

a study on the first principles of Christ
A SURE FOUNDATION

A
Sure Foundation



JOY THOMAS

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First Edition - OCT 2006

Published by

Good Samaritan Fellowship

H2 / 22, Mahavir Enclave

New Delhi - 110 045

India

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Printed at

New Life Printers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi

011 - 27651897

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PREFACE

The Lord has burdened my heart and moved my spirit to write and publish this book because of what I have seen among God's people during my visit to different places in India and other countries. The Scripture says, "*If the foundations are being destroyed what can the righteous do?*" (Ps 11:3 NIV). Again it says, "*Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set*" (Proverbs 22:28).

The times we are living in are as the above verses declare. The spiritual condition of God's people is pathetic beyond words. There is so much confusion and compromise that has set in. In many cases, the foundations that have been laid are so weak because the traditions of men have utterly destroyed and damaged them. In some cases, those ancient foundational landmarks have been marred and changed due to the choice and likings of man. My burden is not to criticize others, but to show God's people their true spiritual plight and condition so that they may turn and return to the Lord of their lives.

In the present day, when the emphasis in some spiritual circles is on what God has done and can do for man, it is encouraging that there are those who are being awakened by the Lord to search the ancient paths and the ancient landmarks. In the midst of growing humanism among God's people, there are those who harbor a deep disgust in their heart for humanistic trends and who seek a sure foundation. "*Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste*" (Isaiah 28:16). Such people shall not be in haste as the prophet says. They will turn to God and seek Him so that a sure foundation may be laid in their lives.

Peter saw this by the Spirit and said, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" (Matt 16:16). Yes, Peter saw the Sure Foundation, the Father has laid in Zion, the Rock of Ages, upon which God has intended to build His house. Surely this was

no empty confession from Peter's point of view. The foundation is the confession based upon a revelation of a Person. The foundation is not merely facts about Christ, nor knowledge about what Christ did, but it is all ABOUT WHO HE CHIEFLY IS – CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

In His days on the earth, there were so many who followed Christ, who even pressed upon Him and were healed, yet they did not “know Him”. Like the throngs who sit in the church pews every Sunday, they only saw Him by their natural eye. **Indeed they saw Him as the answer to all their own needs, but God intended for them to “see” Him as the Sure Foundation for their life and ministry.**

I believe that basically the whole issue of a spiritual foundation is a matter of enlightenment and of a revelation from God. The present religious predicament is simply that men cumber the ground with “other foundations” because they have not really seen the Sure Foundation. Jesus stated it very clearly when He said that only “the pure in heart shall see...” He meant that only those with a pure motive could see by revelation from God, and not those with personal ambitions, those with plans of building their personal kingdoms or those with a desire to earn name and fame. **Saints, this clear seeing is not merely a gate for one to pass through, rather it is to be a pathway in which to walk. Once revelation is past, it may become merely a doctrine or theological tenet. But revelation is to be continually present that is a moment by moment participation in Him; it is something living.** The Father is very jealous that we have only **one** revelation of His lovely Son, not **many** revelations regarding good and important things. **We are to see Christ as everything God designs to share. Every thing, whether it is teaching or doctrine, must simply be an outflow of Christ.** Peter had a revelation of Jesus, not as the Saviour, Servant, Lord, Ruler, Healer or even the Sure Foundation, but more than that, he saw Him chiefly as Christ, the Son of the Living God.

It is necessary for our spiritual eyes to be enlightened to see **Christ Himself as**

our foundation and superstructure. He is the Pattern, the Order, the Form. It is all in a Person, Christ the Son of God, who is the sum of all that the Father has purposed. It is unfortunate that so often everything is reduced to mere teaching and doctrine today.

Paul cautioned the Corinthian believers not to place their own things on this foundation, which is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). **The Father will reject any thing other than Christ to be built on the foundation of His Son.** He will declare it as hay, stubble and wood, however good or nice it may look in the eyes of men. It may be well received, approved and even esteemed among men; it may even involve a lifetime of commitment unto the Lord, but surely, as the Scriptures say, it will go up in fire and smoke. If it is not suitable building material, if it is not something of Christ that has been wrought by the Spirit, it shall surely not be reckoned by the Father.

Dear saints, let the Lord open your eyes to behold the Foundation and the Super-Structure, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

With much burden I submit these pages to the Holy Spirit of God with a prayer –

“Lord, please do not let any of these thoughts and teachings be merely for the mind, but may it pass through into the spirit as a revelation for the inner man. Lord, may it bring such a radical revolution in foundational conceptions to rectify and to correct the life and ministry of all those who read as they will behold the Sure Foundation the Father has laid in Zion that the Father may rejoice to see His Temple, His House coming into completion”. Amen

Joy Thomas

October 14, 2006

INTRODUCTION



THE NECESSITY FOR A STRONG FOUNDATION

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor 3:16).

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph 2:20-22).

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 2:5).

THE calling of every individual, born of God, is to be a temple of God. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, “...know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ...” (1 Cor 6:19). Thus, every child of God, having been born again and having entered into the kingdom of God, is called to be an habitation of the Living God. Furthermore, the Church, which is the Body of Christ, is called the House of God or the Holy Temple of God. Therefore, the calling, both individually and corporately, is to be an habitation of God for



the building up of His temple. The temple of God is built with Jesus Christ as the very foundation, Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

As you well know a strong foundation is the most important feature of any building or structure. The larger the building, the greater its dimensions, proportions and magnitude, the deeper and stronger must the foundation be laid. No building can withstand the test of time, weather, climate and usage without a sound and proper foundation. The strength of a building greatly depends on the strength of what has gone into its foundations. Similarly, when the individual lives of God's people are spiritually strong the temple of God will also be strong. When the individual's life is built on a strong foundation, the corporate expression will also be strong. Much of the weakness and failure in the church at large in these days can be ascribed to the presence of shallow and weak foundations of its members. It is, therefore, essential to lay a deep and proper foundation in your life at the very beginning of your spiritual life. Great care needs to be exercised to make sure that God's house is built upon strong, appropriate foundations. **The higher the building, the deeper must the foundations go.** Likewise, in order to come into the fullness of the divine structure and the ultimate purposes of God, we must give ourselves to the building and the laying of strong foundations, individually and corporately.

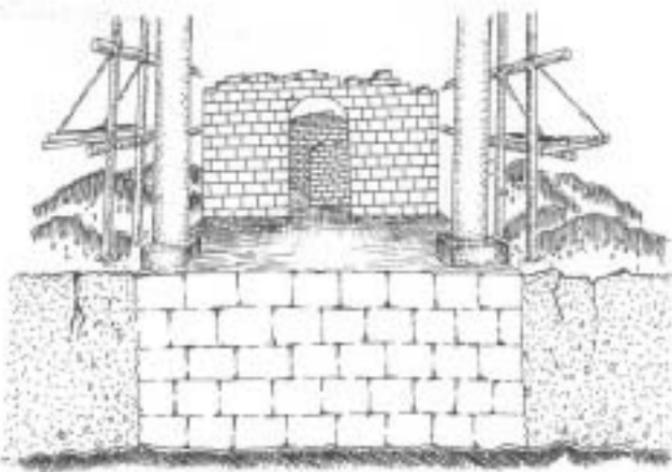
AND THE RAINS FELL

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it



fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” (Matt 7:24-27).

Lord Jesus Christ emphasizes the necessity of a true foundation in the parable of the two builders. There were two builders who set out to build their houses. One of them “*DIGGED DEEP and laid the foundation on a rock*” (Luke 6:48), while the other “*WITHOUT A FOUNDATION, built an house upon the earth*” (Luke 6:49). The Lord called one a wise builder and the other a foolish builder! The difference between what



these men did lies in the manner of their “*hearing the sayings of mine*” that is, in their hearing of the Word of God. The wise man “*heard and obeyed*” but the foolish man “*heard*” but



refused to obey! The spiritual life of a believer will depend largely upon their response to God's voice. The greater the willingness to take heed to God's counsels, the stronger will be the foundation.

In any building or structure, the foundations are hidden deep beneath the earth. One rarely gets to see a building's foundation! However, what we see and appreciate often enough is the outward edifice of the building. Taking this analogy to the Christian life in present times, we see many Christians who look imposing and magnificent outwardly. There is a lot of talk in the church of 'bigness', of large numbers, and of activities of huge proportions. They believe that having a mighty and marvelous God, their churches and their projects must also be big. They make tall claims of revivals, of healings, of baptisms, and of growth. But the spiritual condition is pathetic and paltry in comparison to their outward manifestations. They reflect a shallow Christianity covered up by much that is false, earthly and spurious. One cannot evaluate a building by looking at its appearance. What matters is whether the foundation is sound and whether the building can be used for many years despite bad weather and climatic conditions. Will it be able to withstand earthquakes, cyclones and flood waters? Or will it fall and be damaged by the slightest onslaught of adversity. As a builder what will you choose to do – to lay deep and solid foundations so that a tall structure could be built or would you rather focus on an impressive structure and pay little attention to the foundation?

The churches today consist of both types of builders. Some are wise, but some are foolish; and they both coexist, sometimes in the same church! Both of them are seen in the worship service, they are present in all church activities; and they sit



side by side to sing, shout and praise the Lord. Their houses look alike outwardly. Too often, it's the foolish man's house that attracts more praise and admiration! Most people are easily fooled by outward appearances, by the external and by the temporal. But the Word of God says, "*And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew*". The Scripture does not say "if the rains descended" but rather "*And the rain descended*". It is a matter of 'And' and not 'if'. It's just a matter of time. The rains and the floods and the winds are sure to come and expose the foundation. They will lay the foundations bare! Many do not lay a strong foundation and it is exposed when trials and peculiar circumstances come into their lives. Then they are offended and they are unhappy with God.

In their zeal to get going the unwise builders had overlooked the need to lay a deep and true foundation in their lives. All they were concerned with was the immediate need for some kind of structure that would look good to others.

Dear ones, the rains will reveal the nature and quality of the foundations you have laid in your life. It's high time you saw what kind of foundations you have! Now is the time to take stock of the foundations on which your spiritual life is to be built. It would be foolish to spend your whole life building a structure, in all earnestness, only to see it being washed away when the storm comes! Many desire a very high spiritual life but they have a very weak and poor foundation. **Their desire for a deeper life in Christ does not match with their foundations because it is not deep and strong.** Spiritual growth demands the provision of strong, solid, stable foundations. You cannot hope to progress spiritually with weak and insecure foundations, however hard you try.



THIS WE WILL DO IF GOD PERMITS

The writer of Hebrews, detailing on the foundational teaching and truths on repentance, baptisms etc. says, *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation...And this will we do, if God permit”* (Heb 6:1, 3). For a believer to leave the foundations and move on to the ‘superstructure’ requires God’s acquiescence! God has to give His permission so that we can move beyond the foundations. He is the One who ‘authorizes’ or sanctions’ any development of your life!

Do you think God would consent to your growth, if your foundations are not deep and strong? Do you imagine God will wink at your ignorance and gladly let you into the secrets and depths of His purposes and plans? God will always maintain a perfect standard. He will gladly wait for you to slowly pick up the details of His eternal truths, but He will not sidestep the need for a strong foundation.

Saints you need to know that moving on to perfection or completion cannot be done in our will alone. No. The Lord is the one who will permit those who have a proper foundation. Some time people of God are in a mood to grow in the Lord and yet after a few days everything dies down and they have no desire for the higher things. They lack a sure foundation to hold the super structure which is also Christ! Saints of God, this is a searching thought – *“this will we do if God permits”*.

It’s not surprising that very few of God’s people, a minuscule really, have progressed to any appreciable spiritual stature. There is still an awesome gap between what we are and what we ought to be concerning the life of Christ. It is no



wonder that the vast majority of God's people are still spiritually weak, frail, and feeble. This is so mainly because God's people have not taken care to prepare their lives and seek God's grace and enablement to move beyond the fundamental principles and tenets of Christianity.

"When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps 11:3 NIV).

"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set." (Prov 22:28).

These two verses warn us that we cannot move away from the true foundations which are laid by the early Apostles. There can be no compromise or short cuts in the area of foundations. We are living in times of hurry and haste when people look for quick results. This can endanger the building that God wants to build.

The building of one's spiritual foundations is not a matter of a choice or option; it is an inescapable necessity. It's His will; it's His command. The foundation is but the beginning; we all need to progress on towards the raising up of a structure on that foundation. We have to carefully build upon the foundation in a way that justifies the foundation for this salvation is progressive.

OUR SALVATION IS PROGRESSIVE

A builder does not spend all his time, energy and resources building a good foundation. **A foundation is only the commencement of the builder's plans to build a structure upon it.** It speaks of the builder's intention to build a structure upon it. **Nor does a builder lay the foundation again and again.** A wise builder first prepares a



good foundation and then gets busy erecting a super structure upon it. **The foundation is not the end; it is the beginning of that which is to follow after.** Nonetheless, the foundation is essential and not optional.

The Bible (Heb 6:1-3) speaks of laying a fivefold foundation:

- § Repentance and faith towards God.
- § The Doctrine of Baptisms.
- § The Laying on of Hands.
- § The Resurrection from the Dead.
- § Eternal Judgments.

In repentance, we encounter the Lord Jesus as our Saviour; in baptism we encounter him as our Baptizer; in laying on of hands, we know Him as the Healer & the giver of gifts; in receiving the truth of the resurrection from the dead we know the Lord as the soon and coming King, for it is in His coming again that we will be resurrected; and in Judgments we know the Lord as the True and only Judge of our lives.

These foundational principles form various layers that have to be built as one layer upon another. Together they constitute the most fundamental truths. **Too often we find that the highest level that many believers come to or attain in their spiritual walk is nothing more than these basic foundations!** In other words they have never gone on to the super structure or the real building!

Many believers are content to know the Lord Jesus merely as their ‘Saviour, Baptizer, Healer, King and Judge.’ They acknowledge, proclaim and even teach the things they know of Him. But rarely do they realize that what they know of Christ



is nothing is more than these basic echelons. He saves, He baptizes, He heals, and He is the Lord of Lords, yet He is more than whatever they have experienced. The Corinthian believers had experienced all these things, yet the apostle Paul said that were carnal, that were babes in Christ, and they were feeding on milk and were unable to digest solid meat! The reality was that they had not advanced the most essential foundations!

This salvation can never be limited to our initial experience of Christ. It is a progressive salvation which means there is much more each of us has to experience. Every stage and phase of spiritual growth is essential; no single step, phase or stage is sufficient by itself. However, there can be no advancement to another phase unless the former steps or spiritual levels are consolidated, strong and deep. The foundations must be laid deep within so that they are not affected by crisis situations in our lives.

PROGRESSIVE SALVATION AS SEEN FROM THE LIFE OF ISRAEL

It is enlightening to see God's plan for the Children of Israel. He delivered them from Egypt, from slavery and bondage, led them through the Red sea, brought them to Mount Sinai, where He gave them the Law and the Tabernacle and showed them the might power of His presence. Then God further led them through the wilderness to the River Jordan and then on to the promised land of Cannan. The Lord's intention for the Israelite, individually and as a nation, was for them all to enter into the land of Cannan. **The goal was not just to come out of Egypt, but to come into Cannan! The purpose of their deliverance was to bring them into the Promised Land.** Every believer needs to fully apprehend this 'picture' of salvation. No one should be



satisfied with going half way. To settle down, having attained some part of our full salvation experience, is to forfeit and lose the whole purpose of the initial salvation or deliverance. The Lord says in Deuteronomy *“And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers”* (Det 6:23) That was what salvation was unto Israel of old. They were saved from Egypt unto a great salvation. That is why Paul warned the Corinthian believers with the example of Israelites in First Corinthians chapter 10. He also warned the Hebrew believers saying *“How shall we escape [appropriate retribution] if we neglect {and} refuse to pay attention to such a great salvation [as is now offered to us, letting it drift past us forever]? For it was declared at first by the Lord [Himself], and it was confirmed to us {and} proved to be real {and} genuine by those who personally heard [Him speak].”* (Hebrews 2:3 Amplified).

Every child of God who has been born again is called to move through different stages of progression till they come into full maturity. There is no stopping place; there is no partial salvation; there is no halfway stop. Each of us has to press on to full maturity. It would be a foolish builder who will stop at some intermediate stage and say, “I am born again and that’s sufficient for me” or “I am born again and even baptized in water and that’s enough for me” or “Now that I am born again, baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit, all I need to do is to await His coming!”. **No one can pitch their tent anywhere on the way according to their whims and fancies and await His coming!** We have to move on; we have to press on beyond the foundational stages and come to the place of maturity in Christ.

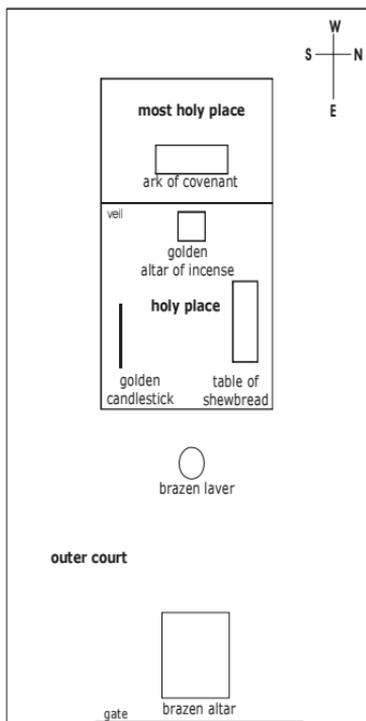
So God’s intention is a progressive salvation. However Israel rebelled against God and finally that very generation that was



called out and brought out did not enter into their full salvation (the Promised Land). The Lord told them that they shall not enter in – “*Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it*” (Numbers 14:23). As we have just seen Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 3 “*This shall we do if God permit*”. God did not permit Israel of old to enter in! How awesome is this call and salvation!

PROGRESSIVE SALVATION AS SEEN FROM THE TABERNACLE

Tabernacle performed a particularly special role in revealing God’s principle of salvation. One must understand that the



principles of salvation have never changed. God’s plan of salvation was established at the foundation of the world and its principles were embedded in the provision of the tabernacle of Moses. Through the tabernacle, God demonstrated in “shadow” how He would extend His mercy to mankind. The Bible reiterates that the Gospel was preached to the Israelites through the tabernacle, “*For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them*” (Heb 4:2). Through the tabernacle, its priesthood, rituals, offerings and furniture, God showed all mankind that



the “substance and reality” of things would follow in the fullness of time.

The diagram shows the main areas of the Tabernacle. The first furniture we see in the Outer Court is the Brazen Altar. That is the only place where the blood is shed. The brazen altar corresponds to the cross of Calvary. Therefore, it signifies the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on Calvary’s cross and the blood He shed for all mankind. **Each item of furniture in the tabernacle symbolized and represented a ministry of Christ and also our experience of Christ.** The brazen altar, therefore, further signified our experience of repentance and our salvation in Christ Jesus. The next furniture was the Brazen Laver which represents water baptism.

Now we come to the realm of the Holy Place which is covered. The Candlestick with its branches which provided light in the Holy Place represents the Holy Spirit and baptism in the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit to understand His Word. Rom 8:9 says, “*Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*” The candlestick was to burn continuously before the Lord. Its fuel was pure oil. The Table of Shewbread in the Holy Place had twelve loaves of bread called shewbread, which typified Christ as the Bread of life. The table also signifies the fellowship of believers. The Altar of Incense means prayer, intercession and worship.

Finally, we come to the Most Holy Place. The Ark and the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place represents the glory, power and presence of God. God spoke from between the two cherubim on the mercy seat. **This is the realm of the fullness unto which the Lord is calling every born again believer!**



There are many spiritual principles that can be learnt from the material, method of construction, journeys of the tabernacle and so on. However we will restrict our meditation to this aspect of progressive salvation as pictured in the Tabernacle of Moses. We see the design and pattern of our salvation in this Tabernacle.

CHRIST HIMSELF IS OUR FOUNDATION AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

It is necessary for our spiritual eyes to be enlightened to see that Christ Himself is our foundation and superstructure. He is the pattern, the order, the form. It is all a Person, who is the sum of all that the Father has purposed. It is unfortunate that everything is reduced to mere teachings and doctrines today.

The apostle Paul makes it very clear in his letter to the Corinthians.

“ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.

If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.



If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor 3:10-15)

The apostle Paul makes it amply clear that this foundation is Christ Himself. He says no other foundation can any man lay. There is no salvation in any other and there is no other name given under heaven given unto men where by they may be saved. This foundation is a man. Every believer has to see Christ as their foundation. A true revelation of Christ is in reality the foundation in the life of every believer. So it is necessary to see Christ in every principle that we shall consider in all the succeeding chapters. Paul cautioned the Corinthian believers that they cannot place anything they want on this foundation which is Christ. Anything that is other than Christ will be rejected and shall not be allowed by the Father on the foundation of His Son. It will be declared as hey, stubble and wood however good and nice it may look in the eyes of men. It may be well received, approved and even esteemed among men. Yet, it will go in smoke and shall not be reckoned by the Lord. Dear saints, therefore, keep your heart open and may the Lord open your eyes to behold the Foundation and the Super-Structure which is the Lord Jesus Christ.



“Behold, I lay in Zion
for a foundation
a stone,
a tried stone,
a precious corner stone,
a sure foundation:
he that believeth shall not make haste.”

(Isa 28:16)

Part One

Repentance

Born Again

Faith Towards God

The New Life

Renouncing The Past



two

REPENTANCE

HAVING seen the need to lay a true and deep foundation in one's spiritual life, let us deal with the process of laying these foundations.

Repentance is the first and foremost step we take to receive the salvation that God offers to us in Christ. The first layer of our spiritual foundation is based on repentance.

§ **Repentance is a Fundamental Principle:** The whole weight of our spiritual life lies upon our repentance. Repentance is the door through which we enter into the kingdom of God. It is more than just a door, for it is also the pathway to our eternal destiny. Thus repentance is the bedrock of our whole spiritual life. True repentance is a godly sorrow towards God for our former sins, ways and life. It involves our whole being, spirit, soul and body.

§ **Repentance Commanded by God:** *“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?”* (Ezek 18:23 NIV). *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to*



repent” (Acts 17:30). “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” (2 Pet 3:9).

§ **Repentance Preached by John the Baptist:** “*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt 3:1-2). **The very first message that was preached in the New Testament era was that of repentance!** When God the Father, broke His silence of four hundred years (from Malachi’s time), He broke it with the word, ‘*Repent ye!*’

I would like to mention in passing that there are many who differentiate between the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of God. The confusion arises because there are many places where both these phrases are used in differing contexts. They however, do not refer to two different kingdoms, but they denote the one and the same thing. The word ‘kingdom’ denotes ‘rule’ or ‘the sphere where the rule is exercised’. Hence, the kingdom of God refers ‘to whom this rule belongs’ or ‘whose rule this is’. In other words, the kingdom of God is the realm of God’s rule. The kingdom of Heaven refers to ‘from where it is’, that is, this rule is heavenly in character and heavenly in its origin.

§ **Repentance Preached by Jesus Christ:** The first message of the Lord Jesus was also repentance. He established the supreme importance of repentance in a believer’s life. “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel*” (Mark 1:15). “*And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his*



name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47).

§ **Repentance Preached by the Disciples before Pentecost:**
“And they went out, and preached that men should repent.”
(Mark 6:12).

§ **Repentance Preached by the Disciples after Pentecost:**
“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

Repentance implies MOVEMENT, i.e. ‘to turn around’ or ‘to turn from’ or ‘return to God’.

Many people, unfortunately, consider ‘repentance’ to be nothing more than a mere word of academic proportions! The words ‘repent’ and ‘repentance’ in the Scriptures fail to have a penetrating, piercing and incisive effect upon their lives. Though leaders often preach about the subject of repentance, it does not have the effect that it ought to have upon them. Most people do not realize that repentance is a turning around of the whole personality towards God.

WHAT IS THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE?

In the beginning when God created Adam, God talked to Adam face to face. There was no wall of separation between them; they could openly fellowship one with another. But one day, Adam chose to go his own way. *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (Prov 14:12 NIV).* You know the story of Genesis. Adam chose to turn his back to God. Ever since, Adam’s generations have been in a position and state where they cannot commune or meet God. It is



necessary for man to first deliberately turn from his own ways and seek God. Repentance in Hebrew and Greek means ‘about turn’ or ‘to turn around’. Repentance, in effect means, ‘to turn to God’, to turn one’s whole being towards God, to turn about and face God.

Most Christians see repentance as an outward act of submission to Christ and no more. They only succeed to partially turn around from their worldly and sinful ways. They just crane their necks towards God for a while and continue to indulge in their sinful ways! Have you seen such believers?

I have seen several believers who have been quick to learn that the Bible says, *‘But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you’* (Matt 6:33). They are happy and satisfied by spending a few minutes in prayer, in the reading of the Word of God, in going to church regularly, in faithfully paying their tithes, in helping to reach out to others and in sending donations to some Christian organizations. They think that by actively giving themselves to these outward things they are seeking the kingdom of God. Therefore they come to the Lord boldly ask Him to fulfill the second part of this verse that says, ‘all these things shall be added unto you’. But when the good things in life are not added, when their finances remained in the red, when their health dwindled down and material blessings are not increased, they wonder, “Why are these things happening to me when I am seeking His kingdom?” They often question God and are confused. Let me tell you why. They have not truly repented of their ways. They have not turned wholly to the Lord. They have continued to walk in their own ways. They have craned their neck towards God to receive some favour and blessing but they have not turned around and faced God! They have only turned their neck to face God while rest of their body continues



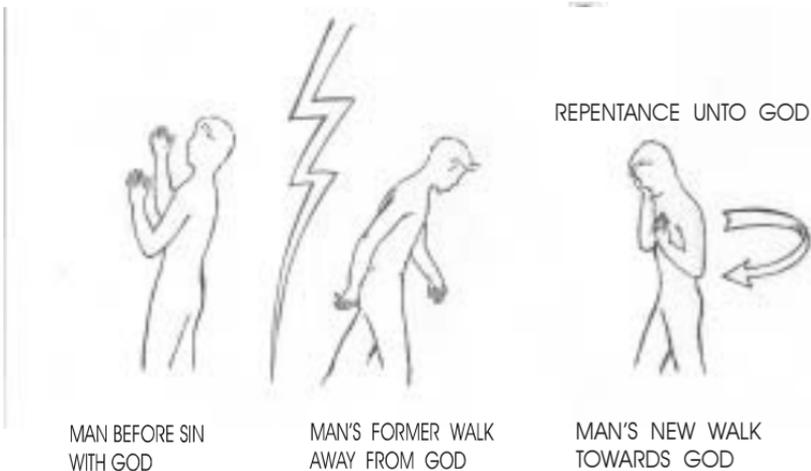
to face their own old paths. Partial turning won't help. There's got to be a turning around and walking back to the Lord. *“For the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, says: “Only in returning to me and waiting for me will you be saved...”(Isa 30:15 TLB).* This alone is true repentance.

“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?” (Ezek 18:23 NIV)

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Isa 55:7)

Repentance Means Change. It involves the following:

- § A change of **HEART** (the seat of your emotions and feelings).
- § A change of **MIND** (the place of your thoughts).
- § A change of **WILL** (the faculty of decision).



Let the wicked forsake his way. Let the unrighteous man surrender his **thought**. This is the true picture of repentance. It is a forsaking of one's own ways and thoughts and returning to the Lord. A solid foundation in repentance would mean, "I have forsaken all my former ways and all my former thoughts and have now taken and embraced God's ways and God's thoughts.

How many of those who say are born again have completely relinquished their own ways and have gladly received the Lord's ways and thoughts?- I am burdened to bring in some thoughts to our consideration.

The Bible talks of '*the deceitfulness of riches*' (Matt 13:22); and that '*the love of money is the root of all evil*' (1 Tim 6:10). The Bible also calls money as the '*unrighteous mammon*' (Lk 16:11). I wonder how many believers accept these thoughts of God regarding money! Aren't believers and Christian leaders more covetous and greedy than their unbelieving neighbors? I've seen believers go to the court pleading the earthly judges to pass verdict against their brother, just to lay their hands on more property and riches! The church buildings are built on money raised through 'unscriptural' means, how then can the leadership in those places tell their members to hate riches! Leaders itch to get more money – they are better of than many of the secular leaders with regard to the amassed wealth!

This just reveals that a foundation on repentance has not been laid in many lives. Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous his thoughts. This is no optional matter. Lord Jesus was very categorical with the young rich ruler. The rich ruler had no option other than to forsake his ways and his gains and follow the Lord.



What is God's thought about fame and name? What's His thought on titles? The Scripture says "...for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15) The Lord says they are an abomination. But born again believers scramble for these things! What does that reveal?

What is God's thought about beauty? I would like to say to young brothers and sisters, that they must lay a strong foundation of repentance in their lives, forsaking the worldly notions of beauty in their marriage partners. "*Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.* (Prov 31:30) The NIV version says, '*beauty is fleeting*'! Can you receive this thought of God into your life? The race of Adam has a tremendous longing in the flesh to admire and desire beauty. But that's deceitful! I know of many young lives that have made a shipwreck of their lives by seeking beautiful life-partners. "*A beautiful woman lacking discretion and modesty is like a fine gold ring in a pig's snout.*" (Prov 11:22 TLB). The beauty in a woman that does not fear God is like gold ring in a pig's snout! The man who is attracted to beauty is truly bringing home a pig! I hope I am not indecent in quoting what the Scripture says. Young brothers and sisters, I sincerely counsel you to forsake your thoughts and ideas of life and receive God's thought and estimation for your life.

In an evangelical crusade there were many who raised their hands to receive Lord Jesus into their lives after a message which stressed the need to repent before turning to the Lord. However, one young lady hesitantly explained why she had not yet decided to raise her hand to accept the Lord, "I have a doubt," she said, "Can you tell me whether I will be able to give my heart to Jesus, since I have already given it to a young man?" This young lady realized that repentance meant a total inward and outward change! She understood what it meant to give



her heart to the Lord!

In repentance Jesus becomes the new object of our love and loyalty. God's interests become our own interest.

Question:

I want to be a better person. I want to experience a change, and I keep trying, but all my efforts are in vain. How can I experience true repentance?

Answer:

Many people want to become better persons and change their way of life, but any kind of self effort will not help. Inward changes cannot come about by our strength. When we are willing to turn from sin, from unrighteousness and from our own works, and acknowledging the need of repentance we return to the Lord then the Lord will strengthen you to change your ways. The prodigal son said, "*I will now return to my father...*". When he chose to return he took the first step to change. If you choose to deliberately turn to God, He will give you the grace to change and be renewed. *All our righteous acts are like filthy rags . . .* (Isa 64:6). Repentance involves a deliberate decision on your part. No one can force you to repent, not even God, but it is God who desires all men to repent! You have to make that choice.

Question:

I feel guilt for all the sinful things I have done. Does this mean that I have repented?

Answer:

It is necessary to feel guilty about our sins before repentance, but it is not enough to feel guilty. Not all who feel guilty actually repent. King Felix felt guilty when the apostle

Paul preached about righteousness, self control and the judgment to come. He was afraid but he said, “*That’s enough for now! You may leave, when I find it convenient I will send for you*” (Acts 24:25).

Question:

Do I have to fast and pray or do some religious things to repent?

Answer:

The Pharisees were very religious in behavior and practice, yet they never repented. Jesus told them to produce fruit in keeping with repentance (Matt 3:7-10; 5:20). They had an intellectual understanding of the Scriptures, but their hearts were not turned to the Lord.

Question:

I have said sorry to the people I hurt because of my sins. I also said sorry to those who caught me doing wrong things. Have I not repented by saying sorry?

Answer:

Many people are sorry for the consequences of their sins, or because they have been caught but that does not mean that they have repented.

There are two kinds of sorrow. One is the worldly sorrow, the other is godly sorrow. We need to distinguish clearly between two common occurrences in our lives – worldly sorrow and godly sorrow. The former comes from the self, but the latter, that is godly sorrow, worketh repentance in our lives, “*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death*” (2 Cor 7:10). The working of the Spirit in our lives brings forth a godly sorrow. We can have tears because of our own sorrows but the tears that come as a result of the working of the Spirit in our lives are much more



precious to the Lord. The Holy Spirit brings forth a godly sorrow that eventually produces brokenness in our beings. The work of the flesh or the will and the mind of man produce worldly sorrow, which results in spiritual death.

We can be men of sorrow and tears because of our self-life. We need to know that not all sorrows and tears are the result of the Spirit's work. They are not the result of a godly sorrow. Believers often imagine that all their tears are shed unto the Lord.

To repent is not just to feel sorry for sin but to forsake it and turn to God wholeheartedly. It is the change of the whole being and not just some aspects of our lives. Repentance is:

§ **Change in mind:** Your opinions, thoughts and ideas will undergo a drastic turnaround. You begin to think differently, accepting God's view of yourself and your life.

§ **Change of heart:** Change in your feelings. Jesus now becomes the new object of your deepest affection and undivided devotion.

§ **Change of will:** Change in your decisions and directions and ways. When your will is changed, you turn your back to the self-centeredness of sin and walk in God's ways in obedience to His will.

SOME ASPECTS OF REPENTANCE

§ **Opportunity to Repent is Gods Gift to Us** *“Him (Jesus), God has put on high at his right hand, as a Ruler and a Saviour to give ... a change of heart and forgiveness of sins.”* Acts 5:31 (BBE). Essau when at a later stage sought for it with tears did not find a place for repentance. *“for you*



know also that afterwards desiring to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, although seeking it out with tears.” (Heb 12:7 LITV). It would be foolish, to think you can repent, whenever you want. Repentance is an opportunity from God. We cannot repent when we think we can repent. God given opportunities are not to be missed.

§ **God cannot Repent for Us.** God can't repent for us. It's what we do towards God. On the day of Pentecost when people heard the Gospel from the apostle Peter, they responded with a question, “*What shall we do?*” (Acts 2:37). In answer to that the apostle Peter said “repent.....” So it is a thing that man has to do towards God. It is mans response to God's word.

§ **Repentance is Not an Option** If people go to eternity without Christ, it would not be because of what they did, but because of what they didn't do. The sin of rejection is far more serious than what we realize. “*God ...now commandeth all men every where to repent*” (Acts 17:30). We are commanded of God to repent and if we refuse to heed His voice and to disobey we have to suffer the consequences and penalties of punishment.

§ **Unless we Repent we shall all Perish.** “*And don't you realize that you also will perish unless you leave your evil ways and turn to God?*” (Luke 13:3TLB)

REPENTANCE INVOLVES A TURNING MOVEMENT

REPENTANCE IS TURNING TOWARDS GOD.

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance



toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

§ **Realizing One’s Condition.** There is a gap between what we are at present and what God intends us to be. The example of the Prodigal Son is illuminating. “*And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger*” (Luke 15:17). The prodigal son realized his state and condition and desired to bridge that gap. He said, “I will arise and go, I will close the gap”

“And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim...And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.” (Judges 10:10,15).

§ **Acknowledging the Holiness of God.** Our sinfulness is a personal insult to God. Remember, sin is primarily against God. Before our sin affects others, it affects God. Your anger towards another person is first of all an insult to God then its against the person. Sin is rejecting, hurting and grieving God. One has to take this to heart. Too often some people live by the 11th Commandment, ‘Thou shalt not get caught’! But God know each one’s heart. You cannot fool God. A penitent heart or a repentant heart, feels the hurt of his sin against God. David cried out, “*Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: ...Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.* (Ps 51:4-5). Confession of sin is an act before the living Father in heaven – He knows us and sees everything. Our grief should be that we have grieved him.

“For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our



sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.” (Isa 59:12-13)

§ **Outward Show of Remorse.** Repentance is often accompanied by a feeling of remorse, a weeping, a lamenting or mourning – feeling ashamed for what has been committed against God. Emotional outbursts alone cannot be attributed to repentance. True repentance is more than rending of garments (Joel 2:13). **Outward penitence is only real when it is accompanied by rending of hearts.** Have not you noticed how easily some mouth the word ‘sorry’ with not an iota of remorse?

Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. .. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. (1Ti 1:13, 15)

§ **Recognizing that God is Wholly Right and we are Wholly Wrong.** “*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.... every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God”*(Rom 3:4, 19). In a truly repentant heart, there is this abject feeling of one’s own worthlessness and inner depravity before a holy God. It is not a painless, tearless affair! (Ezra 9:15) (Job 42:6) (2 Chr 12:6) (Isa 6:5). One of the famous preachers and revival speakers Charles Finny once said about repentance – “it implies an intellectual and heart justification of His law, of His moral and providential government and of all His works and ways.”



§ **Wholly Repent.** We repent not only of what we did, but for what we have said and, for what we have thought. **If we have turned from God in any way repentance is the way back to God, no matter what we have done in the past.**

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” (Pro 28:13)

REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE

“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” (Acts 11:18)

§ **Repentance is a movement unto life.** It is the narrow way that leads to the life of Christ in us. Many Christians do not realize the true meaning and value of repentance. It is more than a phrase, a teaching or a doctrine. A person may be healed by the Lord according to His grace, and may have become a committed church member, but if the foundation of repentance has not been laid, the person’s growth in Christ will be arrested. After a few years, when he is faced with trials and situations of life he will not be able to withstand the pressures and the strain if he has not been able to lay a strong foundation of repentance. Experiencing healing and miracles in life is not sign that one has repented and turned toward God.

§ **Repentance is Being truly sorry to God for your sin.** *“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye” (Ezek 18:32).* True repentance is a godly sorrow, a true sorrow toward God and not just a sorrow toward self or another person. **Repentance is a positive act in which we turn to embrace the life and forgiveness of God.**



Repentance involves something more than merely feeling 'sorry'. Esau, the elder son of Isaac felt sorry about his act of giving away his birth right to his younger brother Jacob, but such regret was insufficient. The scripture says, *"And afterwards, when he wanted those rights back again, it was too late, even though he wept bitter tears of repentance"* (Heb 12:17 TLB).

Judas Iscariot too felt sorry for his deed. Such remorse on the contrary could cause despair and death. *"About that time Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that Jesus had been condemned to die, changed his mind and deeply regretted what he had done, and brought back the money to the chief priests and other Jewish leaders. "I have sinned," he declared, "for I have betrayed an innocent man." "That's your problem," they retorted. Then he threw the money onto the floor of the Temple and went out and hanged himself* (Matt 27:3-5 TLB).

§ **Repentance Brings True Brokenness.** It is the narrow way that leads to the life of Christ in us. Many Christians do not realize the true meaning and value of repentance. It is more than a phrase, a teaching or a doctrine. A person may be healed by the Lord according to His grace, and may have become a committed church member, but if the foundation of repentance has not been laid, the person's growth in Christ will be arrested. After a few years, when he is faced with trials and situations of life he will not be able to withstand the pressures and the strain if he has not been able to lay a strong foundation of repentance. Experiencing healing and miracles in life is not sign that one has repented and turned toward God.

Truly, we can easily shed tears purely because of the frustrated desires of our heart. Tears come easily out of the shattered expectations of self-life. On the other hand,



the working of the Spirit within brings a brokenness that is in no way self-generated. There is a brokenness that is wrought within when one is open to the Holy Spirit. People have feelings and emotions that can lead to tears, but a godly sorrow is a precious thing. Godly sorrow and brokenness are a part of God's work of total repentance.

§ **Godly Sorrow is Life-Changing.** Our grief, sorrow, remorse or tears should spring from the fact that we have hurt the Lord; it should come from that gnawing feeling within—against You and You alone have I sinned. Such godly sorrow makes the repentant heart turn to God for mercy.

§ **The Goodness of God Leads to Repentance.** *“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom 2:4).* Many mistake the goodness and the blessings of God as a license to do their own thing. They misconstrue His goodness and kindness as His permissive will to follow their own selfish ends. The Israelites construed that God's continued sustenance and blessing upon them was a sign of His approval. How they misjudged the Lord! God was gracious and merciful, and long suffering toward them. He fed them with manna and quail. He led them through the wilderness and protected them from the scorching sunlight and dryness of the wilderness despite their failures and rebelliousness. **His Sovereign acts were to lead them to repentance.** His gracious acts were to lead them acceptance of their folly so that they may repent of the way they had dealt with their loving Father. *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9).*



§ **Turn to Right Living.** *“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God”* (Rom 6:13).

REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS
TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD.

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom 6:17-18). Dead works are works of the flesh which can never please God. We need to turn from sin, self, the world, and the devil and turn and return to the living God. The true response of a repentant heart is, “Lord, what shall I do? Or What would you have me do?” This was the spontaneous cry and response of the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus as well as the Philippians jailor. **There is no place for any thought of self gain and profit.**

“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1Thes 1:9). To repent is a practical act. It means **‘to stop doing something’s and to start doing other things’** *“not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. (Heb 6:1).* **Dead works are activities that are done unto God without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.** That could include our daily devotional time, worship songs, and church attendance. In repentance, you not only cease to do such things but you begin to produce deeds appropriate to repentance.

“Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I



say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” (Luke 3:8-9). “But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance” (Acts 26:20). If you have truly turned to God in repentance, then there should be ample evidence of the fruits of repentance, there ought to be in the history of our lives evidences of leaving behind many things, activities that once had a grip over us but now no longer! **Repentance is a very practical thing.** After I was born again, my desire to play music remained, but the only difference was that it took on a spiritual colour! I had to deliberately suspend and restrain every desire to play the guitar until I was sure that music no longer mastered my life. This could be illustrative of various other habits or friendships or dispositions that have a hold over us in the early stages of our life.

Repentance is an on-going process. Repentance is not just a good beginning; it is a fundamental attitude that every believer must have. All through our Christian life we should be open to repent and change our ways. “*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*” (Prov 28:13).

RESTITUTION

Restitution involves giving back to others whatever you owe them, whenever possible. Restitution is a part of the complete process of repentance.



“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

Zacchaeus, the tax-collector had made money in an unrighteous manner. But when he turned to the Lord in repentance, he was more than willing to restore all those whom he had wronged. Genuine repentance is always backed up by this fruit of restitution. He was willing to restore all those whom he had cheated four times the sum he had made from them. He could do

this because he knew these people personally. But how about those whom he did not know? Concerning them he said that he was willing to part with half of his possessions and give it to the poor. He never wanted to have any money acquired through cheating and unfair



means! What a radical step of restitution and repentance! Do we ever hear such a thing today? Yes, there are such disciples even today but they are very few.

Leviticus 6: 4, 5 also gives us a good idea of the Old Testament law in this regard, *“Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took*



violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering.”

Restituting follows true repentance. One must be willing to retribute to God and man for one’s unrighteousness and trespasses. It is not always possible to retribute people whose names we do not know or whose whereabouts are unknown. But where possible one should make every attempt to restore as the Lord prompts us. Once a young man came and confessed to me that he had traveled in trains without buying tickets. The Holy Spirit has been bringing this to him again and again. He felt that he should retribute but he did not know how he could do that. I counseled him to buy tickets to those very places and tear them off so that the government will get the money. He was so released as he obeyed the Lord in restituting.

I remember another incident in the life of a spiritual friend of mine. When he was convicted of his sinful ways, he was keen to pay for the meals he had taken from a way side hotel-restaurant by cheating the manager. A friendly waiter had agreed to provide him three meals a day by billing him only for two meals. He stayed in the lodge for several months continuously cheating the management. After the Holy Spirit convicted him, he gathered up all his courage, went back to the manager, narrated the whole incident and insisted to restore all he had gained by cheating him over the last many months. His act of restitution showed the fruit of his repentance. If you are keen to retribute, you may have to write letters of apology to people you have wronged, you may have to visit some,



and you may have to return the things you acquired wrongfully. If you are open to God, the Holy Spirit will show you how to retribute others. It is good to be open to the Holy Spirit who will prompt you in the area of restitution.

SIGNS OF A STRONG FOUNDATION OF REPENTANCE

- ◆ Are you sensitive or indifferent to sin as it affects God? Do you loathe yourself for the wrong things you do or the people you hurt by your words?
- ◆ Are you willing to confess your sins and take responsibility for it or are you always making excuses for the way you are?
- ◆ Are you willing to change your attitude and behavior when corrected or when you see how wrong you are?
- ◆ Are you willing to retribute all persons and even the person you dislike?
- ◆ Do you desire to obey God at all times and to live for His glory?



BEING 'BORN AGAIN'

'BORN AGAIN' and 'repentance' are two sides of the same coin (experience). They go together and follow one behind the other. A person enters into this 'new' life through the doorway of repentance. The new life is a result of our repentance.

The experience of being born again is highlighted in these verses from the Gospel of John.

*"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **Marvel not that I***



said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:1-8)

AN ABSOLUTE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FLESH AND SPIRIT

These words of Jesus show that there is an absolute distinction between flesh and the Spirit. The word ‘flesh’ is used in a variety of senses in the New Testament, but when Jesus uses the word ‘flesh’ in His words to Nicodemus, it was applied to our human nature. The apostle Paul also uses the word ‘flesh’ in his epistles to mean **‘human nature controlled by sin’**. It is important to distinguish between the flesh and the spirit. The flesh is dead in sins (Eph 2:5)! As has been explained earlier, the sons of Adam from their very birth have a spirit that is dead to the things of God. God is Spirit and hence He communicates with His creation only through the Spirit. The only way man can be born spiritually (called ‘born again’) is by bringing the spirit in man to life—the quickening of the spirit in man. The Holy Spirit miraculously brings the human spirit to life. In new birth, God the Holy Spirit acts on and through the human spirit that was once dead in sin, and is now made alive to God. The spirit of man that was once dead is brought to life by the working of the Holy Spirit. And you are born again, spiritually! Hallelujah!

The Lord told Nicodemus, *“except ye be born again....”!* EXCEPT YE! To be born again is a universal imperative.

Flesh and spirit are incompatible. Each opposes the others work. Romans 8:1-15 make this very clear. Roman 8 shows



very emphatically that that which is after the flesh brings forth the flesh. It has no desire for the things of the Spirit. The same way the Spirit has no desire for the flesh.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom 8: 5,6,8,14)

Being born again is a universal necessity. A man who is born of the flesh lives after the flesh but a man born of the Spirit lives after the Spirit. There are many terms used for being born again; it is the same as being born from above or born from the Spirit of God. What it means is that the human spirit that is dead because of sin is made alive. That is the born again experience.

We also need to remember that however much man may desire to be born again spiritually, it is not in his hands. The making of a Christian is not man’s work. It’s a supernatural miracle of God. The greatest miracle in the world is the born again experience of man. The ‘born again experience of a man’ is a unique feature of the Christian life. It does not happen in any other religion. **It is a sovereign ‘act’ of God in the life of an individual.** This act of God leaves man bewildered and grappling for an answer, with all his acumen he can only stand like the religious Nicodemus and ask, *“How can a man be born again when he is old?”!*



ONLY THE INITIATION OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD BRINGS NEW LIFE

In nature, every animal, every plant and even human beings, produce offspring after their own kind. This is a natural law. Like produces like; a horse gives birth to a horse and a cow gives birth to a cow. Everything under the sun produces after its own kind. Likewise 'flesh' gives birth to flesh and Spirit gives birth to spirit. Flesh cannot bring forth the likeness of the spirit. The Spirit of God alone can give birth (that is, save) the spirit of man. A drowning man cannot save himself. Even the good and law abiding Nicodemus could not save himself as much as a man cannot give birth to himself! No person, however good and with whatever good works he has, can ever give or bring forth new life. The most we can do is to share the gospel and our experiences in Christ with others, but new life can only be brought forth by the Holy Spirit.

How I wish that this truth is realized by Christian leaders who employ carnal, human methods to bring people to Christ, by offering some kind of gifts to them to get them to say that they have repented and turned to the Lord. No one can become a Christian with such means. The best that man can do is to help another to repent and turn to God. But it has to be the initiation of God!

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which 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)

A child of God is born not of human will or effort or decision but of the will, effort and decision of our Father in heaven. The Scriptures tells us that this miracle is wrought in human



life solely by Divine intervention and initiation. No merit on the part of any man can earn him this new life in God. Even Jesus was born of the promise of God; He was born of the Spirit. Jesus did not come on His own, nor the will of the flesh, nor the mind of man, but the will of the Father. He was sent of the Father. The Son did not come of His own. It was the Father's initiation.

“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.” (John 8:42)

“By faith Abraham, even though he was past age— and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore” (Heb 11:11-12 NIV). When Abraham's endeavor, strength and resources came to nothing, God initiated a process and the barren womb of Sarah sprang forth with new life! This was not according to the will of man or effort or decision of man, it was God's initiation.

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now” (Gal 4:29). It is very important for us to see that Isaac was born by the working of God, the Holy Spirit. Ishmael, son of Abraham, by human choice and possibility, represents the flesh. Ishmael was born of the flesh. Isaac the son of the promise of God, and product of the miracle of God, when men thought it impossible, represents the birth of a Christian. When man thinks it is not possible God walks into our lives and makes new birth possible. We receive new life through the working of the Holy Spirit.



New birth is an **EVENT**, and is more than just few outward acts.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN NEW BIRTH

§ First of all, it is the **Father's love** that brings any individual to a place where he turns to the Lord. It is the Father's love that produces this new life in us.

*"Behold, **what manner of love** the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I Jn 3:1).*

*"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth **is born of God**, and knoweth God" (I Jn 4:7).*

*"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that **he loved us**, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I Jn 4:10).*

"We love him, because he first loved us" (I Jn 4:19).

"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42).

§ Secondly, **Holy Spirit** gives us this new life.

*"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born** of water and of **the Spirit**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).*

§ Thirdly, **God's Word** is the agent the Holy Spirit uses to bring new life to us.

*"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, **but of incorruptible, by the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet 1:23).*

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of



*naughtiness, and receive with meekness **the engrafted word**, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21)*

§ Finally, its **God’s Sovereignty**, it is His choice according to His own purpose and grace.

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph 1:5).

DEFINITE CONDITIONS TO BE MET TO RECEIVE NEW BIRTH

RECEIVING CHRIST AS THE LORD

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which 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).

*“But to **as many as did receive and welcome Him**, He gave the authority, power, privilege, right to become the children of God, that is, to those who believe in – adhere to, trust in and rely on His name, who owe their birth neither to bloods, nor to the will of flesh (that of physical impulse) nor to the will of man (that of natural father) but to God – they are born of God!” (John 1: 12, 13 Amplified Bible)*

Firstly, new birth involves receiving Jesus as the Lord of your life. Mere confession alone is not enough. We have to believe Him as Lord in our hearts. With our heart we believe and with our mouth we confess! Jesus has to be received as the Lord in the heart of man. The early church always presented Jesus Christ as the Lord and the King. He was not presented as a “Santa-Claus or Xmas Father” as is often done today. They have made Him out to be One who meets their needs. When it



came to the Kingdom of God, Jesus always showed Himself as the King. He was presented as the One who died for them though He was their King. There is a radical difference from the way He is presented to unbelievers today. Let us review the way Zacheaus was saved and born again. Jesus told Zacheaus that He would come to his house. He did not tell him that He would like to come to His home. He showed Himself as the Lord and king. The king does not have to wait for any one! The Lord is the Lord! The King's business needs haste! Today we have a cheap, weak Christianity mainly because the Lordship of Jesus is never portrayed or preached. He is only preached as the One who can forgive and meet the needs of people. That is not enough! Zacheaus received the Lord Jesus into his house and was willing to have Jesus as the Lord of his life – as the new head of his house. He was willing to from that day come under the dominion of the Lord Jesus.

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:” (Col 2:6). Today most preachers do not preach Jesus Christ as the Lord. One man said, *“Lord, I will follow you but let me go and bury my father.”* The Lord said let the dead bury the dead. *“And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”* (Luke 9:61-62). These were all people who wanted to be a part of the kingdom, who wanted to join the Lord!

Matthew the tax collector sitting besides his table heard a voice, ‘follow me’. The Lord told Matthew to follow Him and left Matthew to obey His calling. He did not chase after him. It was up to Matthew to decide to follow Jesus, whether to accept His Lordship or not. Many talk about the Lord Jesus



and call Him Lord, but in reality He is not the Lord. The gospel has been reduced to something weak and powerless. **The Gospel is the proclamation of Jesus as the Lord.** Matthew decided in favor of the Lord unto his own salvation. This is how a new birth should be in a believer's life.

BELIEVING AND TRUSTING IN HIS NAME

Secondly, new birth involves believing and trusting in all that His name describes Him as being and doing for us. We ought to know that there is a difference between believing and trusting in the Lord. Many believe in the Lord and believe that He performed great miracles and believe that He died and rose again. **Many believe, but they will not trust Him!** Believing does not mean believe in the mind; **it is a believing that will cause you to trust your life in His hands.** Does that sound absurd?

In the days of the Lord Jesus, "*When he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man*" (John 2:23-25). Jesus knew their heart! Let me explain this difference in belief and trust through an example.

There is a story of a man who decided to walk across the Niagara Falls on a tight rope that was strung across the waterfalls. Many gathered to watch this great event. He walked on the rope and crossed the falls without any trouble. The people were enthralled; they clapped and cheered! Then he took a wheelbarrow and asked the people whether he could cross the Falls on the wheelbarrow! The people said with one voice, "We believe you can do it." The man then challenged the people, "If



you believe I can do it, then will one of you sit in that wheel barrow, while I push it to the other end!” There was pin-drop



silence among the audience! No one dared to come forward. Not a single person had faith enough; no one was able to really believe the man. The Bible talks of a believing that puts full faith and trust in Christ. ‘Wheelbarrow’ faith is sitting in the wheelbarrow and believing that the man can cross the Niagara Falls!

Many people believe in the Lord, but few are willing to trust their lives in the hands of the Lord, to fully trust Him and have absolute faith in His name. The Word says that God is ‘Jehovah Jireh’ our Provider. It is easy to believe that; it is another thing to trust that He will provide all your needs. Many doubt that their sins can be washed away by Jesus. Many are not sure whether He will do all that He has promised!

THE WORD OF GOD AND NEW BIRTH

The Word of God is the agency that the Lord uses to impart new life to us. When we hear, receive, believe and obey the word of truth about Christ, the Spirit imparts His life to us. The key is to hear, receive, believe and obey the word of truth about Him, because the Word is the method that the Spirit uses to impart the life of Jesus to us. We obey the word through the working of the Spirit of Truth.

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born



again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet 1:22-23).

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13)

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:” (1Thes 1:5-6)

The Word of God and the Holy Spirit go hand in hand. The Spirit uses the Word to bring the life of Jesus into us. The Holy Spirit uses the medium of the Word to impart the life of the Son into us.

“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

Mary welcomed the Word that came to her through the angel of the Lord. *“And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her” (Luke 1:38).*

Mary welcomed the Word of God and the Spirit of God brought life of the Son into her. This led to the conception of Jesus in Mary’s womb. There is a tremendous work of the Spirit in the life of Mary. Jesus was brought forth in her life through the overshadowing work of the Spirit and the Word of God. This provides us a picture of our rebirth or born again



experience. Oswald Chambers says that God creates the life of Jesus in us and we in faith make our lives a Bethlehem for the life of the Son of God. Mary allowed the Holy Spirit to work in her and a Life was brought forth in her! That is what must also happen in us. The life of Jesus is formed in us by the Spirit and the Word of God working together in our lives. We are born of the incorruptible word of God as Peter says. When by faith we receive the Word of God into our lives, believing in Jesus, the Son of God then the Holy Spirit imparts His life into us. Thus we also are able to have a ‘Bethlehem Experience’ in our lives!

THE REALITY OF NEW LIFE

To be born again is not an outward happening; it is an inward consciousness of the presence of God. It is not a label to be used to show who you are or what you believe. It is not something we can achieve by our efforts or even by our prayer or faith. It is purely and simply the operation of the grace of God to open your eyes of understanding.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Cor 5:17). Another Bible version puts it this way: *“Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation.”* Many changes take place within the human constitution when we become Christians. Our former state of death is replaced by a state of life in Christ.

CLEAR EVIDENCE OF NEW BIRTH

Like the wind that blows wherever it wants to, new birth



is mysterious but can be known by its effects. *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit”* (John 3:8).

The effects of the clear confession of Christ as the Lord can be seen in our lives in several areas.

§ Confession Must be Accompanied by Commitment.

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Cor 12:3).

§ The Opening of Our Eyes to See the Kingdom. We begin to see God’s rule and Christ’s lordship operating in every area of the world, of history and of our lives.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

§ Growth of the Christ’s Nature and Character in Us. Christ like character begins to show and grow in us. Galatians five shows us what should happen within us as the Spirit works in us and we are filled with the Spirit.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Gal 5:19-23)



§ **Growing Interest in Spiritual things.** A growing interest in spiritual things at the expense of worldly or carnal pursuits is another proof of the work of the Spirit.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”
(Rom 8:5)

If we love to walk after the Spirit it clearly shows that we are born again.

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:” (I Peter 2:2)

§ **Growing Interest in Brothers/Sisters in the Family of God.** A growing interest in brothers and sisters in the family of God and love the fellowship of the saints is another clear mark of the Lord. If we do not like to be with others of the faith, there is something amiss and the foundation is not proper.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” (I Jn 3:14)

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.” (1 Jn 4:7)

A longing to meet God’s people is so essential in our lives.

§ **A Jealousy For His Name.** A growing concern for the heavenly Father’s name and glory and the name and reputation of the family of God. The heavenly Father longs to see a desire in us to be like Him.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”
(Matt 5:16)



“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:” (1 Cor 10:32)

Do all for the glory of God. Maintain the family’s name and reputation and don’t bring dishonour to His name.

We can see that only God can make true Christians. Our Christian lives are ours because of His sovereignty and choice and gift. Christianity is not something we can achieve by our own selves. It is initiated by the Spirit of God. It is supernatural from the beginning to the end.

IMPLICATIONS OF NEW BIRTH

§ Being a Christian is a matter of having life in us which is God’s own eternal life.

*“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that **pertain unto life and godliness**, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:3-4)*

§ Being a Christian is a matter of expressing His LIFE in every area of our lives. We have to express the life of Jesus Christ within us in every area so that we come into the lordship of Jesus. This is very important.

§ We have a living hope that one day we will see Jesus as He really is and of becoming what we really are.

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the



world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”(1 John 3: 6)

§ With a supernatural start like new birth, we can be assured that God will complete His work in our lives

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” (Phil 1:6)



FAITH TOWARD GOD

SAVING FAITH IS A VITAL NEED

BELIEVING in the Lord is a faith that saves; it is a saving faith.. The Bible tells us of the jailor where the apostle Paul and Silas were confined. The apostle Paul told him that he would be saved if he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:30-31)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:16-18)

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he



that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. "(John 3:36)

We are sinners apart from the Lord Jesus Christ and we are without hope if we do not trust in the person of Jesus Christ. The key truth is that without faith in Jesus Christ we remain unsaved and we perish not having eternal life. Having faith in God involves an exchange of self-trust for trust in God. **We stop trusting ourselves and trust God who is worthy of our trust. We relinquish reliance on our own efforts and limited resources and instead believe in His unlimited resources.** We cannot save ourselves from sinfulness and we will perish under the judgment of God and the full effects of His wrath. **Faith calls us to rely on Him, have confidence in His Person and His words.**

SALVATION FAITH IS A WORK OF GOD

We have seen that repentance is an opportunity that God gives us to turn to Him. The born-again experience is a work of God, a work that is not in the flesh but in the Spirit. Salvation through faith is also a work of God and not a work of man. Men, even the best of preachers and men of God, cannot save others. It has to be a work of the Holy Spirit of God. We can help others, show them the Scriptures, testify through our experience and lives, but the born again experience has to be given by the Spirit alone because what is of the flesh remains flesh and only that which is of the Holy Spirit is spirit. Even the saving faith, the faith to trust in His salvation is a gift from God. The righteous live by the faith that He gives us as a gift.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man



should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:8-10)

“For in the Gospel a righteousness which God ascribes is revealed, both springing from faith and leading to faith (disclosed through the way of faith that arouses to more faith). As it is written, The man who through faith is just and upright shall live and shall live by faith .” (Rom 1:17 Amp Bible)

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

The Biblical doctrine shows that we are justified by faith and not by our works .Justification is a legal term. It shows on what basis a loving and holy God who has decreed that a soul that has sinned shall die, justly and legally pardons and forgives guilty sinners, and restores them to His favour.

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezek 18:4)

God’s principles can never be set aside, even by God, but He provides a way that satisfies and fulfills His righteous demands for justice.

Justification means to pronounce the guilty acquitted because the claims of the Law upon him have been met by another and to reckon to them the righteousness of this other person (the Lord Jesus), who has taken the blame and the responsibility. Thus the justice being satisfied or met, they can be restored to the favour of God in a righteous relationship with Him.

“But now the righteousness of God has been revealed



independently {and} altogether apart from the Law, although actually it is attested by the Law and the Prophets,

Namely, the righteousness of God which comes by believing {with} personal trust {and} confident reliance on Jesus Christ (the Messiah). [And it is meant] for all who believe. For there is no distinction,

Since all have sinned and are falling short of the honor {and} glory which God bestows {and} receives.

[All] are justified {and} made upright {and} in right standing with God, freely {and} gratuitously by His grace (His unmerited favor and mercy), through the redemption which is [provided] in Christ Jesus,

Whom God put forward [before the eyes of all] as a mercy seat {and} propitiation by His blood [the cleansing and life-giving sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation, to be received] through faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over {and} ignored former sins without punishment.

It was to demonstrate {and} prove at the present time (in the now season) that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies {and} accepts as righteous him who has [true] faith in Jesus.

Then what becomes of [our] pride {and} [our] boasting? It is excluded (banished, ruled out entirely). On what principle? [On the principle] of doing good deeds? No, but on the principle of faith.

For we hold that a man is justified {and} made upright by faith independent of {and} distinctly apart from good deeds (works of the Law). [The observance of the Law has nothing to do with justification.]

Or is God merely [the God] of Jews? Is He not the God of



Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

Since it is one and the same God Who will justify the circumcised by faith [which germinated from Abraham] and the uncircumcised through their [newly acquired] faith. [For it is the same trusting faith in both cases, a firmly relying faith in Jesus Christ].

*Do we then by [this] faith make the Law of no effect, overthrow it {or} make it a dead letter? Certainly not! On the contrary, we confirm {and} establish {and} uphold the Law.”
(Rom 3:21-31 Amplified Bible)*

Paul finally says that new covenant believers establish the law. May the Spirit open the eyes of our understanding! Let us study these verses in greater detail.

“Being justified freely by his grace ...” (Romans 3:24). We are justified by the grace of God. This is God’s undeserved favour being shown to us. It is by grace through faith and not by works that we are saved. We are justified, made upright with a right standing with God, freely by His grace through the redemption provided in Christ Jesus. It is God leaning and moving and acting on behalf of man and showing an undeserved favour.

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross as an atonement for sin for us. (Romans 3:25). Propitiation stresses the appeasing of God’s just wrath upon sin by bearing the penalty of it. (In the Old Testament, the high priest goes behind the veil and the blood is sprinkled upon the mercy seat of God. That was a shadow but the reality is that the sacrificial, atoning blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, satisfies the just need of God. **Though the shadows have moved away the truths conveyed by the shadows are eternal.** We don’t keep the feasts



of Israel now **but the truth that God has conveyed through those feasts is eternal.** The principles conveyed through the Tabernacle are eternal, even though we do not raise up tabernacles now.

The Lord died on the cross on our behalf. He became a propitiation for sinners. In the Old Testament when a sinner makes certain sacrifices for his sins, blood is shed and the blood is shed. When the Lord looks at the blood it signifies that death has taken place for the sin and therefore the soul that had sinned need not die. The Scripture says “...with out shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb 9:22) The animal died in place of the sinner and the righteous demand of the Lord is met. This is the principle of God. In the Old Testament a sinner’s relationship with God is restored through the death and the blood of an animal. But in the New Testament, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, offered Himself as the last and only and perfect sacrifice. And when that blood is sprinkled upon the Mercy Seat, God looks upon the blood and says, “The just demands of my righteousness have already been met.” Jesus Christ made Himself available to die in our place. In the Old Testament, as a sinner I could take a lamb and go the altar of sacrifice in the Tabernacle, but in the New Testament I take the blood of Jesus Christ as the eternal Lamb of God who died in my place on the cross. **God has appointed Christ as the means of propitiation, a propitiation accepted by the shedding of His blood and this propitiation is to be received and made affective in ourselves by faith.**

SAVING FAITH IS A GIFT

Faith is a gift to those who believe in the forgiveness of sins and in the right standing of Jesus with God that He enjoys. This faith is a gift to those who believe of the forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot



enter into the presence of God as we are because we are sinners. But the moment I offer this sacrifice and take to the Lord I have a right standing now with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)” (Rom 5:15-17)

This should be a strong foundation in our lives. There should be a strong assurance that the Lord Jesus has forgiven my past sins. He has died in my place and His blood and sacrifice has been accepted by the Father and therefore I am now freed from that curse of guilt.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:” (Col 1:14)

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor 5:21)

The demonstration of God’s justice is an important aspect of saving faith. God has acted lawfully in forgiving sinners because Jesus paid the penalty for them. This is vital for providing the legal basis for our continued forgiveness.

“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom 3:26)



"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn 1:9)

Justification is part of the amazing plan of God. It shows that our faith does not rest on man's wisdom. Our faith does not rest on the wisdom and human philosophy of man, but in the wisdom and power of God in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. This is the burden that the apostle had for the church. Many today are groping in darkness and are frustrated by the wisdom and philosophy of man. Truly we need to thank the Lord.

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor 2:5)

SAVING FAITH IS A BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE

This is very important and basic. If we ignore any foundation there will be an effect on the superstructure! We cannot take anything for granted. **Faith was the way to relate to God much before the Law was given. The element that needs to be seen in an individual's heart to relate to God is faith.**

FAITH - THE WAY TO GOD MUCH BEFORE THE LAW

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." (Gen 4:4-7)



When Able offered his offering to God it was accepted by God. The important thing is that Able had faith toward God. We shall not get into other aspects of this verse at this time.

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” (Heb 11:4)

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb 11:6)

When **Abel** came to the altar and brought his firstlings he came by faith by which he pleased God. It is only the faith way that we can relate to God even in those days. Abel was justified before God. And the Lord told Cain if you had done it would I not have accepted your sacrifice as well. I believe that Abel was sensitive to God’s workings. In those days God spoke directly and audibly to men. The principle of sacrifice had been established earlier. It is only in the shedding of blood that man can come closer to God. There was a covering for sin right there in the Garden of Eden. We read *“Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”* (Gen 3:21). God covered man with animal skin and it speaks of God Himself shedding blood to provide tunics of skin. There we see the symbolic expression of blood being shed for sin. Perhaps this was where Abel got the inward inclination to bring in the firstlings by faith. Therefore, Abel brought the firstlings by faith; believing that in the shedding of blood God would accept his sacrifice. But Cain had another heart and did not desire what God loved. When we come to the House of God we do not desire to bring a worship that would satisfy God and meet His desires. Many people want to come and offer something to God but they are not worried whether God would accept it.



The church has plenty of Cains! God is a rewarder of all who seek Him and Abel diligently sought Him. So the Lord has respect for Abel. Abel was justified by faith and not by sacrifice outwardly.

Abraham is another great model of faith, prior to law. He believed in the Lord and God and it was counted for him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6). (Rom 4:1-25).

Our faith totally rests upon the Lord Jesus Christ. We read in Romans “ *For the answer to that question, answer this one: When did God give this blessing to Abraham? It was before he became a Jew-before he went through the Jewish initiation ceremony of circumcision. It wasn't until later on, after God had promised to bless him because of his faith, that he was circumcised. The circumcision ceremony was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him just and good in his sight-before the ceremony took place.*” (Romans 4:10-11 Living Bible) Other Bible translations such as New International Version and Amplified New Testament will also give a clear understanding. When did God give this blessing of circumcision to Abraham? Was it before he was a Jew and went through the Jewish initiation ceremony of circumcision? No it wasn't at all. It wasn't until God saw his faith much before he was circumcised. God had already justified and accepted Abraham before the ceremony of circumcision took place. **So he was justified and counted righteous not because of his circumcision but because of his faith in God which was expressed much earlier.** Circumcision was only a sign of his faith and his blessing was not because of an outward sign or circumcision but the underlying factor of faith.

Abraham is the father of those who believe and are saved



without obeying the Jewish laws. We see that those who do not keep these rules are justified by God through faith. And Abraham is also the father of those Jews who are circumcised. They can see from this example that it is not the ceremony that saves them because Abraham found favour with God before he was circumcised. **So we see it is not a religious work but faith that God accepts.**

THE LAW WITNESSED TO THIS FAITH WAY OF SALVATION.

Salvation, forgiveness and acceptance unto God were through faith alone and not through any other things. The law and the prophets spoke about the same faith way to salvation

*“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;”
(Rom 3:21)*

“But now the righteousness of God has been revealed independently and altogether apart from law though actually it is attested by the law and the prophets” (Rom 3:21 Amp).

The law did not replace faith. Abel and Abraham were before the law. They (the law and the prophets) endorsed, attested, approved that it was the same way. It gave it a more detailed context to operate in. Faith was meant to be the heart of Israel’s response to God.

“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?” (Deut 10:12-13)



God's desire was that Israel may really respond to God in faith. They were to trust and obey God from their heart. But the children of Israel had no heart for God's commandments, they were bringing sacrifices to God without faith. Abel brought a sacrifice to God in faith but not the children of Israel who brought sacrifices to the Lord because the law said so. This is the great difference between the way of the law and of faith. The law said that when you transgress the commandment of God you can bring a sacrifice to the Lord and your transgressions will be forgiven, you will be accepted by God. What was lacking was faith within them. The law was given so that they may realize their mistake that they have transgressed against the Lord, so that they may walk in His statutes, that they may love Him. This is the real underlying factor of the Law. So instead of seeing the principles of God they got into a ritual. **They kept the law and the commandments but had no faith.** According to the law they were circumcised on the eighth day but never had faith in what they did. They did it because the Word said so but there was no faith in them. The element of faith which is the thing that God approves and accepts was missing in their lives.

Is it possible with us to be like the children of Israel though it is the time of grace. Faith is something on the basis of which we can always come to God. Faith in God is therefore of paramount importance to the believer. By faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in the work of atonement, we come to Him and we do everything. He that cometh to God must know who He is! Without faith it is impossible to please God. We can keep all the commandments and yet without faith all that is useless.

Faith was meant to be the heart of Israel's response to God and to trust in externals was to miss the way.



"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Rom 9:31-33)

They thought that just because they were continually doing these things outwardly they would be acceptable to God. They followed the law of righteousness which is nothing but righteousness before God, but stumbled because they had no faith. The law was actually attesting to the faith way to salvation. But they stumbled!

THE PROPHETS RECALLED PEOPLE TO FAITH

The prophets recalled people to trust, criticizing reliance on externals.

"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." (Hab 2:4)

"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6)

The Lord says that there is something more that He desires — knowledge of God, faith in God.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8)

Yes, all the prophets told the people not to rely on anything they do externally but to depend on faith in God. They criticized their reliance on external ceremonial things.



A man called Berkov said, “The Old Testament expressions for faith in God are, hoping in God, waiting on God, fixing heart on God, trusting God, cleaving to God—all stressing the loving self commitment to God which is the essence of saving faith”.

“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.”

“Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.”

“If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”

“But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

“I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.”

“My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.”

“Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.”

“And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

(Ps 130:1-8)

It is not by works but it is trusting upon this great God.

The Old Testament and New Testament unites in teaching that faith is the only means of relationship with God. Faith through the Lord and in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only means by which we can have a relationship with the Father. There is only one way for Jews and Gentiles and that is faith in Jesus Christ.



“Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” (Rom 3:30-31)

Both are justified through faith—those who are circumcised and those who are not circumcised.

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.” (Rom 9:30-31)

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom 10:9-13)

“And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.” (Rom 11:23)

What is the way in? If the same Israel will come through the door of faith they will be grafted in. There is no other way. **The same way of faith that was rejected by them will be the door for them.** God has worked out His salvation in such a beautiful way!

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:26)



For Old Testament it was all hope but for us it is all history plus hope. For us and them it means faith in the Lord and message of God.

The Law was Moses was never meant to be a means and a way of salvation but it was meant to **teach us our sin.**

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Rom 3:20)

The Law was given to teach us the need for a saviour; it was meant to show us our sin.

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal 3:24)

Let us have faith in the Lord Jesus, not faith in our activities, in our confessions, in our works. Mere confession without believing is useless before God.

JESUS-THE FOCUS OF OUR FAITH.

In this sense of coming into focus it can be said that faith came with the coming of Jesus Christ.

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Gal 3:22-25)

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,



and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Rom 10:9)

To Believe in the Lord Jesus is to believe in His name. The word believing is not a mental believing but a heart believing—a belief with trust in God. It is a wheelbarrow faith. It is a trust in the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, including the life He lived and His death on the cross. It is not agreeing with the mind but believing in Him and His name. There are many names of the Lord and they talk of the character and attributes of the Lord. It is believing in who He is, what He stands for, what He has done and what He has authoritatively represents.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:” (John 1:12)

Believing in Him as living for us is faith in the working of God who raised Jesus from the dead.

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” (Col 2:12)

If Jesus is not alive our faith is worthless today. Believing in the Lord means believing in the Lord who is risen from the dead. The Father in heaven raised Him up and He is working in us today.

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” (1 Cor 15:14)

Our faith is resting upon the living Christ because the Father hath raised Him from the dead.



"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1 Cor 15:17)

PICTURES OF FAITH

BELIEVING IS LIKE LOOKING UNTO

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:14-15)

"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." (Num 21:9)

Some translations use the word 'looking unto' instead of 'beheld'. Believing is thus a 'looking unto' Him. This looking unto phrase shows a concentration of faith upon Jesus only.

BELIEVING IS LIKE EATING

The Lord relates eating to believing, something essential to our very life. Eating and feeding upon Jesus (the Word) is essential in our lives.

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:50-51)



BELIEVING IS LIKE RECEIVING THE LORD CONTINUALLY

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:” (John 1:12)

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:” (Col 2:6)

SAVING FAITH – ITS VITAL INGREDIENTS

KNOWING WITH MIND.

Believing involves knowing with the mind. We must know enough about a person to trust him with our lives. We need to know the Minimum contents of the Gospel. We need to know our sin, His saving death and His lordship. The apostle Paul gives the gospel here in very brief form. We need to know it with our mind; it is essential for our faith.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of



due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.”
(1 Cor 15:1-15)

Again we need to know this with our mind. We need this mental understanding.

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Rom 10:8-13)

We also need to know that He is alive. I Cor 15:4 and 1 Cor 15:17.

Faith is not vague admiration for Jesus. It is not mysticism but involves believing and receiving as He is offered to us in the Gospel.

Faith Receives the Truth about Jesus. There is a hearing and an understanding with our mind that is essential.

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth,



the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (Eph 1:13-14)

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom 10:17)

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;” (John 17:20)

BELIEVING INVOLVES FEELING WITH THE EMOTIONS

Faith is not a cold intellectualism but it is all of growing interest in the things of God. It brings some sense of meaning, some measure of the conviction of sin, basic gratitude to God, love for Jesus, even hurt for what has been done. **There is a rising of our faith. But at the same time it is not all mind, intellectualism and emotions!!**

BELIEVING INVOLVES ACTING WITH THE WILL

Believing ‘IN’ is the most frequent New Testament way of speaking of faith.

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

Bercov says, “Believing IN speaks of an absolute transference of trust from our self to Another in complete surrender.” There is an act of our will involved in complete surrender. We transfer our will and we are given to do His will. There is a transference involved.



FAITH IS COMMITMENT

Many people say that they believe in Jesus, but Jesus did not always commit Himself to men. People often use the word commit for believing. But Jesus did not entrust Himself to such men. Faith is not mere assent to Jesus but a surrender to Him and His truth. The people in Jesus' presence said that they believed in Him but they did not make a commitment to Him and they did not believe in what He was doing or surrender to Him and His truth was not in them.

"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:24-25).

"As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:30-32)

Jesus said that it was not enough to approve what He was saying but there needs to be a surrender to what they were hearing. There is a will involved and a commitment.

FAITH IMPLIES OBEDIENCE

There is obedience to the faith that is imperative. Faith is expressed in obedience.

"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:" (Rom 1:5)

"But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting



God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:"
(Rom 16:26)

A WILLINGNESS TO BE TOLD WHAT TO DO

A man with faith is one who is open to instruction.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)

They heard about Jesus and there was an immediate willingness to be told what to do.

"And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."
(Acts 9:6)

Faith implies obedience to what you are told to do. **There are many believers who say that they do not want to be told what to do.** A man of faith will be open to instruction. He is humble to receive instruction and correction

SAVING FAITH IS SEEN BY ACTION

Our faith cannot stand alone—without obedience and action. Faith is ‘active’ not passive.

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."
(James 2:17)

FAITH INVOLVES THE WHOLE PERSON

Faith involves the spirit, soul and body – in other words the whole person of man. It involves the complete man.



THE BLESSINGS OF SAVING FAITH

These are the results of believing in God.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom 5:1-2)

We Have A Good Conscience Toward God.

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:” (1 Tim 1:5)

We Have Access to God Through Our Faith.

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom 5:2)

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)” (Heb 10:19-23)

“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (Eph 2:18)

“In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” (Eph 3:12)

Hope Of Sharing In The Ultimate Glory



“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom 5:2)

“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom 8:30)

Joy And Patience Even In Trials

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;” (Rom 5:3)

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” (1 Pet 1:5-9)

In all these portions we see the blessings and results of saving faith.

IMPLICATIONS OF SAVING FAITH

§ **Faith becomes our life principle for the just shall live by faith.** Trust the Lord and believe in what He has spoken. Many times we doubt whatever the Holy Spirit has spoken. We have unbelief.

§ **Faith varies in degrees as we progress.** There is a degree of faith. A doubting man is a man of little faith. There is



a measure of faith to each believer. There is a progression from little faith to more faith.

“And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matt 14:31)

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” (Rom 12:3)

§ **Our faith can increase.** Let this be our prayer as it was the apostles’ prayer.

“And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.” (Luke 17:5)

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;” (II Th 1:3)

§ **Faith brings its own measure of assurance.**

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb 11:1)

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb 10:22)



THE NEW LIFE

THERE are two fragments of New Testament Scripture that sum up what happens when we become Christians.

“Ye must be born anew” or “Ye must be born from above”.
(John 3:7)

“Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation.”
(II Cor 5:17)

ANEW ALIVENESS

Becoming a Christian in the New Testament sense is not a matter of joining some society or institution, even though it may go by the name of ‘church’ but it is by way of being born anew, becoming a new creation, which means we become a different species from what we were before.

There is a new aliveness in us when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. This other life is a wonderful basic experience of the Christian. We are made alive from the dead! We become alive! There is an impartation of what was



never there before—a new life, belonging to a new creation, which is a new order which is a heavenly order. For this is birth “from above”. Something happens in you which is as radical as being born all over again in another realm.

When Jesus said, “You MUST ...” it is not just a command, it is a statement of a fundamental and inescapable fact—that you can never know God in a real way until something has happened to you that is absolutely constitutional. You have got to have a new life, which is God’s own life to enable you to understand and know Him.

A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD

This new life immediately introduces a new consciousness of God, a sense of God’s presence. God becomes a living reality. He is no longer remote, far off, and indefinite. Now He becomes very dear, very real, very wonderful. We know God in a new way and have a new sense of His awareness.

A NEW AWARENESS OF THE MEANING OF LIFE

We find that we have a new sense of destiny and of this life that provides an explanation to our own life. We begin to realize that now we are here!

A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE AND VOCATION

It is not only that there is new meaning in our being alive, but that a purpose has come in with this new life, a sense of vocation. We are called for something. We may not understand all of it but we realize deep within that there is a new sense of direction and purpose to our lives.



A truly born-again child of God spontaneously, instinctively, begins to talk to other people about it. We can test our Christian life by that. We must talk about it; we must let others know. We feel we are called for some business on hand. It all springs from a new life in us.

A NEW SET OF RELATIONSHIPS, INTERESTS AND DESIRES

This is what happens to every believer. Others will not be able to understand this. Others have their relationships, their interests, their desires and they just despise you for not doing what they do and going where they go. They think that we have missed the way, that we have lost everything that is worth having. But we know quite well that it is just the other way around. We do not despise them, but we pity them and are sorry for them.

There is a new ‘company’—a new relationship, a new fellowship, a new set of desires and interests. When some disciples were let off after being arrested, brought before the religious authorities and threatened, they instinctively returned to their own company for fellowship (Acts 4:23). Such is the new life. It is satisfied only in the company of other saints. No one can understand or appreciate it, but the Christian knows.

A NEW CONSTITUTION AND CAPACITY

Further, we acquire a new constitution inwardly. We receive a new desire to do things in a spiritual way. Further we receive a capacity to do things which is different from and additional to, the normal human capacity. There is a new understanding of things by the Spirit. Even a person who has not had any advantage academically, educationally, or in any other sphere, in other words, a very ordinary person, finds that there is a new understanding and intelligence that they did not have before.



They acquire a spiritual insight that others who have had a higher education and greater opportunities miss.

This wonderful constitution and new capacities grow and develop as we move forward spiritually. We find that we have new abilities of understanding, of enduring, of overcoming sins and of working—something that comes from His grace.

A NEW HOPE

This is characteristic of the new life in Christ. A new Christian is not one who is distinguished by despair, hopelessness, by a sense of final frustration and disappointment. Deep down we realize that there is something wonderful ahead and beyond. This is what has kept many Christians to face difficulties, sufferings and opposition. It is not because the Christian has any better natural caliber than others, but they are gripped with an inward conviction that this is not the end. So often the Christians are the weak ones as counted by men, but there is a going on which comes from the God of Hope.

A NEW CONSCIENCE

The true born-again Christian receives a Person that takes up residence in his inner being. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit, who has all the wisdom and knowledge of God. We learn, day by day, to walk in fellowship with the indwelling Holy Spirit. If God is resident within us then we shall not be dictated by natural things. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Life (Rom 8:2). He constantly renews our conscience and our mind turning them to the Lord instead of to the things of man and the self.



RENOUNCING THE PAST

THE OCCULT

OCCULT literally means, the ‘hidden things’, things which are covered over, things which are mysterious, concealed, or hidden. To be involved in the occult is attempting to go beyond the 5 senses for gaining knowledge and understanding. Deut.29:29 says *“the secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”*

WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS

“You shall not permit a sorceress to live” (Exodus 22:18). This was the Old Testament means of eliminating a practice and manifestation of the enemy, Satan.

“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist



or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 18:10-13).

“And I will come near you for judgement; and I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and the fatherless, and against those who turn away an alien- because they do not fear Me,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:5).

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21).

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year to the Lord” (Luke 4:18,19).

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

If we have even been involved in occult practices we need to bring them into the light of God’s forgiveness. Because of the additional spiritual and supernatural principles involved, we can experience a considerable release when we put this area right. The contrary will apply if we persist or do not put things right.



REALM OF THE SUPERNATURAL

There are two sources of supernatural power or knowledge.

- a) God
- b) The Devil

The only way to God is through His Son Jesus

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)

This infers that any other way in which we have approached God has been erroneous. And seeking such knowledge or power (e.g. healing, fortune telling etc.) is abomination. The biggest danger is that many occult practices are Christianized for acceptance, the names are changed so one does not know immediately what they are engaged in. They can then practice unknowingly what is forbidden

CONSEQUENCES

Occult practices promise to give an experience of extra power. This is what attracts people into this activity. Yet once they gain this power, they become subject to it, prisoners to the one thing that they thought would help set them free. Occult practices can be passed on to the 3rd and 4th generation in families, by seeking out the occult arts and knowledge, or power; we are refusing the true god and are indirectly replacing him with worship and allegiance to another god.

Many can be suffering today through demonic oppression and control because of their parents, grand parents, or great grand parents involvement in the occult. If as a Christian we



are aware of someone in our family that was involved in this practice, we should pray a prayer of renunciation to break the control or oppression passed on in the generations. This in no way is a promotion for generational curses. It is a way to make someone aware of a spiritual influence that can oppress them and plague them hindering their walk with the lord.

Spirits cannot just enter or, take control of a person. Occult practices almost always require a meditative, or passive state. By doing this we are allowing them control, emptying ourselves, neutralizing our mind is the easiest way to allow another to have control.

If we have called upon demonic sources for aid - no matter how inadvertently, we can place ourselves in bondage to:

§ Sickness

§ Fear

§ Oppression etc.

This is because we have violated the “hedge” .

“Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.” (Job 1:10)

God places around us to protect us from the supernatural. In doing so we place a gate or access back through that hedge for whoever we have called upon. For example in consulting palmists or horoscopes or Ouija boards we can give an access into our lives to a spirit of divination.

In other words, if we have violated this hedge by an act of



our will, we heed to repair it by another act of our will.

It is not enough to get others to pray for us. We need by an act of deliberate choice, to renounce any such past actions personally.

Renounce the god's of our fathers

"And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. (2 Chr 29:5-6)

You cannot and should no longer want to take those gods with you. (Otherwise they have access to your life by route of your permissive will and right!)

Confess our sin

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn 1:9)

OCCULT PRACTICES

All occult practices should be avoided like the plague. See what God thinks of them.

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an



abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.”
(Deut 18:10-13)

SOME PRACTICES THAT USE DEMONIC SOURCE

Some common occult ‘practices’ that many unwittingly engage in

Fortune telling
Reading cards
Tea leaves
Tarot cards
Palm reading
Horoscopes
Reading your palms
Hypnosis
Yoga
Spiritualism
Reincarnate studies
Ouija boards
Planchette
Crystal ball

There are other occult ‘games’ such as

Extra-Sensory Perception (ESP)
Telepathy
Kalala
Dungeons and Dragons
Consultation of mediums
Levitation

There are spiritist ‘healing’ such as



Seances
Spirit guide healing
Use of the pendulum
Magic Science
Metaphysical healings
Trances
Holistic Health
Reiki Rebirthing
Transpersonal counseling
Metaphysical counseling
Shiatsu

Is there in your possession occult 'literature' on

Astrology
Dream interpretations
Metaphysics
Religious cults
Self realization

Have you tried to locate persons or objects by psychic means, clairvoyance Psychosomatic powers, divination ego, Water divining. Have you tried table tipping, levitation, or spirit writing?

Have you at any time worn Charmer - any formula or action supposing to have magic power using trinket or a piece of jewelry worn on the body; talisman, crystals, occult symbols. Has your handwriting been analyzed? All these practices seek divination or protection through non-natural powers which means going into the supernatural or more simply calling on false Gods.

Have you experienced with drugs, sought psychedelic experiences, transcendental meditation, astral projection, 'Spirit Travel'?



While this list may not be exhaustive, it gives a brief outline of such practices, which even many Christians indulge in. Pray therefore that the Holy Spirit will bring to mind any other relevant matters. Remember that you won't need lists to watch out for in avoiding the occult in the future. The Spirit of God within you will warn you, you are off limits, if unsure, seek the pastors/ elder's help.

ACTION

If we have indulged in any of it previously, they should be

§ Renounced SPECIFICALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY.

§ Sought forgiveness of God SPECIFICALLY

It is good to

- ◆ Make a list of things involved.
- ◆ Pray with another who can oversee your list to ensure nothing is missing.
- ◆ In praying, first ask God's forgiveness.
- ◆ Then specifically renounce each item. For example: "Lord Jesus, I'm sorry that I've been involved in occult practices, and I ask your forgiveness for playing with, reading horoscopes ... etc. I turn away from those things and renounce them from my life. Satan, I therefore renounce your practices from my life and I renounce reading horoscopes etc."
- ◆ It is then wise to ask the person praying with you, to pray for you.



Part Two

Water Baptism

Holy Spirit Baptism

Gifts of the Holy Spirit



seven

WATER BAPTISM

INTRODUCTION

LOT of controversy surrounds the matter of water baptism. The reason for this is that we have a watered-down gospel. The popularity of a ‘faith’ gospel wherein all that one has to do is believe-believe-believe, has slaughtered the truth of God’s Word! There has been more preaching and teaching on faith in the last century than all the previous twenty centuries! People glibly quote Eph 2:8 & 9, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith...not of works...*” They claim that if we are saved by works, then we are not saved by faith at all. All that one is required to do in this life is have faith in Jesus Christ. While many feel comfortable and cozy under this (so called) gospel, there are some who are truly hungry. They are crying, ‘What shall we do’ (as they did on the day of Pentecost). To such ones the Bible says even today, ‘repent and be baptized’.

Jesus Christ must be the example to every person who has received salvation through Him. Jesus is our new Master and He is our Example. In chapter 3 of the gospel of Matthew, we



read about John the Baptist who was recognized to be a great prophet. Daily people thronged the banks of river Jordan to hear his preaching. They came from far away places to hear his message of repentance. People would be convicted of their sins and would willingly step into waters of river Jordan for baptism. Confessing their sins and repenting, John would immerse them in the waters for baptism.

One day, Jesus arrived from Galilee and went to John, to be baptized by him. John knew who He was by the Spirit and said, “*I have need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?*” (Matthew 3:13 & 14). Jesus had no need to be baptized for there was no sin in Him, but it was the Father’s will for the Son to be baptized by John. Jesus said unto John “*Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.*” Then John consented. (Matt 3:15) Jesus said to John let US both obey the Father. He did not say “John, YOU need to obey the Father”, but said, ‘we both need to obey the Father’! If there was one man upon the face of the earth who could avoid baptism, it was Jesus Christ, but He obeyed the Father’s will. Thus He became an example to every believer. We need to learn from the example of our Saviour and Lord. It is a strong foundation of obedience in one’s spiritual life.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

Baptism is a response to the gospel that we have received through hearing the Word. It is a further spiritual step after our repentance and saving faith. **It is a response to all that God has done for us in the Lord Jesus Christ.** We obey His Word which says that we need to repent and be baptized.

Every believer is commanded by the Word to be baptized in



water. There is a clear command to ‘be baptized’ and believers are left with no other option. It is an act of our wills and a resolve to obey the Word of God come what may. We take a step to enter the waters of baptism as a mark of obedience, surrender and commitment to God’s Word.

As we had mentioned in the introduction to this book, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their journeying to their destiny is a picture of our salvation. The Apostle Paul used this example to exhort and correct the New Testament saints in his day. When the children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt, they had to pass through the Red Sea. All of them, without exception, had to enter the Red Sea on the way to their destination. There was no question of evading that call of God to cross over Red Sea. **It was part of the journey (but not the end of their journey), that God had planned for His people. The Red sea was a ‘type’ of the believer’s water baptism.**

In the Tabernacle of Moses, there was a brazen altar (see the diagram in chapter one) in the outer court, on the way to the Holy Place. Every priest had to wash himself in the waters there. They had to go through an elaborate procedure of washings that point to baptism. It was essential for the priest to wash himself before he moved on to minister to God.

In the New Testament, it clearly declares that we are priests unto God. *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:”* (1 Pet 2:9) Hence this step of water baptism is an essential experience before we can minister to the Most High God.



Baptism is a foundational, elementary principle. **Baptism in water is not the last step for a believer, it is not the end of spiritual experiences in the life of a believer, but it is the mark of a definite beginning.** It is the start of a life that is given to Christ. It is not a final experience but an initial one.

Baptism is not a ‘symbol’ of being saved. Baptism is done for “fulfilling all the righteousness of the Father”. We must repent and experience the born again life before we are baptized.

“Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he? And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.” (Acts 10:43-48)

In the New Testament we are baptized into one body (the body of Christ). This can only happen if we are saved. So if you are saved then you are baptized into the body of Christ.

*“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit **are we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.” (1 Cor 12:12-14)*



Water Baptism is connected with sanctification (the crucifixion of the old nature). The command is to

§ Repent,

§ Be baptized, and

§ Receive the Holy Spirit.

We are born again prior to water baptism, but water baptism is connected with sanctification not justification.

Baptism is not a sign of maturity but a step towards progression and growth. It is an elementary step in a believer's life. Simon the sorcerer was baptized in water by Philip, but he still tried to bribe and use unjust means to receive the gift of God. The Corinthian believers were baptized yet they were carnal and they had divisions and strife in their midst. Paul says *“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;”* (1 Cor 3:1-3)

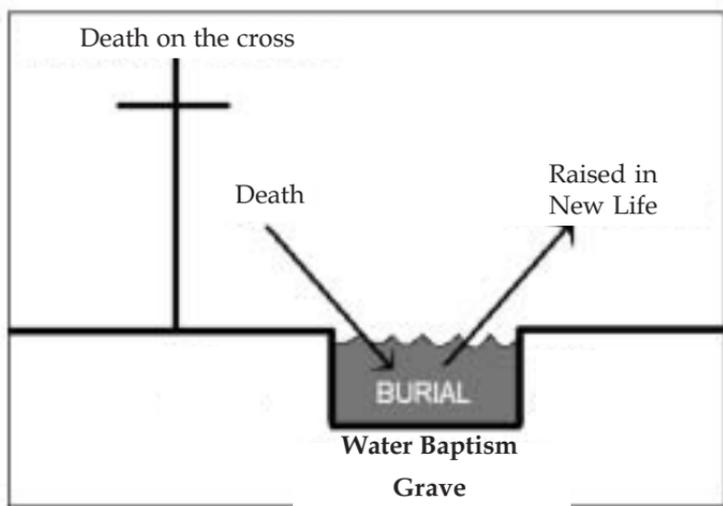
Baptism is a picture of a transformation which also takes place within the believer. The act of going under the water and rising up again demonstrates what has happened to the believer inwardly.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:” (Rom 6:3-5)



"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." (Col 2:12)

The word baptism is derived from a Greek word 'baptizo' (bap-tid'-zo) and it means to immerse, submerge; to make overwhelmed (i.e. fully wet). In water baptism, a believer is totally immersed in the water. Can you see the connection between baptism and the death and resurrection of Jesus? The water is a picture of the grave. As the believer is raised out of the water something is buried. What is it? It is our old man, the sinful nature or the self crucified. When Jesus died on the cross, our old nature which Satan used to rule was crucified with Jesus. The old nature which died has to be buried. Water baptism is the funeral service of your natural man. Therefore, when one comes out of water he is a new man, a Christian, clothed with a new nature, the very life of Jesus within him.



Water baptism is also a resurrection to new life. This is a tremendous work of the cross.



It is important to see that Christ's work is pictured in every aspect of water baptism.

§ Christ died and therefore I have died in Him (Rom 6:6, 7).

§ Christ was buried and I am buried in Him (Rom 6:3, 4).

§ Christ was raised and I am raised with Him to have new life (Rom 6:4, 5).

§ Christ ascended and I ascend in Him (Eph 2:6 & Col 3:1).

It is important to note that God is committed to do a work in you when you obey the Lord in the waters of baptism, in obedience to His word which we read in Romans chapter 6 verses 3 to 6. I wish to quote the example Naaman the centurion in this connection. He was a leper. (II Kings 5:1-15) 2 Kings 5:10 tells us that when Naaman arrived at the house of Elisha, the prophet sent a messenger to him saying "...*Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.*" Verse 11 reads, "*But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.* Naaman on hearing this strange command was very angry in his heart and decided to return back to his home. He reasoned in his heart how can I be healed by water. He thought the man of God will keep his hands and pray for his healing. Water cannot wash away leprosy. There were many lepers all over and if the waters of Jordan could heal them, they all would have so easily washed not seven times but seven hundred times! However, his servants persuaded him to go to Jordan and wash as the prophet has said. He did it seven times and the seventh time his leprosy had gone and was healed. Now the question is what healed this man? Was it water? No. Water cannot. Then what was it? It was faith and obedience to the word



that brought healing. I find a tremendous principle here. **If we obey God's word in faith, God will fulfill what he has spoken.** This is true in baptism and also in other matters on which He speaks to us. So when a person enters into waters of baptism and is raised back again from the water, God does a work in his life in fulfillment to His promise in His word. Truly the past is buried and is done away with and a newness of life is brought in as the Lord has promised. This is a reality. When children of Israel went out of Egypt, Pharaoh and his armies could follow them only till Red Sea. The Red Sea became the place where these forces were destroyed. This is very significant for every believer. Certain things of the past may stick to you until you step into baptism. However, after baptism those habits, behaviors, relationships, fears etc., will no more pursue you. Their power is destroyed in baptism!



The man of God Spurgeon comments on his own baptism in river Lark like this. "I felt as if heavens and earth and hell might gaze upon me for I was not ashamed there and then to own myself as a follower of the Lamb. My timidity was washed away, it floated down the river into the sea and must have been devoured by the fishes, for I never felt anything of the binding sins. Baptism loosed my tongue and from then it had never been quite. I lost a thousand fears in the river Lark and found that in keeping His commandments there is a great reward."

Apostle Paul says in Romans 6:2 "*You must consider your-self dead to sin and live to God In Christ Jesus*". Satan will still come with subtle temptations, but we can now tell him that the old life that he once ruled has died, and that he has no authority over our new life.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

In the days of Lord Jesus Christ, John the Baptist baptized those who had repented. But after Jesus rose again, baptism took a fresh, new meaning. We shall see this in the succeeding paragraphs.

“And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance.”... “But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them...” “Jesus was nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death and God raised Him up again putting an end to the agony of death.”... “Now when they heard this they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, Repent “and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:1,14,37,38, 23 & 24.)

Therefore, the answer is that *only* a REPENTED person or a believer in Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior is qualified to be baptized.

We read about the change of life of the Ethiopian eunuch. The Ethiopian asked Philip, *“What prevents me from being baptized?”* And Philip said, *“If you believe with all your heart you may.”* And he answered and said, *“I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.”* (Acts 8:35-37)

We see from these verses that those who have repented and put their faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized.



The Bible shows us that an infant cannot be baptized. An infant cannot repent and believe: and therefore does not qualify for baptism. There are those who argue that in the book of Acts, it mentions that the whole household was baptized. The answer is that if the children in their families were old enough to repent and believe, they must have been baptized. However, they would not be baptized as infants. (For example, at the time of election, if one would say that his whole family voted for one party, no one would think that the infants in the family voted for they are not eligible). Similarly, only those who are old enough to independently repent and believe are to be baptized. Only such ones are eligible for baptism.

ELIGIBILITY FOR BAPTISM

Only believers are baptized in the true New Testament sense. The essential qualification for baptism is that we must have a genuine experience of repentance and new birth.

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12)

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41)

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matt 28:19-20)

Those who gladly received the Word and believe in Jesus are baptized. Only those who want to become disciples of the Lord are baptized.



“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:16)

Only believers are baptized and baptism is limited to them. Being un-baptized will not damn you, but un-belief and willful rejection will.

In New Testament times, un-believers were never baptized; only born-again believers were baptized. Only believers are baptized and all believers should be baptized.

WHY SHOULD BELIEVERS TAKE BAPTISM?

When Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptized, John tried to prevent him saying, “I have need to be baptized of thee, and ‘how do you come to me?’” But Jesus answering said unto him, ‘*Permit it*’ at this time, *for in this way it is fitting for us to’ fulfill all righteousness.*” Then he permitted Him. **Born again people have to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness of God.**

Although Jesus had no sin that He should repent and be baptized, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness of God.

Firstly, the one who believes in Jesus should take baptism to fulfill all righteousness of God. If Jesus had to do it how much more do you and I need to do so! “*And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him*”. (Luke 7:29-30)

Secondly, the people who obeyed in baptism were **justified with God**. There were also many **who rejected the counsel**



of God by abstaining from baptism. This shows that to be baptized is to be justified with God and to disobey is to reject the counsel of God in life. **Every born again believer will have to be baptized to be justified with God.**

Baptism is a once-in-a-life time event. It is not an on-going process such as feeding the poor or clothing the homeless or offering sacrifices to be counted as works. Such works cannot save us.

“...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.” (Col 2:12 NIV)

Baptism is a manifestation of life. It is not man who is at work in baptism, but God. Baptism is a ‘work of righteousness’. Jesus told John the Baptist, *“Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” (Matt 3:15 NIV)*

THE CONDITION BEFORE GOD IMPLIED IN BAPTISM

“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:” (1 Pet 3:21)

‘Good conscience towards God’ i.e. baptism is related to the whole experience of a sinner being saved by God through the atoning work of Christ. It focuses on the appeal made to God for a good conscience.

BAPTISM IS AN ACT OF FAITH AND NOT A WORK

Although baptism is something we must do, it is an **ACT OF FAITH** and not a work. It must be noted that **the**



one at work is God when we are baptized and not us.

HOW SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

It is clear from the picture that the Apostle Paul paints for us in Romans 6 that a person must be baptized by immersion. Accordingly, baptism can be by no other method, but by full immersion in water. Baptism by sprinkling is never seen in the scripture. It is more a religious tradition adopted by the intelligent men in the past. It is mere logic and not the true teaching of the Scripture. The sprinkling method of baptism does not bring out the significance of death, burial and resurrection according to Romans 6. You cannot bury any one just with a spade of mud. It is the same with baptism which is a spiritual burial. You cannot be baptized with a cup of water.

“And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.” (John 3:23)



“And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.” (Mark 1:5)

From the above verses it is so clear that all the people were immersed in water. Immersion requires that one has to go down into water.

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (Acts 8:36)

SHOULD A PERSON BE RE-BAPTIZED?

The scripture clearly instructs us that when some people were baptized and their baptism was proved to be wrong they were baptized again. We read this incident in the book of Acts

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy



Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” (Acts 19: 1-6)

The apostle Paul met these disciples in Ephesus and during their conversation he found that their baptism was of John. He then said to them, “... *John baptized with the baptism of repentance, continually telling the people that they should believe in the One Who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus [having a conviction full of joyful trust that He is Christ, the Messiah, and being obedient to Him]. On hearing this they were baptized [again, this time] in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Amplified New Testament)*. These people were so God hungry that they were willing to obey the Lord. They did not argue saying they were baptized once and why should they be baptized again. No. They were those who had a heart to follow. So the apostle Paul baptized them again.

There are many who need to be baptized again since their baptism is not right in the light of the Scripture. Many people who are from denominations which practice immersion baptism are generally baptized without repentance. I have met many of them personally. They include leaders and saints. They have been baptized as per their doctrine but they have never repented nor have they been born again. They were taken through a few classes on baptism and they were baptized. Their lives were never changed and they continued in their past behavior and life style. That foundation is not proper and it is totally wrong. If the apostle Paul was alive today, he would ask “then what was your baptism?”. These people would answer and say, “It was our traditional baptism!” If Paul was alive today, he would have baptized them again, if they were open.

According to the clear teaching of the Word, only a repented person could be and should be baptized. You cannot first be



baptized and then repent and be born again whenever you want. No. That goes against the counsel of God. In other words, you cannot put the cart before the horse. A man of God once said, "I was once sprinkled, then I was immersed and finally I was baptized." He was open to the counsel of God and loved the Lord Jesus Christ rather than submitting himself to man's traditions.

IN BAPTISM YOU ARE
BROUGHT UNDER THE NAME OF JESUS

In baptism, we confess our relationship to Jesus Christ the Lord. When a woman is married, she is brought under the name of her husband. His name is called over her own name. In baptism the name of the Lord Jesus is called over you and thus you are brought under His name!

In baptism we are placed under the very name of Jesus. We are branded, stamped with the Lord's name (the opposite of the sign of the beast). We are His! Our confession in the waters of baptism is, "No more of this world ~~for me~~, I am crucified to this world and this world is crucified to me".

There are many contentious matters concerning being baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture says,

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. (Acts 10:48)

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" (Matt 28:19)



There is no apparent contradiction between these two verses as some make them out to be. Some say the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost should be called over the person who is being baptized, others claim that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ should be called over them. Let me explain this. Please be open to accept this truth.

Were the apostles confused? When the Apostles baptized the believers in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and when the Lord Jesus said, be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost they were referring to the same thing. **Father is not a name, it refers to an office that one occupies. Son is not a name but it refers to an office that one occupies so is Holy Spirit.** For example in the natural if we tell someone, **my father sent me, the person would surely ask, what is the name of your father?** Father is not a name. To be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost means to be baptized in the name of the **Lord Jesus Christ:**

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
(2 Tim 2:19)

To be baptized in His name means to bring into the service an ownership of someone. The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is called over the person being baptized thus showing the claims of Jesus has upon his life as Lord, with the stress on authority and making disciples for Him.

“ And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16). “Calling on”, signifies the surrender of ourselves. The one baptized ‘calls upon’ the name of Jesus for salvation as a confession of Him as the Lord and as an act of surrender to His authority and love.



CONSEQUENCES REVEALED IN BAPTISM

“Faith baptism” saves us from this perverse generation. Peter exhorted the people saying “ *save yourself from this untoward generation.*” (Acts 2:40) It denotes a separation from the world, it’s values and life-styles and committing oneself to the life and truth of the Kingdom of God.

“Faith baptism” marks our entry into the community of faith which is the church of Jesus Christ. The Scripture says “ *then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand*”. (Acts 2:41). You are truly added to the local and universal church only after you are baptized after repentance.

“Faith baptism” commits us to the authority teaching and fellowship and life style of the Body of Christ. “*And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship and breaking of Bread and prayer*” (Acts 2:42)

“Faith baptism” in normal New Testament circumstances is clearly linked to the receiving of the Holy Spirit Baptism.

WHEN SHOULD BELIEVERS BE BAPTIZED ?

Based on the following verses recorded in the Bible, a believer has to obey the commandment as soon as possible.

§ **At Once** : The new Ethiopian believer was on a journey and desired to stop and be baptized *at once* as seen in Acts 8: 36. It was an urgent request.



§ **Same Hour:** “*And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*” (Acts 16:33). This Philipian believed, was saved and obeyed the command to be baptized the same hour as he was saved.

§ **Same Day:** “*So then, those who had received his word were baptized and there were added that day about three thousand souls:*” (Acts 2: 41)

§ **Third Day:** “*And he was three days without sight and neither ate nor drink. . . and he arose and was baptized*” (Acts 9: 9). Apostle Paul was baptized after three days.

The early church obeyed Jesus by baptizing believers as soon as possible.

If you have really accepted Jesus as Saviour, baptism is for you. Jesus Himself said in Mark 16:16, “*He that believeth and is baptised will be saved.*”

God’s word says, “*And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins calling on His name*” (Acts 22: 16). If you are convicted about this act of baptism please pray right now.

“Father, I realize that in Christ I have died to sin and to my natural life. I am thankful that Christ was also baptized by immersion in the waters of Jordan though He was without sin and iniquity. He said to John “... it is proper for us to do this”. Jesus was the only one who could avoid baptism but He said it is proper for Him and John to obey Your counsel. His example convinces me to enter the waters and to make a commitment to be baptized.”



BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRITINTRODUCTION

THERE has been a great deal of discussion in religious circles regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some groups see it as an experience only for the early disciples as recorded in the book of Acts. Others regard it as an essential experience for current believers for the purpose of ministry and service. These two groups are wrong in their approach. This has been one of the most controversial subjects in the spiritual world.

SEVERAL SCRIPTURAL TERMS FOR HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

In the Bible, several expressions or terminologies are used to denote the supernatural experience of early believers with the Holy Spirit. Terms such as ‘being baptized in the Spirit’, ‘being filled with the Spirit’, ‘receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit’, ‘the anointing of the Spirit, and ‘falling upon’, were used in the Scripture to speak of their experience of the Holy



Spirit. But all these terms speak of one specific experience in the Holy Spirit.

The word 'baptize' comes from the Greek word '*baptizo*', which means 'to make fully wet, overwhelm, and cover wholly'. It is used to suggest that the Holy Spirit completely overwhelms a person with His presence. The word 'fill' comes from the Greek word '*pletho*' which means 'to fill, imbue, influence, supply, accomplish, furnish'. It is used to suggest how the Holy Spirit influences and empowers a person by His presence. The suggestion of these two terms is that the baptism (or infilling) of the Holy Spirit is an overwhelming, consuming experience whereby the Holy Spirit consumes the believer with spiritual power and energy that is available no other way.

SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNTS OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The main source of evidence of the baptism of the Spirit comes from the Acts of the Apostles.

Words of John the Baptist to his disciples

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:" (Matt 3:11)

Mentioned by Jesus when He showed Himself to the disciples

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts 1:5)

The Day of Pentecost. Exactly fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, the promises made concerning the coming of the Spirit were fulfilled. This was the commencement of an entirely new work of the Spirit as



foretold by the prophets.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:1-4)

Peter’s words on the Day of Pentecost after the experience of a mighty rushing wind and flames of fire.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38)

Peter and John in Samaria.

“Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:15-17)

The house of Cornelius (a Gentile) where the whole household was baptized.

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (Acts 10:44-48)



Peter's account to people in Jerusalem of what happened at Caesarea in the house of Cornelius.

"God had blessed the Gentiles with the gift of the Spirit in exactly the same way that He had blessed the believers at Pentecost. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." (Acts 11:15-16)

A clear account of Paul's ministry in Ephesus where he found some disciples of John the Baptist.

"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. (Acts 19:5-6)

DIFFERENCE OF VIEWS AMONG EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS

§ **Traditional Evangelical Teaching:** Their teaching holds that regeneration and baptism in the Spirit happen at the same time or perhaps two sides of the same experience. According to this view, the Holy Spirit is fully and automatically given at the time of conversion.

§ **Second Blessing Teaching:** This teaching links infilling of the Spirit with holiness as experienced subsequent to regeneration so that usually the two experiences are distinct in nature and normally this is observed by the Wesley's groups and mainline Pentecostalism.

§ **Balanced Viewpoint:** The general consensus is that every born again believer has the Spirit within him (Romans 8:9). But not every believer has the infilling of the Holy Spirit, so that at some point after conversion many receive by



faith a further definite conscious experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus, regeneration and baptism in the Spirit are seen as distinct phases of the Spirit's work which ought not and need not be separated by much time—but they are not automatically given altogether.

The charismatic viewpoint is preferable for the following reasons:

- § It has valid New Testament basis.
- § It explains current experiences.
- § It produces New Testament results for the individual believer and for the Church.

The Biblical basis of this view is as follows:

§ Acts 10:37,38; John 1:33,34, shows that Jesus himself though born of the Holy Spirit did not begin His public ministry as the Son of God until He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power. Can we as members of His Body do without similar empowering? This power is just what Jesus told His disciples to expect – that is to receive it before they go out to witness.

§ Disciples who were believers before Pentecost had to wait to receive this power. Various terms are used to express this experience such as, RECEIVE (Acts 8:15), FALLING (Acts 8:16), POURED OUT (Acts 10:45).

§ The believers in Samaria, though baptized in the water had to wait for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which they received when the Apostles laid hands on them. They received the Holy Spirit with the evident features.

§ On the road to Damascus the Apostle Paul met with



the risen Christ. Later on he was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17; Acts 13:9; I Cor 14:18).

§ In the house of Cornelius they believed the gospel, they received the baptism of the Spirit and then they were baptized in water (Acts 10:11,44).

§ The Apostle Paul noticed that something was lacking in the lives of believers of Ephesus. Paul first of all laid a proper foundation of baptism and then laid hands on them and prayed that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT EXPERIENCE AFTER CONVERSION

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an additional experience beyond our spiritual conversion and is available only to those who have surrendered their lives to Christ. In other words, **we could say that “we get the Holy Spirit” when we are born again, but “the Holy Spirit gets us” when He baptizes us with the Holy Spirit.** At this point in our salvation experience we have totally surrendered all our desires, future and bodies to the will of God.

The advise of Paul is at Romans 12:1-2, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a distinct and separate experience from the new birth as we turn total control of our life over to God. When one receives this experience one will



definitely know that it is from the Spirit and all doubts will disappear.

“But now they believed Philip’s message that Jesus was the Messiah, and his words concerning the Kingdom of God; and many men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself believed and was baptized and began following Philip wherever he went, and was amazed by the miracles he did. When the apostles back in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent down Peter and John. As soon as they arrived, they began praying for these new Christians to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come upon any of them. For they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:12-17 TLB)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a spiritual experience that overwhelms the believer with renewed spiritual power and vision. It is a one time experience as the Holy Spirit is permitted total access to our life and it is a continuing experience as we allow the Holy Spirit to be the director of our daily lives.

“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them. “No,” they replied, “we don’t know what you mean. What is the Holy Spirit?” “Then what beliefs did you acknowledge at your baptism?” he asked. And they replied, “What John the Baptist taught”. Then Paul pointed out to them that John’s baptism was to demonstrate a desire to turn from sin to God and that those receiving his baptism must then go on to believe in Jesus, the one John said would come later. As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then, when Paul laid his hands upon their heads, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other languages and prophesied.” (Acts 19:2-6 TLB)



The baptism of the Holy Spirit is primarily for the purpose of testimony and service unto God.

“But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect, to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, about my death and resurrection.” (Acts 1:8 TLB)

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

§ Jesus

“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,” (Luke 4:1)

§ Jesus’ disciples

“And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in languages they didn’t know, for the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.” (Acts 2:4 TLB)

§ Peter

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,” (Acts 4:8)

§ Stephen

“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily upward into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at God’s right hand.” (Acts 7:55 TLB)

§ Paul

“Then Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, glared angrily at the sorcerer and said, “You son of the devil, full of every sort of trickery and villainy, enemy of all that is good, will you never end your opposition to the Lord?” (Acts 13:0-10 TLB)



§ Gentile Converts

“Then the Jewish leaders stirred up both the godly women and the civic leaders of the city and incited a mob against Paul and Barnabas, and ran them out of town. But they shook off the dust of their feet against the town and went on to the city of Iconium. And their converts were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 13:50-52 TLB)

The question is, “Do we present day believers need the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the same overwhelming power that was needed in the early church?” The answer is a resounding YES when we look around at the condition of our present world.

Evil abounds everywhere. Ungodliness tramples human lives and is destroying the moral fiber. The professing Christian church is a mere organization divided over theological interpretations.

Spiritual power has been replaced in the church by humanism, planning and production. Committees replace true plurality of leadership. Miracles of healing and deliverance are being promoted by “healing evangelists” who distort the reality of pure faith. Externalism and emotionalism have replaced the true power of God.

Yes, the need for a renewed and true infilling of God’s Spirit in the lives of today’s believers is urgent...if there is any hope of winning the lost souls in these final moments of human history.

The Bible identifies the reasons why we need this baptism of the Spirit in our current day. The book of Revelation describes



this era in which we currently live by the prophetic warning to the ‘Laodicean’ church ...which is actually the prophecy to the ‘Laodicean church age’ in which we currently live. It reveals our current condition and warns us.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Revelation 3:14-22)

THE NEED FOR THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is urgently needed today that we again obey the true commands and will of God...

“Don’t act thoughtlessly, but try to find out and do whatever the Lord wants you to. Don’t drink too much wine, for many evils lie along that path; be filled instead with the Holy Spirit



and controlled by him.” (Ephesians 5:17-18 TLB)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is urgently needed today so that we believers have power over all sin in a world gone crazy with sin.

“I advise you to obey only the Holy Spirit’s instructions. He will tell you where to go and what to do, and then you won’t always be doing the wrong things your evil nature wants you to. For we naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has his way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures. When you are guided by the Holy Spirit, you need no longer force yourself to obey Jewish laws. But when you follow your own wrong inclinations, your lives will produce these evil results: impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, idolatry, spiritism (that is, encouraging the activity of demons), hatred and fighting, jealousy and anger, constant effort to get the best for yourself, complaints and criticisms, the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group – and there will be wrong doctrine, envy, murder, drunkenness, wild parties, and all that sort of thing. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; and here there is no conflict with Jewish laws. Those who belong to Christ have nailed their natural evil desires to his cross and crucified them there. If we are living now by the Holy Spirit’s power, let us follow the Holy Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” (Galatians 5:16-25 TLB)



The baptism of the Holy Spirit is urgently needed today to give us power and credibility for Christian service.

“But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect, to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, about my death and resurrection.”
(Acts 1:8 TLB)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is urgently needed today that we may regain the joy of our salvation to share it with a mistrusting and fearful world...

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14)

“On the last day, the climax of the holidays, Jesus shouted to the crowds, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. For the Scriptures declare that rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in me. (He was speaking of the Holy Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him; but the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet returned to his glory in heaven.)” (John 7:37-39 TLB)

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Question

What is the need for the baptism of the Spirit for we have already received the Holy Spirit when we accepted the Lord Jesus into our lives?



Answer

The believers in Samaria were baptised in water, **yet the Apostles felt it needful for them to be baptised by the Holy Spirit** and they sent Peter and John to lay hands on them that they may receive the Holy Spirit.

Question

Are the gifts of the Holy Spirit more important than the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

Answer

The bearing of fruit takes time. As the plant grows it bears fruit. Just as a sapling cannot bear fruit so also new born one in God's household has no 'fruit' to show. **He has the potential for bearing fruit but it will be the result of an inward work of the Holy Spirit in him over a period of time.** Gifts can be received instantaneously but it is not so with 'fruit'. It is quite possible that a person who exercises many spiritual gifts has very little in terms of spiritual fruit in his life. **Gifts are for power, but fruit is the sign of holiness.** The believers in Corinthians manifested lots of gifts but they were 'babes in Christ'! Gifts are primarily for the edifying and building up of the Body of Christ.

Today's believers are well versed with foundational truths. They know the Lord as the Saviour, Baptizer, Healer, and King; they know of many minutiae concerning the Lord's Second Coming, but they fail to manifest any signs of maturity. The teachers and leaders feed the flock with milk and toss up many by-products of this milk to feed the flock! How very tragic!

A man continuing in sin with spiritual gifts will ultimately



end up being used by the evil one for the Kingdom of Darkness.

IS IT NECESSARY TO HAVE THE EVIDENCE OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES?

Some quote I Corinthians 13:8-10 to substantiate the claim that ‘tongues have ceased’, “...*whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*” The word “perfect” in the Scripture had never been used to denote the Word of God (Literal Bible). The argument by the fundamentalists is that which is perfect is the written Word of God. So they claim that when the literal Bible is come that which is in part is done away. **A word study will reveal to you that the word “perfect” denotes growing into maturity.**

Some others say that ‘tongues’ are not for all believers and quote, “*do all speak in tongues?*” (I Corinthians 12:30). It is necessary to know the background of the chapter. The whole chapter deals with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are given “*to every man to profit withall*” (vs 7), “*dividing to every man severally as he will*” (vs 11). So a gift is given for the common good and the profit of the Body and not for the individual.

Among the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit there is one gift called “*diverse kinds of tongues*”. Whether the terms is ‘diverse kinds of tongues’ or speaking in tongues, it means a language spoken by supernatural power and not by natural learning. Its purpose is to edify the Body when used with interpretation and not the individual. This gift is not given to all but to those the Holy Spirit chooses. This is the reason Paul asks, “*Do all*



“speak in tongues?”, meaning, ‘Do all speak in diverse kinds of tongues to edify the church?’ The answer is, no.

However, I Corinthians 14:2-4 points out that “...*he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh... not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. edifieth himself;*”

The apostle Paul says emphatically here that **the purpose of tongues is to edify the individual**. Is he contradicting his own statement? No. This speaking in tongues has a different purpose than speaking in ‘diverse kinds of tongues’, which is for the edifying of the Body.. This gift every individual can receive when baptized in the Holy Spirit to build one self in the Lord. When we speak in tongues, though the words may not be understood by our human intellect, we build ourselves up spiritually. This is what the Scripture says “for no man understandeth him”. So speaking in tongues has two different purposes. **Firstly, it is to edify the individual**. This gift is received when one is filled in the Holy Spirit. He is able to use it for worship and prayer. It opens a totally new realm to him. **Secondly, ‘tongues’ are used with interpretation for the edification of the church**. This only a selected few will receive as the Spirit gives it.

The sad thing is that many in the Pentecostal and Charismatic realm are confused about this matter of ‘tongues’. They believe in these experiences but they have no understanding of the word. So they are confused when others



confront them with questions. Many do not know to rightly divide the word. There is so much confusion in that realm. This foundation is not laid properly. Many keep themselves away and have many questions because of what they see in this realm! We read in the Old Testament that the High Priest was to replenish the oil in the lamp and clean the wicks that stood in the Holy Place. The lamp was never to go dry so that there was a perpetual light and clarity. However, today in the Pentecostal and Charismatic realm there is confusion and people fear to identify with this because there is lack of oil in the lamps and the flame is dying and the wick are not cleaned thus producing a lot of smoke instead of light! So less of light and so much of smoke! How true that is if you are open in your heart!

SPEAKING IN TONGUES EVIDENCE OF HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

There are Scriptures that shows very clearly that whenever people were baptized in the Holy Spirit they spoke in tongues.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Act 2:1-4)

There were many signs on the day of Pentecost because God had fulfilled many things on that day. That day was more than just the day of baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many scriptures were fulfilled on that day. After that day, in every



place where there was baptism of the Holy Spirit only ‘tongues’ continued to be the sign.

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (Act 10:44-47)

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” (Act 19:1-6)

It is worth noting that these saints were filled in the Spirit and they began to speak in tongues and prophesied. **They did not prophesy and speak in tongues but spoke in tongues and prophesied.** So that is the order. You speak in tongues before you use the gift of prophecy.

The Scripture says “by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established” (Matt 18:16-17). We have in



the above references three witnesses to establish the truth that when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit they also spoke in tongues.

Further we have two other references where we can perceive that they spoke in tongues.

“Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.” (Act 8:15-20)

We read “And when Simon saw”. What did Simon see? There must have been some manifestation which Simon saw. I perceive what Simon saw was these saints speaking in tongues, in languages they have never learnt naturally.

We have the example of the Apostle Paul who said, *“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? ... I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:” (1Co 14:14-18)*



REASONS FOR THE NEED TO SPEAK IN TONGUES

§ It is an initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6). Paul thanked God for the ability to speak in tongues for this can only be given by God (1 Cor 14:2).

§ It is God's will for us, for our spiritual edification and building of oneself (I Corinthians 14:4 & 14). We do not know the actual values of being built up by the Spirit. The Spirit is gentle. He leads but does not drive. Sheep's are to be led, cattle are to be driven. The Spirit will urge but never drive. He never condemns, but always convicts. Speaking in tongues is a source of personal edification.

§ It is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, who helps us to commune with God. "*Deep calleth unto deep*" (Psa 42:7). Speaking in tongues helps us to be conscious of God, the Holy Spirit within us.

§ It eliminates the possibility of the self entering into prayer (Romans 8:26). We do not always know what to pray for, but the Spirit is able to help us. It is also a means of cleansing and release.

§ It helps to learn and trust God more fully (Jude 20). Praying in the Spirit stimulates faith. It enables us to develop the life in the Spirit which is a walk by faith.

§ Keeps us free from the influence and contamination of the ungodly and the profane. We can speak to ourselves and to God wherever we may be in our daily life. It is a source of rest and refreshing (Isa 28:11, 12).

§ It is a means of producing the mind of Christ in us. It provides ways for things to be prayed for.



§ It is an opportunity to give thanks and bless the Lord in a way that is much better than we can do with our understanding. It breaks through our human limitations.

§ Yielding our tongue to the Holy Spirit is a step towards fully yielding all members of our body to God. If you can yield your tongue you can yield any member of your physical body to the Lord.

Saints, why do you want to opt for something apart from what the Scripture clearly teaches us as the evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In all reality and in strict terms speaking in tongues and interpretation are the only New Testament gifts. All other gifts out of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit have been in operation in the Old Testament. Satan, therefore, fights and does his best to keep New Testament believers from the true New Testament gifts and experiences!! What a move of the evil one and how many are deceived by this enemy of our soul! Saints, be open and give yourself to the Holy Spirit and let Him give you this experience. This shall be a strong foundation of Christ experiencing Him as baptizer in your life



THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

EVERY Christian has received God's gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, every Christian has spiritual "power" and should be exercising that power. Remember that Jesus said that when Holy Spirit came, believers would have power.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

What is the power Jesus was speaking of? It is the power to hear from God, to speak in tongues, prophesy, do signs, miracles, and wonders, and much more. In short, we can bring into evidence, into manifestation, the **gift of Holy Spirit** inside us. The gift of Holy Spirit, the divine nature that is sealed in each Christian cannot be detected by the five senses. No one can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch it. However, holy spirit inside can be manifested, brought forth into evidence, in the nine ways set forth in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

God's plan is to equip us so that we can perform the ministry to which He has called us. Through the gifts we can



demonstrate the reality of God to the world and minister to one another in building up the Body of Christ.

To the Apostle Paul it was virtually important that he told the Corinthians, *‘now concerning the spiritual gifts...’*. The same exhortation is vital to the church today, for many misunderstanding and misuse governs the spiritual gifts today.

Some vehemently oppose spiritual gifts, saying that it was only for the early church and not for the present times. They quote, *“For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”* (I Co 13:10). They imply that the ‘perfect’ talks of the time when the Word of God as a written form will come. The Weymouth Bible translation makes it very clear, that the word ‘perfect’ talks of the ‘maturing of the saints’ *“For our knowledge is imperfect, and so is our prophesying; but when the perfect state of things is come, all that is imperfect will be brought to an end.”* (1Co 13:9-10 WNT)

Some others say, gifts are God’s anointing on ‘natural talents’. It is very important to realize that when the Bible says *“manifestation of the spirit”* it means exactly that—these are evidences of Holy Spirit, not natural abilities that God has given to the person. They are the presence of Holy Spirit being made visible. We make this point because some people treat these manifestations as if they were talents that some people have, with no specific connection to the gift of Holy Spirit they received. It is true that God does give different people talents. Some people sing well; some people are very athletic; some are very intelligent; some people are great artists, etc. These are all God-given talents, but they are not manifestations of Holy Spirit. **These are all God-given talents, but they are not**



manifestations or gifts of the Holy Spirit. A natural gift and ‘spiritual’ gift are not the same. Gifts are supernatural ability and not natural ability!

*“Now to each one the **manifestation** of the Spirit [spirit] is given for the common good.” (1 Co12:7)*

The word “manifestation” is a good translation of the Greek word ‘*phanerosis*’, which means “a manifestation, a making visible or observable.” A manifestation is detectable by the five senses. We experience manifestations all the time. Electric energy in a light bulb is manifested in the form of light and heat. A manifestation of the chicken pox disease is a rash with small pimple-like sores. We cannot see the virus that causes the chicken pox, but we can see the manifestation of the disease.

The multipurpose “Swiss Army” knife is a good example of the difference between a gift and a manifestation. The traditional knives have red handles, and many come with blades (big and little), screwdrivers, a can opener, an awl, scissors, a file, and a pair of tweezers. If you receive one multipurpose knife as a gift, you can use (bring into manifestation) any or all of its implements, and cut, snip, tweeze, etc. The one gift has many manifestations. Similarly, the Holy Spirit we receive as gift (Acts 2: 38) can be manifested in nine ways.

The examples of the light bulb, chicken pox, and Swiss Army knife, are intended to show the difference between a gift and a manifestation, and every example has limitations. The examples are intended to make the point that there can be one gift with many manifestations, and when a person has the gift, he has the capacity to manifest it.

The gift of Holy Spirit is not observable or detectable by



our five senses. Its presence inside the Christian becomes known when it is manifested, made obvious, in the senses world. It may be obvious only to the one with Holy Spirit, such as when God gives a message of knowledge to someone, and that message is known only by the one receiving it, but it is obvious in the senses world nonetheless.

The Bible says that to “each one” (1 Co. 12:7) is given the manifestation of the spirit. Every Christian can manifest Holy Spirit. We know that there are many Christians who have never manifested the gift of Holy Spirit in a way that they themselves recognize, and this has caused them to doubt that they can. We trust that this book presents convincing evidence

What are the manifestations or the gifts of Holy Spirit? The Bible tells us.

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom;

to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

To another faith by the same Spirit;

to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

To another the working of miracles;

to another prophecy;

to another discerning of spirits;

to another divers kinds of tongues;

to another the interpretation of tongues:

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing



to every man severally as he will.” (1Co 12:7-11)

We will study each of these manifestations separately, but before we do, we need to address some basics about the manifestations. Firstly, these verses seem to indicate that each **Christian** gets only one manifestation, something that has confused many Christians. Even though these verses use the term, “to another,” it does not mean that each person will manifest only one of the manifestations. The Holy Spirit gives to each one as He wills several gifts in which one may grow up. As we have seen somewhat already, and will see in much more detail later, **every person can manifest** all nine of the manifestations. Christ manifested all the gifts while He was on this earth. However, not everyone will manifest the spirit in the same way at any given time and place. To make sure that things in the Church are done “*decently and in order*” (1 Cor. 14:40), at any given time the Lord energizes different manifestations in different believers. Thus at a Christian meeting, one person will speak in tongues and interpret, another will prophesy, another will minister healing, etc. It is important to point out that believers need to step out on what the Lord is energizing in them. It often happens that he is working in someone to **speak in tongues and interpret, prophesy**, etc., but the person will be too timid to step forth and manifest. The Lord will do his part, we need to be sure we are doing ours.

Secondly, the Bible specifically says that the manifestation of Holy Spirit is for the “*common good*.” Some benefit is missed, or some consequence occurs when Christians do not walk with the power of the manifestations of Holy Spirit. Just imagine of having the Bible without all the supernatural manifestation—no record of Moses smiting the rock, or Joshua stopping the Jordan River, or Samson pushing down the pagan temple, or God telling Samuel to anoint Saul as king, or Elijah



calling down fire from heaven, or God telling Jonah to go to Nineveh, it would be !

The Bible would be much less exciting, and would bring much less hope and blessing, if the power of God were absent from its pages. If Ananias had not walked in the power of the manifestations, he would not have had the blessing of healing Paul (Acts 9:10-18). If Peter did not walk in the power of the manifestations, he would not have had the blessing of being the first to lead Gentiles into the new birth (Acts 10:9-46). If Paul had not walked in the power of the manifestations, Eutychus would have remained dead (Acts 20:9-12). If a Christian does not speak in tongues, he misses out on the fact that he can speak mysteries with God! (1 Cor. 14:22). **Similarly, if the manifestations are absent or misused, there are consequences.** If everyone in the congregation speaks in tongues at the same time, for example, an unbeliever may get the wrong impression (1 Cor. 14: 23).

We can group the manifestations of the spirit in the following manner:

Gift of Revelation	Gifts of Power	Gifts of Utterance
The Word of knowledge	Faith	Prophecy
The Word of wisdom	Gifts of Healing	Tongues
Discerning of spirits	Miracles	Interpretation



UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

§ **They are spiritual gifts:** “*Now concerning spiritual gifts...But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man*”(1Co 12:1, 7). The gifts display or manifest the Holy Spirit in the believer. They are not to be confused with the fruit of the Holy Spirit which shows the character of God in the lives of believer.

§ **In using gifts Jesus is exalted as the Lord:** A genuine gift will exalt the Lord Jesus and not the individual.

§ **God is the center:** There is a great unity of purpose in the Godhead in the operation of the gifts in the church.

o God the Father plans and oversees these operation

o The Lord Jesus Christ ministers to the people in their needs. He came to the earth to redeem, heal and deliver mankind

o The Holy Spirit’s task is to make Jesus ministry effective in our lives and also to bring forth those things which Jesus wants to do in the earth.

§ **Gifts operate for the Body of Christ**

“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?”



And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracle, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.”
(1Co 12:11-31)

In these verses Apostle Paul explains the operation of the Body of Christ. When the gifts are in operation then the Body functions. We have been placed in the Body that we may function as members. The gifts operate for the Body and not for the individual users.



EACH OF US SHOULD UNDERSTAND

§ **Each one has a function** in the Body of Christ, through the operation of the gifts. All are to be involved, each one expecting to operate in the gifts.

“And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” (Exo 19:3-6)

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” (1Co 12:7).

As we minister, God will minister through you.

§ **Each is important.** All are significant in the local church

§ **Each is different.** We should not expect the same function as someone else.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” (Rom 12:3)

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For the body is not one member, but many. (1Co 12:12,14)

§ **Each should accept others.** We should realize that



without others contribution we are incomplete. We can not say one of the gift is better than the rest. The best gift is the one that is most needed at any particular time. For example if a person is sick, the gift we need is healing and not prophecy, although prophecy is good.

§ **The gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit** as He desires.

“But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” (1Co 12:11)

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. (1Co 14:1).

Though we are to earnestly desire for spiritual gifts, **it is not up to us to decide which gift we or others should operate.** First we have to surrender then He will give the gift for the occasion that God might be glorified.

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (1Pe 4:10-11).

Gifts cannot be earned or merited therefore gifts are not a sign of spiritual maturity.

WHAT ARE GIFTS FOR

Gifts are tools and not toys to be experimented or played with. Gifts are to glorify God and not the vessel.

§ They supernaturally equip the church to show the power



of God. Christians are to function as Christ's Body in the earth. Jesus promised that supernatural signs would follow. We should expect it even today. This is a part of His salvation.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb 2:3-4).

God warns men not to neglect such a great salvation. So also the church is not to neglect this salvation and her responsibility to use all that God has given her to reveal that salvation.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mar 16:17-18).

Gifts are not the end but the means to God's end. Signs will follow and not that we should follow after them.

§ They establish strong foundation in our lives.

"For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;" (Rom 1:11).

The gifts are something extra to our faith, for the edification and the growth of the Body.

§ Where the gifts are in operation in the right order, the life of the believers shall be balanced and established on strong foundation.

§ They bring encouragement and vision to the church.



"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1Co 12:7).

They are not for personal benefit but for others, for the edification and encouragement of the Body of Christ.

"Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." (1Co 14:12)

"...when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." (1Co 14:26).

The gifts will lift the believer into the realm of God's thinking and bring encouragement and edification.

§ They bring deliverance and healing to the whole man. Through gifts God brings release and healings to the mind and body. The gifts can release us from fears and anxieties, it can deliver us from satanic oppression, so that,

'the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (1Th 5:23).

God does not desire us to in any bondage or sickness. These gifts were not just for the Corinthian church, Paul instructs the believers to make full use of their gifts.

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

This a supernatural gift or revelation of facts that are normally unknown or beyond the reach of the natural mind. The Holy Spirit is able to supernaturally make known to us at a particular time for a specific purpose, events that are in the



past and the present. **It the Lord providing you information, insight, and understanding about something of the past and the present.** A good example would be the Lord Jesus meeting with the woman at the well in the Gostpel of John.

“Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.” (John 4:16-19)

This is a clear operation of the gift of the word of knowledge.

THE WORD OF WISDOM

This a supernatural revelation by the Spirit of God of a tiny portion of God’s total wisdom concerning the divine purpose in the mind and will of God. It is operated only under God’s control. **This wisdom is not gained through study, experience, maturity, neither is it a substitute for studying God’s word.** It is God or the Lord Jesus Christ **providing to you direction or wise counsel or divine understanding of the future.** God gave Joseph a message of wisdom, and Joseph told Pharaoh to store up twenty percent of the harvest during the plenteous years for the upcoming famine years (Gen. 41:33-36). When God gives a person direction, and tells him what to do, then it is “a message of wisdom.” Any message that points to the future it falls into the category of the word of wisdom.

It is important to realize and keep in mind that a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom are manifestations of Holy Spirit, and are not part of the natural human mind. **They are not superior knowledge, insight, awareness, or wisdom, which**



comes from the ability of the mind. Many unsaved people have great knowledge and wisdom, but these are not manifestations of Holy Spirit. Neither is it giving knowledge or wise advice to someone else, for many unsaved people give wise counsel to others.

A message of knowledge and a message of wisdom are God “speaking” to us to guide and help us. It is inconceivable that He would not do that for each and every Christian. Surely He would not give guidance to one Christian and not to another. Every Christian can, and needs to, manifest Holy Spirit in these two ways to live a rich and successful Christian life. No doubt most Christians have heard from God via the manifestations without even realizing it. God gives a message of knowledge or wisdom in such a clear and powerful way that it cannot be missed, because usually God speaks in a “gentle whisper” or “a still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12-NIV, KJV).

An example of the Lord giving a very clear and powerful message of knowledge and wisdom was when the Lord wanted Peter to go to the Gentiles and present the Christian message to them. The Lord gave Peter a vision and audible revelation (Acts 10:11-13). **However, in our experience, the whisper of God can be so gentle, so quiet, that often we cannot distinguish it from our own thoughts.** This is especially true in these modern times when there is probably music or television in the background, and we are so busy and distracted that we are not really paying attention to Him. The Lord “provides” the information or direction, but sometimes we do not recognize it for what it is. **Many times it is only after the fact that we recognize that the “thought” we had was actually a revelation from the Lord.**

In the above examples the Lord gave the revelation at just



the right time, and the effect of the believer acting on the revelation he received was that people were helped and blessed. This is a good example of how the manifestations work for the “common good” (1 Co. 12:7). It is often when there is a tangible blessing in the Body of Christ that people recognize that the Lord is at work in those Christians who walk by the power of Holy Spirit.

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

This is God or the Lord Jesus Christ revealing to you information about the presence or non-presence of spirits (including both Holy Spirit or demons), and some times including the identity of demons present, whether or not you may cast them out, and providing the power to do it. It gives us the ability to judge, whether people or situations are motivated by satanic, human or divine spirit. This is not the natural human judgement of people and circumstances based on what we are taught at home and our culture. Neither is this our Christian judgement of good and evil which becomes more and more sensitive as we grow in Christian life through fellowship and study of God’s word (Heb5:13,14). There is the discerning of spirits through the evil powers, which is called ‘spiritism’. This is strictly forbidden in the Word of God. We have dealt with this matter in the chapter on ‘renouncing the past’.

The manifestation of discerning of spirits is necessary if men and women of God are going to deal effectively with the spiritual realities of this fallen world. There are many “spirits” in this world, including angels and the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, because of the spiritual battle that rages around all of us, the most important aspect of discerning of spirits is



dealing with the demonic forces of this world. *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”* (Ephesians 6:12), *“Our Adversary, the Devil, walks about as a roaring lion, seeking people to devour”* (1 Pet. 5:8). God has not left us helpless in that situation, but has empowered us to deal with him. The manifestation of discerning of spirits is more than just recognizing them, it also involves entering into battle against them and casting them out. Recognizing demons, protecting the believers, and casting them out is all part of “discerning of spirits.”

By use of this gift alone can the church confidently remain free from deception. This gift is not fault finding or suspicion, neither is it thought reading or psychoanalysis. It is not discerning of people or behaviour, but it is discerning of spirits.

The Lord Jesus discerned the spirit of Peter when He turned, and said unto Peter, *“Get thee behind me, Satan”*. (Matt 16:23). Other examples where this gift was employed is found in Acts 8:9-24; Luke 9:51-56;

THE GIFT OF FAITH

This is **not human faith that is based on experience of the five senses. Neither is it the same as ‘the saving faith’ which is exercised to be saved.** ‘Saving faith’ is a gift of God, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. “ (Rom 10:17 KJVR). This faith grows, we receive baptism by water, baptism of the Holy Spirit by this faith, we receive answers to our prayers, receive healing in our body, meet financial need through this faith. “Therefore I say unto ou,



What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. “ (Mar 11:24 KJVR). The gift of faith is not the same as the ‘fruit of faith’. **Fruit of faith is a character that grows as we walk with the Lord.** We must distinguish between faith as it is commonly used in the Bible and the “manifestation of faith.” All of us have “faith” (trust) in a large number of things. In fact, ordinary life would be impossible without trust. A person would not sit down if he did not trust the chair would hold him.. God asks us to trust that Jesus has been raised from the dead because the Bible, history, and life give plenty of evidence for it.

The gift of faith is not the same as the ‘fruit of faith’. Fruit of faith is a character that grows as we walk with the Lord. We must distinguish between faith as it is commonly used in the Bible and the “gift of faith.” All of us have “faith” (trust) in a large number of things. In fact, ordinary life would be impossible without trust. A person would not sit down if he did not trust the chair would hold him. People plan their entire evening based upon faith (trust). God asks us to trust that Jesus has been raised from the dead because the Bible, history, and life give plenty of evidence for it.

In contrast to ordinary faith, the gift of faith is necessary to accomplish the special tasks that God, by revelation, asks us to do. For example, Jesus said that a person with faith could tell a mountain to be cast into the ocean and it would be done (Mark 11:23). Well, all of us have seen mountains, and we know that we do not have the human power to move them, so doing that requires the power of God. We need God to make that kind of miracle available to us by first giving us the revelation to do it. When He does, then the faith we must have in order to



get the job done is “the manifestation of faith.”

Moses brought water out of a rock by the manifestation of faith (Exod. 17:5, 6), Gideon defeated the Midianites by the manifestation of faith (Judg. 6:16), Elijah multiplied the oil and bread by the manifestation of faith (1 Kings 17:14-16), and the other great miracles of the Bible were done by the manifestation of faith. When it comes to miracles and gifts of healings, we need the gift of faith because we cannot heal the sick or do miracles by our human power. God must give us a message of knowledge and a message of wisdom, letting us know that it is His will for us to heal someone or do a miracle, and then we must have the faith to do it.

Daniel was in the lions den, he received a miracle as a result of faith. God gave him special faith. He did not do anything, his faith was passive rather than active, but he received a miracle.

GIFTS OF HEALINGS AND WORKING OF MIRACLES

We cover these two manifestations together because they are similar in many ways. The “*gifts [plural] of healings [plural]*” is so called because God does multiple healings, and each of them is a gift, done out of His grace or mercy. Gifts of healings and working of miracles are manifestations of Holy Spirit because it takes a believer to do them by the power of God that he has been given. It is very important to realize that it is people, empowered by Holy Spirit within, who do healings and miracles. On rare occasions God heals or does a miracle without human agency, but that is not “the manifestation” of gifts of healings or miracles because the gift of Holy Spirit inside a believer was not employed.



To do a healing or miracle, several manifestations come into action. First, the person needs a message of knowledge and/or a message of wisdom to know what the situation is and what to do about it. Second, he needs the manifestation of faith to bring to pass the healing or miracle. Third, he must represent Christ on earth and, via the power of God, bring to pass the miracle as God supplies the energy for it. Notice how Peter raised Tabitha.

“Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.” (Acts 9:40)

Peter spoke the miracle into being. First, Peter prayed. Then, when he had revelation from the Lord to go ahead, he raised her from the dead by the power of God. Once Peter received the revelation to raise Tabitha, he performed the miracle. We believe that there would be more miracles and healings in Christendom today if Christians would step out in faith and do what the Lord tells them to do. Too often we are waiting for God to do what He has given us the spiritual power to do.

Some of the means of divine healing:

§ By calling the elders and anointing with oil and praying
James 5:14

§ The table of the Lord I Co. 11:27-34

§ Laying hands by those who believe. All believers have this privilege to believe God’s word and to pray for the sick.

The manifestations of gifts of healings and working of miracles are often interwoven. There are certainly miracles that



are not healings, such as when Moses parted the sea so the Israelites could escape Egypt. Also, there are healings that are not miracles, when, although the natural power of the body to heal itself is augmented by the healing power of God, the healing is not instantaneous. However, there are many miracles of healing in the Bible, such as the instantaneous healing of Bartimaeus, who was blind (Mark 10:46-52). Also, casting out a demon can be a miracle (Mark 9:39).

PROPHECY

The gift of prophecy is speaking, writing, or otherwise communicating a message from God. ‘Prophecy’ means to flow forth, it carries a thought to bubble forth like a fountain, to let drop, to lift up, to tumble, to spring forth. God or the Lord Jesus gives a message of knowledge or a message of wisdom via the Holy Spirit born inside him, and when he gives that message to someone else it is prophecy. The revelation that is spoken as prophecy can come in the moment, coming almost word by word as the speaker says them, something we call “inspirational prophecy.” It can also come as a complete revelation given to the speaker before it is spoken as prophecy, and it can come as a combination, with some revelation coming beforehand and some coming as the prophecy is spoken. In the Old Testament, when a person had Holy Spirit, he or she almost always prophesied. That is why Joel said that when Holy Spirit was poured out on all believers, they would prophesy (Joel 2:28), and why Peter, in his teaching on the Day of Pentecost, referenced Joel. “...I [God] will pour out my Spirit [spirit] on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit [spirit] in those days, and they will prophesy.” (Acts 2:17, 18).



God says His servants will prophesy, so there should be little argument about it. The gift of prophecy is to strengthen, encourage and comfort people (I Co. 14:3). It can reveal the secrets of people's hearts so that they can be closer to God (I Co. 14:24 and 25).

The scripture makes it clear that 'all' may prophecy (I Co 14:1, 31, 24); children may (Joel 2:28); even women may prophecy (I Co 11:5).

Prophecy can originate from three sources;

§ **Human spirit** – *“Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; (Eze 13:2)*

§ **Evil spirit** – *“And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the LORD said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do even so.” (2Ch 18:21)*

§ **Holy Spirit** – *“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” (Act 13:2)*

In simple words, the gift of prophecy there is no revelation; whereas the office of the a prophet there is the element of revelation.

In the Old Testament prophecy there is essentially a foretelling but prophecy in the New Testament is different. It shifts from this and prophecy has no foretelling!

Some think to prophecy means to preach. It is not so. There can be an element of prophecy in preaching. 'Preach' means to



proclaim, to announce, to cry out or to tell. The purpose of preaching is different. Word of God does not tell that men would be saved by the foolishness of prophesying but the foolishness of preaching. (I Cor 1:18-21). On the day of Pentecost, tongues arrested the onlookers to a place of hearing, but the word was essential to save them.

The office of the prophet and the gift of prophecy differ. (I Cor 14:39; 12:28; 14:31). **Prophesying does not make one a prophet. A prophet is a gift of God and in him there are other gifts in operation**, like the word of wisdom, knowledge, discerning of spirits. There is a misuse of this gift in today's Christianity and many consider those who prophesy to be prophets! This has brought in much confusion in the life of believers. Many who are called prophets today do not qualify to the office of the prophet. They only have the simple gift of prophecy. If it is used as the Word of God tells it will be a great blessing.

Some seeing the prophetic ministry in others desire to do so, hence foretells instead of forth telling! By this act he gets into even more trouble, at times even loosing what he has. It is good to stay with the simple gift of prophesying.

For many this gift is about foretelling, but we must remember that in it there is no prediction but speaking unto men for the edification, exhortation and comfort. (I Cor 14:26) The best time to exercise this gift is in worship. (Acts 13:1-4)

Many Christians do not prophesy, not because they do not have the spiritual ability. The presence of Holy Spirit inside a Christian gives him the ability to prophesy. If a Christian does not prophesy, either he has not been sufficiently instructed, or



he does not have the faith to step out on what he has been given, or he does not want to prophesy. 1 Corinthians 14:24 states that the whole church can prophesy, and 1 Corinthians 14:39 says “covet to prophesy.” There is a reason why each Christian should covet to prophesy. Bringing God’s messages to His people is not only a tremendous privilege, it is essential for the well-being of the Church. A study of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, reveals how valuable the prophets were in the spiritual wholeness of the people of Israel. Not only can every Christian prophesy, as the Scripture says, but we should want to.

DIVERSE KINDS OF TONGUES

The word ‘diverse’ is in *italics*, signifying it is not in the original. ‘Tongues’ is speaking a language of men or angels supernaturally without any natural learning. He does not understand it. It is one of the great blessings that God has given to the Christian Church, and He desires that every Christian speak in tongues. “I would like every one of you to speak in tongues... “ (1 Co 14:5a). The fact that God says He wants each Christian to speak in tongues should end the discussion about each person getting only one “gift” of Holy Spirit.

Speaking in tongues has nothing to do with linguistic ability. It has nothing to do with the mind or intellect. It is a vocal miracle! Tongues and interpretation are distinctive of this dispensation. We see all other gifts in operation in the Old Testament. Speaking in tongues is primarily a devotional gift, such as praying in the spirit, singing in the spirit, praise and worship.



INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

The interpretation of tongues is interpreting, or giving the sum and substance, in one's own language that which he has just spoken in tongues. The interpretation of tongues, like speaking in tongues itself, is given by the Lord. No one understands what he is saying in a tongue, so no one could give an interpretation of what he is saying. The interpretation comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, just as the tongue does. The manifestation of interpretation of tongues works just like speaking in tongues and prophecy do—the words come from the Lord Jesus Christ to the individual via the gift of holy spirit inside him. When a person speaks in tongues in the assembly of saints, he should interpret so that the people in the meeting may be edified.

Tongues could be an expression through the spirit towards God, such as an expression of adoration, worship, hope, faith, exalting the Lord. It is not just a message to people as in prophecy. "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified." (1 Co 14:5). The interpretation of tongues is to be done by the one who spoke in tongues, just as 1 Corinthians 14:5 says. Furthermore, because speaking in tongues is praise and prayer to God, the interpretation will also be to God. That is the big difference between prophecy and the interpretation of tongues. Prophecy is a message to the people (1 Cor. 14:3), while interpretation of tongues is to God (or the Lord Jesus Christ), but is heard by the congregation, who are then edified by it.

Every Christian can talk with the Lord and receive



revelation, every Christian can and should have faith and do some of the works of Jesus, every Christian should enter into the spiritual battle and deal with demons, every Christian should prophesy, speak in tongues, and interpret. It is by manifesting Holy Spirit that Christians can walk in the power that Jesus Christ gave to the Church. We must trust God to boldly manifest Holy Spirit in our daily lives.



Part Three

Laying on of Hands

Resurrection from the Dead

Eternal Judgement



THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

SINCE the earliest of times, the laying on of hands was recognized as a means whereby blessing was imparted to people. Its relevance carries through to Jesus' times, where we find throughout the gospels that Jesus laid His hands on the people to heal them.

The laying on of hands is one of the most basic and fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. There is a definite impartation to be received through the laying on of hands.

A distinct transformation took place in the life and ministry of Joshua the son of Nun after Moses laid his hands upon Him and gave him authority over the people of God.

“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.” (Deu 34:9)

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before



all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.” (Num 27:18-23)

There must have been a visible manifestation of power evident in the laying on of hands in the early church for even Simon the sorcerer recognized the reality of a power behind it

“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,”(Act 8:18)

Many occasions are given in the scriptures for the laying on of hands:

§ **Physical healing** : Matthew 20:34; Mark 1:41; 6:5;7:33; 8:23-25; Luke 4:40; 13:13; 20:50,51; Acts 9:10-12, 17; 28:8; James 5:11

§ **Spiritual deliverance:** Luke 4:40; 13:11-13

§ **Baptism in the Holy Spirit:** Acts 8:17,18; 19:6; 5:17

§ **The impartation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit:** I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:6



§ **Separation for ministry:** Numbers 8:10; 27:18, 20-23; Acts 6:6; 13:3

§ **Raising the dead:** Matthew 9:18

§ **Impartation of spiritual authority for leadership:** Number 27:16-23

§ **Impartation of spiritual blessing:** Mark 10:13,16; Matthew 19:13

§ **Performing of various miracles:** Acts 14:3

§ **Impartation of strength:** Daniel 10:16-19

From this basic study it can be understood that laying on of hands is not just a ceremony, but like all other doctrines it is a basic foundation. Some practical points for receiving spiritual impartation are given below:

§ In laying hands on a person we seek to impart an anointing, a gift or a blessing. Before ministering to others we must seek His face and look to His will (Acts 3:6).

§ If there is receiving from the Lord then there we should exercise our faith so that as hands are laid upon the person something will happen.

§ When laying hands on a person look for a 'word of prophecy/wisdom/knowledge'.

§ There is a great need for wisdom to be exercised in ministering to others through the laying on of hands (Numbers 27:18).

§ For ministry matters, hands should be laid upon those whom have received the Holy Spirit.



§ The Apostle Paul exhorts us to “*lay hands suddenly on no man*” (I Timothy 5:22).

§ Do not be careless or light-hearted in laying on of hands. Be careful who lays hands on you.



RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD

THE doctrine of resurrection of the dead is closely associated with all the other events at the end of the age. It is however a basic doctrine as mentioned in Hebrews 6:2, an understanding of which is necessary to move on to maturity.

WHAT IS THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD?

It is the belief that God by the power of the Holy Spirit can and will raise the dead in particular. Of course, it is believed that the resurrected Jesus Christ is the first fruit of many other.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." (1Co 15:20)

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col 1:18)



Secondly, it is the belief that at a moment of time, it is the purpose of God to raise all who had died to life again for judgment.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” (Joh 5:25)

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, “ (Joh 5:28)

The resurrection of the dead will not only be spiritual but actual. The grave will open and the dead will hear His voice. There will be a change for believers from their mortal bodies to glorified bodies.

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Phi 3:20-21)

“It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: “ (1Co 15:43)

“As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” (1Co 15:48)

A glorified body will have the same characteristics as the risen Jesus. It will be

§ recognizable

§ but it will not be limited by time, space or age

Everybody who has died will be raised, those who have known and those who have not known the Lord Jesus as their



Savior. Those who are in Christ will be raised to eternal life and will live with Jesus forever and ever. Those who have not known Him will live to eternal judgment.

WHEN WILL THE
RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD TAKE PLACE?

This will be at the end of the age.

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (1Co 15:20)

“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” (Joh 6:39-45)

This doctrine is really a glorious hope to those who are in Christ Jesus. It is a source of victory, for Jesus has conquered death. This truth releases one from the fear of death.



twelve

ETERNAL JUDGMENT

WHEN the resurrection of the dead takes place, it will be for judgment. The end of the age will be climaxed by this day and Jesus will return to the world in righteousness.

“And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.” (Psa 9:8)

WHO WILL JUDGE?

Jesus will be the judge:

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” (Mat 25:31-33)

“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.” (Joh 5:26-27)



“And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.” (Act 10:42)

“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Act 17:31)

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;” (Phi 2:10)

The saints will judge with the Lord as agents of His kingdom.

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this lie?” (1Co 6:2-3)

WHO WILL BE JUDGED?

§ Angels will be judged

§ Demons and fallen angels will be judged;

“And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Mat 8:29)

“Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1Co 6:3)

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;” (2Pe 2:4)



“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” (Jud 1:6)

§ Sinners will be judged :

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (Joh 5:28-29)

§ Saints will be judged. To those who believe it will not be a judgment of condemnation but a reckoning of what they have done in the body.

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” (1Co 3:12-15)

But to those who do not believe it will result in judgment and in eternal separation from God

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of



the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. " (Mat 25:41-46)

The results of judgment are clear from John 5:28,29 (quoted earlier) - Heaven / Hell, Blessing / Judgment, Life / death.

WHAT IS TO BE JUDGED?

§ Every act, word, deed, nature is to be judged.

§ Obedience to the revelation of God through creation, through conscience on the revelation of the Lord Jesus

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:" (Rom 1:18-20)

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee." (Mat 11:21-24)

§ Obedience to the revealed will of God



“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Mat 7:21-23)

§ All words that are spoken will be judged

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” (Mat 12:36)

§ Things that are done secretly

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” (Rom 2:16)

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.” (1Co 4:5)

§ Every deed done

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds:” (Rom 2:6)

This doctrine is not simply futuristic but has practical effects upon our lives. We live in the “now” of God’s judgment, for it is time for the judgment to begin with the House of God.

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1Pe 4:17)



THE PRINCIPLES OF JUDGMENT

§ Accountability to those in authority over us

"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." (Mat 25:19)

§ Carefulness in building on the foundation of the Lord Jesus in our lives and ministry

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1Co 3:10-15)

§ Carefulness in conversation, speech and behavior

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. " (Mat 12:36)

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;" (1Pe 1:15)

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness," (2Pe 3:11)

§ Exercising of sound judgment, sober spirit and prayer



"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." (1Pe 4:7)

§ Exercising of doing good and sharing and hospitality

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:" (Rom 2:7)

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb 13:16)

§ Developing the qualities of perseverance

"In your patience possess ye your souls." (Lk 21:19).

Paul cautioned the Corinthian believers not to place their own things on this foundation, which is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). **The Father will reject any thing other than Christ to be built on the foundation of His Son.** He will declare it as hay, stubble and wood, however good or nice it may look in the eyes of men. It may be well received, approved and even esteemed among men; it may even involve a lifetime of commitment unto the Lord, but surely, as the Scriptures say, it will go up in fire and smoke. If it is not suitable building material, if it is not something of Christ that has been wrought by the Spirit, it shall surely not be reckoned by the Father.

Dear saints, let the Lord open your eyes to behold the Foundation and the Super-Structure, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.



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