the full presbytery for a nation. For those of you who are immediately counting all the buds in the lampstand, you may find 25 and that would be true. We are counting the 24 above the first flower. Now when you read the chapter, I think that will become very clear on why that is the case. But it is very significant that we see the number 24, which is the number of overseership in every lampstand church, because there is a presbytery for a nation. This will be upgraded to a worldwide presbytery in terms of the 24 thrones around the throne of the Father. We have the 10 central buds in the lampstand. They represent the meeting of the presbytery for fellowship in the word and the work of shepherding.

The base is a very interesting point. The base is a threefold root which represents the community of *Elohim*. The base is not just a big lump of gold. I think the picture that they inscribed on the

Arch of Titus has done us a great disservice in terms of what we perhaps think about what a lampstand looks like. There is a lot of actual historic and archaeological evidence that the lampstand in the tabernacle of Moses actually had a three-pronged base like a tripod - very stable, but three legs. Now that is representing for us the community of *Elohim* - the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The first point regarding the growth of a lampstand church is that it grows from its root. We have already read this Scripture where the apostle John tells us concerning the base of a lampstand, remembering that the lampstand is an instrument of *light* revealing the seven Spirits of God. The apostle John tells us concerning the base or where it all proceeds from (where it grows from). 'God is *light* and in Him there is no darkness at all.' He is speaking about the fellowship of Yahweh *Elohim*. That is where a lampstand church is growing from. Before the foundation of the world, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (the community of *Elohim*) determined to make offering for the purpose of giving us Their life and including us in Their fellowship. They declared, 'Let Us make man in Our image and according to Our likeness.' The community of *Elohim* (the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit) does not grow. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are and will always be the only members of the Godhead. However, the fellowship of Yahweh does grow as men are born of God's own life and then taught to abide in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The fellowship of Yahweh is growing, and a lampstand is revealing the life and fellowship of Yahweh. Now the book of Revelation concludes, making this point in Revelation 21 verse 7, 'He who overcomes shall inherit all things... [speaking of everything that was foreknown and predestined in the dialogue of Father, Son and Holy Spirit before the foundation of the world. Everything is inherited by overcomers. So we do need to overcome] ...He who overcomes shall inherit all things. [This is defining who we are in relation to God who is our Father for eternity.] I will be his God, and he shall be My son.' He is our Father; but He is and will always be our God. We are sons of God; we never become God. It is a very simple point.

The purpose of a lampstand church is to reveal the multiplication of the life and fellowship of Yahweh by offering. It is all multiplying by offering. For this reason, the light of a lampstand church is the light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh. When we are talking about the seven Spirits of God (or the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh), we are talking about the capacity that belongs to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the fellowship of one Spirit to multiply Their life and fellowship by offering. We are looking at a fellowship of offering where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all sanctified to Their name and then They are enabled by the capacity that belongs to that fellowship (by Eternal Spirit) to make offering, and the purpose of Their offering is to reveal the Other.

When you are looking at that fellowship of offering, it is a fellowship of light. Everlasting increase and multiplication are forever exploding from that fellowship. This is what a lampstand church is revealing. This is the ministry of the Spirit. It is revealing that capacity for everlasting increase - the increase and multiplication of life and fellowship. The light of the sevenfold Spirit of Yahweh, which is revealed by a lampstand church, is the light of the world. Notably the light of a lampstand church is the *only* light that shines in the darkness of this present world. That is a very big point in its own right. There is no other light in the darkness of this world. The only light is the light that shines from a lampstand church.

We will read our last point here before we close the book: the total number of parts in the lampstand. We have clear that the base is the community of *Elohim* which is a fantastic point. It is good to have the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all involved in a lampstand church, which you would agree. It is good to include Them. Once we include Them, we note that the total number of parts in the lampstand is 72. This helps us then in relation to the double-portion principle when we are looking at the 144 000 who are revealing the lampstand in the time of the end. The 144 000 are sent to look for worthy houses. Those worthy houses become the context for evangelism to bring in over half the world's population. The Lord is going to use a lampstand church to fulfill His purpose in the end of the age.

We will close the book. I want to continue to orientate us. I want to talk about the significance of the second time, because we are recognising that the word regarding the restoration of the lampstand church was first delivered to us (Vic has already mentioned this today) just over 50 years ago. I would like to add there that that is before I was born. It is before many of you were born. It is good to keep that in perspective. We are very thankful to Vic's faithfulness over the years and all that period of time to continue proclaiming this word to us. Many of us are here for that reason.

The word regarding the restoration of a lampstand church was first delivered to us just over 50 years ago. We have commented in the book (and I will not develop this) that during the first time of this word it was received by many leaders who professed a faith for a presbytery and a city-wide communion. However, many of those same leaders maintained a collegial mode in the presbytery and an independent clergy mode among their own outreaches or local congregations. Many of you will be very familiar with the history. We have had many crises in different places over the years as the Lord has come among us in judgement to reveal to us what was real and to call for repentance and faith in terms of the pattern that the Lord was calling us to. There has been many a season of judgement (but I want to also then note), but we are *here*. Can you rejoice in that today - that you are here? We are hearing this word now for a second time. I want to comment on the significance of the second time, and we are going to come at this from three different perspectives.

The first perspective is that when the word is proclaimed a second time, it means that the time for its fulfillment is near. When the word is proclaimed a second time, it means that the time for its fulfillment is near. Now this is the lesson that we learn from Joseph. There was a prophetic word regarding Joseph's rulership. He was a type of a manchild, and he was called to become a ruler and a deliverer. That is the calling of a manchild. His calling was not fulfilled the first time. Joseph received the coat of many colours from his father, and that was a prophetic coat. It was a symbol of his mandate. The first thing that happened to that coat was that it was covered in blood. This was because when the word was

received the first time, it initiated a season of suffering for Joseph and specifically a season of suffering in the world. He receives his two prophetic dreams, and the Lord is revealing to him that the time will come when his brothers are bowing down to him; but that is not fulfilled the first time. The brothers are not very happy with that idea at all. They take the first opportunity they can get to throw him in a pit and then sell him to slave traders who are on the way down to Egypt. It initiates this season of suffering for Joseph in the world. Egypt is a symbol of the world. The psalmist draws our attention to the main lesson that we learn from Joseph in terms of the period of time between the first and the second time. This is Psalm 105 verse 19: 'Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.' There was a season of trial - the trial of faith.

The word of the Lord always has a time that has been appointed for it to come to pass. The word that is proclaimed on the first time is not inherited until the second time. The period between the first and second time is the trial of *faith*. For Joseph that was a 13-year period. For us it has been a 50-year season - a trial of faith. Notably, it was the two prophetic dreams of Pharaoh that initiated the fulfillment of the second time for Joseph. This is all according to the sovereign purpose and timing of the Lord. Pharaoh has his two dreams, and the first one was (you will know these well) coming up out of the river, he sees the big fat, well-fed, good-looking cows - seven of them. They all come up out of the river. Then he sees coming behind them, these seven skinny, gaunt, ugly-looking cows. He draws particular attention to the fact they are ugly, and they come up and they start eating grass in the paddock next to the seven good-looking, fat cows; but they are not satisfied with the grass. They gobble up the fat, good-looking cows and then amazingly, they are still just as skinny and gaunt and ugly as they were before they ate the cows. Pharaoh is just scratching his head. 'What does all this mean?' Then he sees the dream with the seven good, plump heads of grain on the one stalk, and then the seven windblown thin heads. They gobble up the good heads and so they are gone. Pharaoh is wanting an interpretation of his dream. Now right there the butler remembers, 'That actually,

is right. Two years earlier there was a man in the prison whom I promised to remember and I have forgotten him. There was a man there (his name was Joseph) who can interpret dreams.' This is the thing that initiates the second time for Joseph. Joseph is brought before the king. He was brought to bring a testimony before the king to proclaim a word of peace to the king of Egypt, the ruler of the first world kingdom. He interprets his dreams.

This is really highlighting for us the first big principle concerning the second time. This is what Joseph said to Pharaoh. We will quote these verses from Genesis chapter 41 verse 25: 'Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one. [The word that is proclaimed on the first and the second time is one word. It is still the call to return to first love, to eat from the tree of life in the Paradise of God as we have been hearing. We understand what that means better now; but it is still the same word; it is the same call] God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do." ' [Then down to verse 32] 'And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice... [This is really emphasising this principle of the second time. It is the one word, but it is proclaimed twice. There is a first and second time] ...And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God... [That is the first point. It is established by God, according to His immutable purpose. From before the foundation of the world, it is established by God. God is not going to change His mind concerning His purpose for the ministry of a lampstand church, which is suitable for the fullness of times — 'It is established by God.' But then we have the second point] ... The thing is established by God and God will shortly bring it to pass.'

Now in contrast to the first time when many cleave to the word with deceit, we will inherit the word on the lampstand church the second time upon the foundation of worthy houses. Does that point, in terms of the second time, excite you? I am just filling you with faith here today for a lampstand church.

Let us come at it from another perspective now concerning this principle of the second time. I will say it this way: When the word is proclaimed a second time, it is the opportunity for recovery or restoration to our original inheritance. We

learn this principle from the jubilee year. This point is emphasised by the jubilee principle. Remember when the nation of Israel went into the promised land, every tribe, every extended family, every family was given an inheritance in the promised land. It was their job then to go and possess that inheritance. Now that included driving out all the enemies in the land, which none of them did very well. Then having taken possession of the land, it included stewarding that land and sowing and reaping and bringing offering. For all those families, whatever the cause was, whether they were lazy or whether they had been beset by some unforeseen circumstances, or whatever the case may be, many of them were forced into selling their land. It had been given to them as an inheritance, but they needed to sell it to somebody else. Then they had to go and work as slaves for somebody else. Now, mostly that is happening because they had not stewarded properly what God had given to them. They had not walked faithfully in relation to the word of the first time. Then the Lord initiated the principle of the jubilee, that after 50 years the land went back to the original landowners so that every man was restored to his inheritance and restored to his family.

We are not talking about being recovered to a plot of ground in the promised land. We are talking about being recovered to our inheritance - our plot of ground within the heavenly Jerusalem on the top of Mount Zion. The Lord is coming and saying as He did to the presbytery in Ephesus (we have heard this already), 'Remember from where you have fallen.' When the Lord is saying 'remember', He is not saying, 'You have to think with your mind what you previously had before and may have lost.' He is saying, 'I am coming in most cases to illuminate your spirit to something that you did not even know before that this was your inheritance. I am restoring and recovering you to that inheritance.' The fundamental building block of a lampstand church is worthy houses and the Lord is coming to proclaim the word a second time, so that in one sense, regardless of the history, there is opportunity if you are receiving this word with repentance and faith, to be recovered to what you have lost or what you may have never had before. But it is what God foreknew for you, and it is

your inheritance as a family. Again, is that filling you with faith?

Let us come at it a third way now. This was the point that Vic particularly raised down in Melbourne at the New Year's seminar which is that our restoration in the season of the second time is dependent upon the faith of Christ that we have received through the messenger, becoming our own faith. This is the lesson of the Shunammite woman. We will not go through that account now. You will remember that Vic did that at the New Year's seminar. The simple lesson is that the child was born. This woman had a child because of the faith of Elisha. It was not her faith. In fact, when Elisha proclaimed that she was going to have a child in a year's time, she says, 'No, my lord, do not lie to your maidservant.' That is not the same as 'Let it be to me according to Your word.' 'No, my lord... [this is the opposite of that] ...no, my lord, man of God, do not lie to your maidservant.' But nonetheless in 12 months' time a child is born. The child is born because of the faith of the messenger - not the faith of the woman. Then the child dies and there is a transition as she is going then to look for Elisha, and her husband is saying, 'Is everything okay?' 'Yes, it is well.' She comes then, finds Elisha and confesses her unbelief and then the child is raised from the dead because of *her* faith, not the messenger's faith. Now again, this is another very big principle, because many of us are here because of the faith of a messenger.

A lampstand church begins with the faith of a messenger to proclaim the word, but then this same faith of Christ is then given (and must be given) to every hearer as a gift through the word proclaimed by messenger. Faith does come by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. Paul says, 'This is the word of faith which we preach.' This is how it comes. It is a word proclaimed to us by a messenger, but as we are receiving that word, the faith of Christ is being given to us as a gift. Then it initiates a trial of faith so that that word that we have received as a gift is becoming *our* faith and the genuineness of our faith. This is the gold that is refined in a fire. This is the fruit (or the product) of the trial of faith. The faith of Christ has become your faith. It is in your heart. It is in your mouth.

In this season, the Lord wants the faith for a lampstand church to be burning in all of our hearts - in all of our hearts. The restoration of a lampstand church is dependent upon the faith of worthy houses. I hope that has been ministering faith to you as we are considering those three perspectives on the second time. Can you rejoice that the Lord is proclaiming this word to us a second time? And that is delivering us all then to the valley of decision (as we have already heard), to choose whether we want to be part of this - the lampstand church.

What I will do in the remaining time now, is make a brief start on the preface, and we will continue then in the coming weeks. If you would like to turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and we are going to read verses 1 to 2. In his second letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul described the nature of his ministry as a messenger in the right hand of Christ. As we read this verse, he is identifying seven major points concerning his ministry. This is verse 1, 'Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy ['since we have received this ministry' is point number one. 'As we have received mercy' is point number two. All these become big blocks for us], we do not lose heart [point number three]. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame [number four], not walking in craftiness [number five. That is another big point. Craftiness is sorcery, it is trading] nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth... [we can just put those together, they are the corollary of one another] ...not handling the word of God deceitfully but by manifestation of the truth [number six; then number seven] commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'

As you read that, that is Paul's testimony. That is Paul's description of his ministry. But you will note that everywhere he is saying, 'we'. He could very easily say 'I', but he is saying 'we'. He is saying 'we' because he was ministering as part of an apostolic administration in the right hand of Christ. He is ministering from the ground of fellowship. He is also saying 'we' because this word is being proclaimed to *us* and we are all being invited (as we have said) to join the faith of this. We have to join the faith of this with Paul now to say that this is our testimony as those

who belong to a lampstand church. This is the nature of the ministry that is being committed to us as a lampstand church. Paul says 'we' because it must become our ministry. This must become the testimony of every messenger in the right hand of Christ in every believing household that belongs to a lampstand church. When Paul declared, 'Since we have this ministry', he was referring to the ministry of the Spirit that he had previously described in the first three chapters of his letter. When he is saying, 'Therefore, since we have this ministry', you need to go and read the first three chapters to see what ministry he is talking about.

I am going to read some verses in chapter 3. This is where he is particularly comparing and contrasting the ministry of the Law Covenant with the ministry of the New Covenant. This is verse 7: 'But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones [we know he is particularly talking about the Ten commandments engraved by the finger of God on tablets of stone given to Moses], was glorious [note this: 'was glorious'. There was a glory that belonged to the Law Covenant], so the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses... [because Moses comes down the mountain and he is the messenger and there was a glory associated with his ministry and his face shone. So the people were all afraid of this and they did not want to come near him, so he puts the veil over his face so that they cannot see the glory of what was passing away. So it was glorious] ... so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance which glory was passing away [meaning that it was temporal], how will the ministry of the Spirit be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation... [He is calling the ministry of the Law Covenant here the ministry of death; then he calls it the ministry of condemnation; but he is still noting that it has glory. This is interesting. What was its glory?] ... For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.' Notably the ministry of the Law Covenant did have a degree of glory. In the passage we have

just read, Paul tells us that four times. He says, 'was glorious'.

For those who kept the Law, it resulted in the Lord's blessing upon their own life, their family and the work of their hands. Moses repeatedly made this point to the nation that if they were willing to receive the word and if they were obedient, then there would be a blessing on the work of their hands; there would be a blessing on the fruit of their body (their children); there would be a blessing on all the livestock; all the produce of the ground; there would be rain in its season (the early and the latter rain); all these things were part of the blessing of God on the basis of obedience. The Lord's blessing included physical healing, emotional well-being and material prosperity. The Lord said He would take away all the sickness, all the terrible diseases that they had known in Egypt. This was all part of the blessing - the glory of the Law Covenant. However, it was only a temporal glory because its blessing was confined to this lifetime.

It is not just that there was a finite period for the Law Covenant, which is absolutely true. There was 1 500 years of it (give or take). It was always going to come to an end. But at the same time, the blessing of the Law Covenant was temporal because all the elements of blessing were all appropriated during this lifetime. It did not have any capacity to impart eternal life - anything that was enduring. Despite the glory of the Law Covenant, the apostle Paul described it as the ministry of death and the ministry of condemnation. In the same way that a person's obedience to the Law resulted in blessing, a person's disobedience to the Law resulted in cursing. Cursing is the judgement of the Law of God. This is the first time that we actually see the invocation of cursing upon a person. It is the judgement of the Law. Remember when they go into the nation of Israel, there are two mountains and six tribes are up on one mountain, Mount Gerizim. They are all proclaiming the blessings of obedience, but at the same time you have the six other tribes up on Mount Ebal and they are all proclaiming the curses of God upon disobedience. Cursing then is the judgement of the Law of God.

Notably the judgement of the Law was not limited to a person's behaviour. It also extended

to the judgement of a person's heart. This is an interesting thing to think about. Was the judgement of the Law Covenant limited to a person's behaviour or did it also extend to the judgement of the heart? Even when you look at the 10 Commandments, I think it is clear that most of it is focused on behaviour, but take the first one where the Lord says, 'You will have no other god apart from Me.' He is talking about the idol in the heart. That is what is then addressed by the prophets. And when you get to the tenth one (which Paul picks up), 'You shall not covet', again, it is an issue of the heart. The judgement of the Law did extend to the judgement of a person's heart. Even though the heart of man was judged under the Law Covenant, the Law had no capacity to circumcise the other law in the heart of man. As you are reading your preface, you will note that we have said that the other law was fathered by Satan. We need to retract that. You can draw a line through that. Peter will talk more about this tomorrow. The other law is *not* fathered in our heart by Satan. Satan is a liar. The origin of the other law in our heart is Adam's disobedience - just to clarify that point.

Similarly, even though the Law promised to impart a blessing for obedience, it did not give the capacity for obedience to the nation of Israel. Rather the Law was a tutor (or a schoolmaster) that was intended to lead the nation of Israel to Christ. The offerings that were prescribed by the Law Covenant all foreshadowed the offering of Christ. The men and women who walked in the faith of Abraham made offering under the Law Covenant. They needed to choose this in the same way that Adam needed to choose recovery by offering at the gate of the garden of Eden. The children of Israel who were walking in the faith of Abraham needed to choose to bring offering, but they were bringing the offering, recognising that every offering was a type or a foreshadowing of the offering of Christ. That is the faith that they were bringing their offering. They were not bringing their offering just to be blessed by God. They are bringing their offering to say, 'We are doing this; we are laying our hands on this animal; we are fully identifying with it; our sins are being transferred to it - transferred to the tabernacle - all in the faith that Christ is going to come as the True Tabernacle and there will be a genuine expiation through His seven wounding

events from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. They are bringing their offerings in that faith. It is a tutor leading them to Christ. The men and women who walked in the faith of Abraham made offering under the Law Covenant in faith for the coming of Christ and the inauguration of the New Covenant as the outcome of His offering.

I will conclude here on the ministry of the New Covenant. Paul said, 'We have this ministry...' Our ministry is not the ministry of the Law Covenant. Our ministry is the ministry of the Spirit, and it is called also the 'ministry of righteousness'. After Christ was raised from the dead in His spiritual body, it was possible for men to receive the Holy Spirit into their spirit and to be born again of the incorruptible seed of the divine nature as a son of God. Jesus stood among the disciples in the upper room on the day of His resurrection, and He breathed upon them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' Christ there is writing upon the fleshly tablets of their heart. This is in contrast to the finger of God writing on tablets of stone. Paul is saying that we are now the epistles of Christ. Christ Himself is doing the writing by the finger of God upon the fleshly tablet of our heart. He is writing the name of the Father and the name of the city of God; and then He is sending the Holy Spirit into our spirit; and the Holy Spirit seals and verifies that what has been written by Christ is true. He is the seal. We become a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is enabling us then to cry, 'Abba, Father'. The Holy Spirit is also enabling the incorruptible seed... (which contains the life of Christ, but our unique name as a son of God) ...the Holy Spirit is enabling that seed to germinate in our spirit so that we are a son of God. This all belongs to the ministry of the Spirit.

Then as a son of God, we are led by the Holy Spirit on the pathway that Christ has pioneered for us. The grace of Christ's resurrection life... (which is the law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus) ...this grace is now enabling us to fulfill the works of our sonship each day.

The righteousness of God (this is why it is called the ministry of righteousness) is revealed in our life from faith to faith as we progressively do the works that Christ has already completed for us on His offering journey from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. It is the power of the

seven Spirits of God which is ministered to us through the Holy Spirit that raises us from the dead with Christ, enabling us to complete the works of our sonship each day. We keep picking up these key verses from the first 3 chapters in 2 Corinthians to explain what Paul is talking about. He is saying, 'We have this ministry', and he is saying, 'How are we adequate for this? What is our sufficiency? What does the seven Spirits of God mean?' This is 2 Corinthians 3 verse 5: 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.'

It is the same power that enables us to become a minister of the New Covenant. This is the very next verse. Verse 6: 'Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.' It is the ministry of the seven Spirits of God by the Holy Spirit that multiplies the life of God. The ministry of the Spirit is the revelation of the seven Spirits of God that belong to Jesus Christ. These are very big summary statements.

We spent a lot of time at the NBS explaining what we are seeing when we look at Jesus Christ in Revelation chapter 1 and the seven personal attributes that belong to Him as He is enthroned in His spiritual body at the right hand of God and He possesses the seven Spirits of God. The ministry of the Spirit is the revelation of the seven Spirits that belong to Jesus Christ. The light of the seven Spirits of God that shines from the face of Christ is ministered to His lampstand churches through the messengers in His right hand.

When this ministry is received... (When the word is proclaimed, it is accompanied by prevenient grace. That belongs to the seven Spirits of God as well) ...when this ministry is received, it enables a person to turn to the lordship of the Holy Spirit. Now this is the outcome of choice. Turning is choosing. When the word is proclaimed, the prevenient grace of God pushes back every other influence, giving to us the opportunity to turn... (which is our choice) ... to turn to the lordship of the Holy Spirit so that the veil of our own knowledge of good and evil is removed from our eyes.

A son of God who walks after the Spirit in the fellowship of Christ's offering will be progressively changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory. That is 2 Corinthians 3 verses 16 to 18. We walk after the Spirit by walking in the light of the word that is proclaimed by the Holy Spirit to Christ's lampstand churches through the messengers in His right hand. It is as near you as an ear. '...let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' Then the Holy Spirit is bringing illumination to our spirit in relation to what is publicly proclaimed to us. Then morning by morning the Holy Spirit is opening our ear for us to remember the word of Christ to us. The Holy Spirit is doing that in the context of the word that has been publicly proclaimed to us. The Holy Spirit will not be leading us on the journey outside of the highway that is defined by, 'he who has as an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches'. But then as you are walking as an individual son of God on that highway, The Holy Spirit will be directing you morning by morning, day by day; 'walk here', 'walk there', 'walk there', according to your unique sonship.

I want to finish on this one verse. Speaking about the outcome of the ministry of the Spirit, Paul declared, 'Therefore, since we have such hope... [We can connect that to what we have already received today] ...Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech.' Every son of God should have the same boldness of speech. When we are illuminated to this hope - when we are illuminated to the ministry that the Lord is inviting us to join - then we should have the same boldness of speech as we testify about the ministry of the Spirit to our family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues. I will leave it there.