



Foundations

Essentials Of Our Faith

CORE Discipleship is a faith-based, Christian organization. Our mission is to help you make disciples of Jesus. We provide a simple and reproducible discipleship process based on Jesus' "inner circle" or "core" comprised of Peter, James, and John. We also provide discipleship training and free discipleship resources as free downloadable eBooks.

Just like you, Father God is using the many events and circumstances of life's journey to mold and shape me into the person He desires. Occasionally, I've cooperated completely. It's in those rare moments when something extraordinary takes place - Heaven touches earth, mountains are moved, a part of me is transformed.

Through His infinite patience and unfathomable love I am learning to become the man He created me to be. As I daily surrender my life to Him through His precious Holy Spirit, I see more clearly life eternal.

My hope and prayer for you are that you too will discover God's purpose and become exactly what He has planned for you all along - His son or daughter.

May God grant that we become His disciples by His grace,

Doug Morrell

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INTRODUCTION

The journey you are on is the greatest known to man - the discovery of who you are in light of who God is.

At the outset, I want to make this perfectly clear: this study will have absolutely no impact in your life unless you are willing to receive it and act on it. As equally important, this study was designed to be administered under the supervision and direction of a seasoned, mature Christian. As you will learn, the journey of faith is to be lived out alongside another more spiritually mature believer.

Foundations of Faith provides a step-by-step process of instruction designed to provide a basic overview of the essentials of our faith as presented in Hebrews 6:1-3.

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In this basic, foundational study, we will not address what some consider to be the most difficult part of the entire book. Hebrews 6:4-6 has been debated for years and Satan has used that debate to further his agenda. It has to do with Calvinism, Arminianism, and many stages in between. In short, John Calvin taught that you could not lose your salvation - that believers were “signed, sealed, and secure” in Jesus no matter what they did. James Arminius on the other hand taught that a born-again Christian could choose to walk away from Christ, thus forfeiting his/her salvation. We simply agree with the writer of Hebrews: “Though we speak thus, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things that belong to salvation. For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love which you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Hebrews 6:9-12 RSV).

Age alone does not produce maturity. It is amazing how many of us think it does. We love this thought of inevitable growth. How often we say, “Just give us time. We have only been Christians for 20 or 30 years. Perhaps we will yet grow out of our anger, envy, jealousy, and divisive spirits.” But time never brings maturity.

Immaturity can be identified by two clear marks: 1) an inability to instruct others; and 2) an inability to discern good from evil.

How do believers mature? 1) Begin with truth you already know but have not been obeying. Does God want you to stop some activity you know to be wrong? Does Scripture exhort you to change your attitude, forgive someone, reach out with help to another? No further light will be given until you begin to obey the truth you already have; 2) Review the promises of God for help to obey His word through the power of His Holy Spirit (for example Heb. 2:18; 4:14-16; 2 Tim. 2:7); 3) Claim those promises for yourself, do whatever you need to do, and count on God's grace to see you through the consequences; 4) Follow these steps whenever you become aware of areas of your life and thinking that are not in agreement with God's Word. This is the constant use which enables maturity and as a result, the supernatural ability to handle the solid food of the teaching about righteousness. Paul, in Ephesians 4:14, says, “Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”

Since understanding and practicing God's truth leads believers to such maturity, it is obvious that it is one of the most important truths of Scripture and also one which every disciple should seek diligently to grasp and practice.

We thank our Father for telling us the truth even though it may hurt, for we know that it is always to that end that we may be healed. We pray that God may grant this Holy Spirit-born reality to each life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

solid foundation of knowing and trusting Jesus Christ.

Steps for building a good spiritual foundation are presented in Luke 6:47:

“I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice.” (Luke 6:47)

These steps are by those:

1. Who come to Jesus;
2. Hear His words;
3. And puts them into practice.

All three steps are required. It is not enough to come to Jesus. You must also listen to what He has said. But coming and listening are not enough. You must also take personal action. A person can come to Jesus, hear what He has to say, but not respond:

“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Luke 6:46)

You can know the Word and still not act upon it. Jesus is not truly Lord of your life until you respond to His teachings. A good foundation is based on the Word of God. The man who came to Jesus, heard His Word, and then acted on it is called wise. This man made sure that the spiritual foundation of his life was firm. He “dug deep” removing everything between him and the Rock, Jesus Christ.

“He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.” (Luke 6:48)

God’s Word is the blueprint that tells us how to build our spiritual lives. The Bible must be accepted as the absolute authority and the process for your spiritual foundation:

“For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)

The purpose of God’s revelation is given in 2 Timothy 3:16:

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16,17)

The Bible contains instruction in the basic doctrines of Jesus. It also provides reproof and correction for failing to follow these teachings.

The incorrect foundation:

The man who built on a wrong foundation heard the Word of God but did not take personal action on what he heard. He is called a foolish man and compared to a man who built without a foundation (Luke 6:49). His house was built on sand instead of the rock (Matthew 7:27).

We build on spiritual sand when we base our lives on the traditions or religious beliefs of man. It is thinking we can make ourselves acceptable and spiritual by our good works, church attendance, or religious ceremonies.

The importance of God’s Word:

God’s Word is the bread of our spiritual lives. We are to hold fast to the Lord and eternal life:

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Timothy 4:16)

“See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us - even eternal life.” (1 John 2:24-25)

“...whoever continues in the teaching [of Christ] has both the Father and the Son.” (2 John 9)

Those who leave the Word forsake the Lord:

“Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:1-2)



“HE PREDESTINED US TO BE ADOPTED AS HIS SONS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS PLEASURE AND WILL” (EPHESIANS 1:5)

Notes: _____

UNIT TWO: REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

Key Verse:

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)

Introduction:

As we’ve discovered, Hebrews 6:1-3 lists the elementary teachings of Christ. Taken together, these form the foundation from which believers are to build their spiritual lives. These principles are called the “foundations” of the Christian faith. The first of these principles is “repentance from dead works” and here we will provide a brief introduction to this first principle.

Repentance:

Repentance has two sides - turning away from sin and turning toward God. To be truly repentant, we must do both. We can’t just say we believe and then live any way we choose (see Luke 3:7,8), and neither can we simply live a morally correct life without a personal relationship with God, because that cannot bring forgiveness from sin.

“God longs to guide us with love and wisdom rather than punishment. He offers to teach us the best way to go. Accept the counsel written in God’s Word and don’t let your stubbornness keep you from obeying God.”

Some people associate repentance with emotions, like shedding tears and feeling sorry for wrong actions and thoughts. We must understand that repentance is not an emotion. It is a decision leading to an action. Sometimes we might be emotional when we repent, but it is very possible for a person to shed a lot of tears and never truly repent.

Repentance is turning away from sin and turning toward God.

Notes: _____

Dead works:

“Dead works” are anything we do apart from God; anything we do not done in faith - anything we do that goes against a conviction leaving us “feeling” guilty or uneasy. These works may be wrong deeds or acts of self-righteousness. It is anything we do that we consciously or unconsciously “do” thinking that we have in some way “earned” God’s unmerited favor.

The Bible calls this “sin”. Our selfishness is at the heart of sin. It is doing things my way instead of doing things God’s way. The prophet Isaiah spoke of God’s chosen nation, Israel, when they strayed from Him and compared them to wandering sheep. This love of self results in man going “his own way”:

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)

Yet God would send His Son Jesus to bring us back into the fold - the promised Messiah who has come and died for our sins. Why did Jesus die for your sins?

“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.” (2 Corinthians 5:15)

Initially, when you repent from these dead works of selfishness it means you acknowledge the existence of the one true God, realize you are a sinner, ask forgiveness of your sin, and accept God’s plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. Subsequently, just as you began your Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit, so you should grow by the Spirit’s power. We must realize that we grow spiritually because of God’s work in us by His Spirit, not by following special rules.

The origin of sin:

Satan was once an angel called Lucifer. He was in love with himself, his own beauty, and fell into pride and self-centeredness. His rebellion is seen in five “I will” statements he made. Satan tempted Eve and succeeded in getting her to sin. Ever since then, he’s been busy getting people to sin. He even tempted Jesus (Matthew 4:11). Because of his pride, self-will, and rebellion (sin), Lucifer was cast out of Heaven to earth:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8)

“Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.” (Luke 8:12)

2. You cannot please God without faith:

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

“Faith is a condition of the heart, not the mind. Faith is not mere mental agreement.”

There are varying degrees of faith:

The Bible reveals that there are various levels of faith:

- Those who were faithless (Matthew 17:17);
- Those with little faith (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; Luke 12:28);
- Those with great faith (Matthew 8:10; 15:28; Luke 7:9).

The Bible teaches that each person has a certain amount of faith which is given as a gift of God:

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” (Romans 12:3)

Every person, saved or unsaved, has some degree of faith because it is through faith we are saved:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8)

Notes: _____

The quality of our faith can be increased:

The Bible tells us how to increase the quality of our faith:

“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:17)

Even a small amount of faith is very powerful:

“He replied, “Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20)

Nothing is impossible if you have even a small amount of faith; faith can move any obstacle.

Faith and works:

As said, we become Christians through God’s unmerited grace, not as the result of any effort, ability, intelligent choice, or act of service on our part. However, out of gratitude for this free gift, we should seek to help and serve others with kindness, love, and gentleness. Nothing we could ever do nor any work we could ever complete can help us obtain salvation. However, because of the great sacrifice made by God, our salvation should result in acts of service. We are saved to serve Christ and build up His Church. The Bible teaches:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8,9)

In Whom we believe comes first - what we do afterwards validates the sincerity of our faith. The apostle James wrote:

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

Defensive faith: _____

3. Give two main reasons why faith toward God is necessary. _____

4. How can you increase the quality of your faith toward God? _____

5. Write out and commit the Key Verse to memory: _____

6. What is the difference between faith and works? _____

7. What is meant by "faith toward God"? _____

8. Which is harder: to walk by sight or to walk by faith in God's Word? Why?

9. Have you ever considered that God gave you the faith to be saved? Have you thanked Him for that? _____

“Scripture often indicates that God leads His children through suffering before they reach His glory. Suffering is part of the normal Christian life.”

Notes: _____

Prayer:

Holy Father God, by faith I come to You and thank You that I am saved by faith and by faith alone. I thank You for changing my heart. I acknowledge Your life by working out what You're working in. In Jesus' name I pray. AMEN.

adventure, and though filled with the greatest adventure and joy known to man, it is also a narrow path and is sometimes very difficult.

Christian Water Baptism

To be baptized in water as a Christian was not a suggestion by Jesus; it was His commandment:



“ON HEARING THIS, THEY WERE BAPTIZED INTO THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.” (ACTS 19:5)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (Matthew 28:19)

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:16)

“So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...” (Acts 10:48)

We are saved by faith alone without works of any kind, but a faith that saves will always produce obedience to God. Therefore, we must understand and practice Christian water baptism.

Baptism as a symbol

When you wash dirty hands, the results are immediately visible. But repentance happens inside with a cleansing that isn't seen right away. So John the Baptist used a symbolic action that people could see - baptism. The Jews used baptism to initiate converts, so John's audience was familiar with the rite. Here, baptism was used as a sign of repentance and forgiveness. Repent means "to turn," implying a change in behavior. It is turning from sin toward God. Have you repented of sin in your life? Can others see the difference it makes in you? A changed life with new and different behavior makes your repentance real and visible.

Notes: _____

Why should I be baptized?

Because Jesus was baptized and because He commanded it:

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.” (Mth. 3:13).

John had been explaining that Jesus' baptism would be much greater than his, when suddenly Jesus came to him and asked to be baptized. John felt unqualified. He wanted Jesus to baptize him. Why did Jesus ask to be baptized? It was not for repentance for sin because Jesus never sinned. "To fulfill all righteousness" means to accomplish God's mission. Jesus saw His baptism as advancing God's work. Jesus, the perfect man, didn't need baptism for sin, but He accepted baptism in obedient service to the Father, and God showed His approval.

“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

If you want to follow Christ, you must “repent and be baptized.” To repent means to turn from sin, changing the direction of your life from selfishness and rebellion against God's laws. At the same time, you must turn to Christ, depending on Him for forgiveness, mercy, guidance, and purpose. We cannot save ourselves - only God can save us. Baptism identifies us with Christ and with the community of believers. It is a condition of discipleship and a sign of faith.

Why was Jesus baptized?

While even the greatest prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) had to confess their sinfulness and need for repentance, Jesus didn't need to admit sin - He was sinless.

Although Jesus didn't need forgiveness, He was baptized for the following reasons:

Baptism seems to mark a transition, a turning point from one state into another (Romans 6:3, 4; 5-10):

“For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10:1-4)

The cloud and the sea mentioned here refer to Israel’s escape from slavery in Egypt when God led them by a cloud and brought them safely through the Red Sea (see Exodus 14). The spiritual food and drink are the miraculous provisions God gave as they traveled through the desert (see Exodus 15; 16). From these verses, many have interpreted this to mean that baptism has to do with our being set free from slavery to sin and being enabled to go on with Jesus.

“The Holy Spirit is a personality; He is not just an impersonal force, power or influence.”

“...who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...” (1 Peter 3:20, 21)

Peter says that Noah’s salvation through water symbolized baptism, a ceremony involving water. In baptism we identify with Jesus Christ, who separates us from the lost and gives us new life. It is not the ceremony that saves us, but faith in Christ’s death and resurrection. Baptism is the symbol of the transformation that happens in the hearts of those who believe (Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12). By identifying ourselves with Christ through baptism, we can resist turning back, even under the pressure of persecution.

Notes: _____

The meaning of baptism

The Greek word for baptism is baptizo (bap-tid’-zo). It means to make whelmed (i.e. fully wet); used only in the New Testament of ceremonial ab-lution, especially of the ordinance of Christian baptism; wash; cover wholly with a fluid; to stain (as with dye): to dip.

From the above, it would seem that the intent of the scriptures is that the person is to be placed under the water when being baptized (John 3:23; Acts 8:38; Romans 6:4).

The timing of baptism

All the water baptisms recorded in the New Testament were baptisms of persons old enough to understand the gospel, to be convicted of sin, and to make a decision to follow Christ. This is easily seen by reading the contexts of the baptisms as cited above.

There are no references to infant baptism recorded in the New Testament. Also, it seems that baptism followed as soon as possible after the person had made a decision to follow Jesus (Acts 2:41; 8:36-39; 16:32,33).

Who should be baptized?

In the “Great Commission” Jesus commanded us to “go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:18). Likewise, in the Book of Mark we are to, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved; he that does not believe shall be condemned” (Mark 16:15, 16). The evidence is clear - every disciple of Jesus should be baptized.

Summary

1. Baptism means an immersion or dipping in fluid.
2. There are at least four baptisms mentioned in the New Testament:
 - a. The baptism of John.
 - b. Christian water baptism.



“DO NOT GET DRUNK ON WINE,
WHICH LEADS TO DEBAUCHERY. IN-
STEAD, BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.”
(EPHESIANS 5:18)

- c. The baptism of suffering.
 - d. The baptism in the Holy Spirit.
3. John’s baptism was distinct from Christian baptism and was not sufficient for a believer. It was a baptism of repentance to prepare the people to receive the coming Messiah.
 4. Jesus was not baptized by John because He needed to repent. He did it to set an example for us to follow.
 5. Jesus’ disciples will be called to experience the same “baptism” in suffering and death that He experienced.

LIFE APPLICATION

1. Define the word baptism: _____

2. What are the four types of baptisms mentioned in the New Testament?

3. Why was Jesus baptized? _____

4. What is the difference between water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism?

5. Why is water baptism important? _____

6. Are infants to be baptized? _____

Prayer:

Lord Jesus I stand before you and ask you to take my life this week and use me where I work, live, in my home, in my family. I know this is what you love to do, and I ask that you will grant the grace to understand how to do this, and yield myself to you to say the thing that you have taught us by your Word. Thank you for showing the way and for the new life I now live. I pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

PART TWO: HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Key Verse:

“...after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Matthew 3:11)

Introduction

John the Baptist told us that Jesus would “baptize” or dispense the inward reality of the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit upon His followers. As we continue part two of the Doctrine of Baptisms, we will review Holy Spirit “baptism”.

First, let’s review the third Person of the Trinity, who proceeds from the Father and is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son. He is the One who inspired the Scriptures, empowers God’s people, and convicts the world of “sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8).

“If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit. If you are not a Christian, you do not have the Holy Spirit.”

Who is the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit is a personality; He is not just an impersonal force, power or influence. This is seen by the following:

a) Personal pronouns are always used when speaking of Him. In other words, the pronouns “He,” “Him” or “Himself” are used and not “it.” The Holy Spirit is not a thing; He has a personality.

b) The Holy Spirit possesses attributes of personality such as wisdom and knowledge (Acts 15:28; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12). He has a “mind” or purpose (Romans 8:27). He “determines” to do things (1 Corinthians 12:11). He can be “grieved” (Ephesians 4:30). He teaches (John 14:26), and He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8). He appoints, commissions and commands (Acts 13:2; 20:28). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is said to speak (John 16:13; Acts 1:16; 13:2; Revelation 3:22). All these qualities are attributes of a personality.

Notes: _____

2. The Holy Spirit is God. He is equal with God and one with God.

a) Several triune Scriptures equate the Holy Spirit with God (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2).

b) Several Scriptures call the Holy Spirit “God”:

“...how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit... You have not lied to men but to God.” (Acts 5:3-4)

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16)

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” (2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 2:22)

c) The Holy Spirit possesses Divine attributes. The scriptures reveal the Holy Spirit as omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), and omnipotent (Genesis 1:2).

The Holy Spirit was promised:

1. In the Old Testament prophecies:

“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.” (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:16)

“For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.” (Isaiah 44:3; Zechariah 12:10; Isaiah 32:15; Ezekiel 39:29; Galatians 3:14)

2. By the Lord Jesus:

“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49)

“By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.” (John 7:39; cf. 14:15-26; 16:7-15; Acts 1:4-8)

When we receive Christ as Lord, Master and Savior, we also receive His Holy Spirit. Jesus said,

“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).

“...JUST AS YOU RECEIVED CHRIST JESUS AS LORD, CONTINUE TO WALK IN HIM.” (COLOSSIANS 2:6)

From the Book of Acts, we discover various terms used to describe people’s experience with the Holy Spirit. All these terms are the essential equivalent of Jesus’ promise that the church would “be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5; see especially the fulfillment in Acts 2:4, described by Luke as a “filling”). People were:

- “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4; 9:17);
- “they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:17);
- “the Holy Spirit fell upon (them)” (Acts 10:4);
- “the Holy Spirit had been poured out on (them)” (Acts 10:45);
- and “the Holy Spirit came upon them” (Acts 19:6).

Holy Spirit baptism is the initial, onetime experience a person has at the moment they accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. From that moment forward, we are then instructed by the Bible to be continually “filled with” the Holy Spirit so that we can be “empowered” for day-to-day life and ministry.

Notes: _____

A person must choose to be continually empowered by the Holy Spirit following conversion – though not necessary for salvation – to realize maximum potential for ministry (Ephesians 5:18 is literally, “Keep on being filled with the Spirit”). This “refilling of the Holy Spirit” is a continual process. Once a person receives the Holy Spirit at conversion, it is then important to be continuously empowered. On the Day of Pentecost 120 disciples (committed followers of Jesus) were “filled” with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). This fulfilled the promise Christ had made to them a few days earlier. He had said, “John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). This initial experience of receiving the Holy Spirit is only the beginning of a lifelong experience. God wants us to remain filled with the Spirit.

To illustrate, Christians could be compared to a brand new car. When we accept Christ, construction of our new car, including the fuel tank, is complete. We now have the potential to be useful and to affect lives. But until the car is filled with fuel and the car started, no power is realized. So it is when we are “filled with and empowered” by the Holy Spirit. We open our lives to God and the Holy Spirit pours into and through us. It is then we become most effective in God’s service.

As with the fuel tank, this power-generating experience is not intended to be a onetime occurrence. It is to be an ongoing process. When our spiritual power runs low, we need to return to the Source and let the blessed Holy Spirit provide fresh power. This happened to the early followers of Jesus. They had already been baptized in the Spirit, but later on, when persecution arose, they needed to be refueled spiritually; so they prayed to the Lord once again and “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:31).

The Christian life is a life lived on a spiritual plane. The entry point of becoming a Christian begins with conversion - being rightly related to the Lord Jesus Christ. A Christian is someone who comes to Christ in faith, accepting His sacrifice on the Cross as sufficient payment for sin (Ephesians 2:8, 9; 1 John 5:11, 12).

To live the Christian life, we must continue under the control of the Holy Spirit:

“...just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him.” (Colossians 2:6)

We discover that we become a Christian because we “receive Christ Jesus the Lord.” We become empowered and filled with the Holy Spirit as we “walk in Him.”

Please note: it is possible for a person to receive Christ, be converted, and not be controlled by the Holy Spirit. To live in the spiritual plane, we must see each moment from the spiritual viewpoint. Nothing we do is coincidental, or accidental, or by luck. God is God and He is in control whether we realize, accept, or reject this truth.

It is also important to note that if you have received Christ Jesus as your Lord, Master and Savior, you have the Holy Spirit. Don't let anyone try and convince you that you need more of the Holy Spirit. We do not need to say, “Come, Holy Spirit.” He's already present within your heart (the heart is the place where the Holy Spirit resides). The simple truth is that if you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit. If you are not a Christian, you do not have the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be “filled with the Holy Spirit?”

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)

We are commanded as Christians to “be filled with the Spirit.” A Spirit-filled believer is one who is controlled by the Holy Spirit and not by any other kind of spirit.

The Greek verb translated “be filled” is worthy of our study and will amplify our understanding. “Be filled” is:

1. In the present tense: it is something we can experience and enjoy now;
2. In the imperative mood (a command): this is not optional;
3. In the passive voice: being filled is not something a believer achieves through his or her own strength, will, or desire, but that it is done for a believer by the Holy Spirit as the believer submits to His control;
4. In the plural form: in other words, being filled is not reserved for some particular group or denomination, but is for the universal Body of Christ and for you today.

As Spirit-filled believers serve the Lord in their day-to-day, getting up, going to school or work lives, there is a tendency to become more “self-led” - relying more on our fleshly desires and responses than the Holy Spirit's presence and power. It becomes important to ask for a refueling by the Holy Spirit in order that He is given control over our lives. As said, the command in Ephesians 5:18 is literally, “Keep on being filled with the Spirit.” Herein lies the key to Spirit-filled living. The Spirit-filled life is a continuous process of receiving and giving, of being filled and sharing with others, of receiving power from God and spending it in His service.

The Holy Spirit marks the beginning of the Christian experience:

We cannot belong to Christ without His Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9); we cannot be united to Christ without His Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17); we cannot be adopted as His children without His Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6-7); we cannot be in the body of Christ except by baptism in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16).

The Holy Spirit is the power of our new lives

He begins a lifelong process of change as we become more like Christ (Galatians 3:3; Philippians 1:6). When we receive Christ by faith, we begin an immediate personal relationship with God. The Holy Spirit works in us to help us become like Christ.

To be empowered by the Holy Spirit is a gift for every believer for all generations and an experience for you today that will dynamically increase your

“The Holy Spirit is God. He is one with God and equal with God.”

Notes: _____

Baptism of the Holy Spirit:

Another reference of laying-on of hands took place when believers received the Holy Spirit. There are five examples recorded in the book of Acts of how people received the Holy Spirit. The first example is that of the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). The other examples are of the new converts in Samaria in Acts 8:14-20; Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:17; Cornelius and his family in Acts 10:44-46; and the disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-6.

In three of these five examples those seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit were ministered to by other believers through the laying-on of hands:

- Acts 8:18 states that “through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given.”
- In Damascus, Ananias laid his hands on Saul that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.
- In Ephesus, the disciples to whom Paul ministered received the Holy Spirit after Paul laid his hands on them.

Laying-on of hands is not the only way people receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the upper room in Jerusalem and in the house of Cornelius people received the experience without anyone laying hands on them.

Imparting spiritual gifts:

Another purpose for the laying-on of hands was to impart spiritual gifts. Paul wrote Timothy:

“Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.” (1 Timothy 4:14)

Paul refers again to Timothy’s spiritual experience:

“For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” (2 Timothy 1:6)

Timothy’s spiritual gift had been given to him when Paul and the elders had laid their hands on him and set him apart for ministry (1 Timothy 4:14). God gives all Christians gifts to use to build up the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:4-31), and He gives special gifts to some through church leaders, who serve as God’s instruments (in Timothy’s case, it was the laying-on of hands with prophecy and is one of the means the Holy Spirit uses to reveal His will and purposes to believers).

Laying-on of hands was combined with the gift of prophecy to direct, encourage, and strengthen Timothy to fulfill his God-given ministry.

Commissioning those in ministry:

Another purpose for laying-on of hands is to commission Christian workers. “Commission” means to authorize, delegate, or send on a mission:

“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.” (Acts 13:2-4)

The Bible indicates God had already spoken privately to Paul and Barnabas about the work He wanted them to do before He spoke publicly to the church leaders. The public revelation was a confirmation of the call they already had received.

Summary:

1. The laying on of hands is one of the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith.

“There are many events which will happen in the world at this end of time. Only God knows the exact timing of these events.”

Notes: _____

UNIT SIX: RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Key Verse:

“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25,26)

Introduction

There are two remaining foundational doctrines of the Christian faith - remember, these are just the basics; every Christian should know these foundational truths plus more! The last two we'll review are the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. In the study of these two remaining doctrines, the Bible takes us by revelation beyond the present time into the future of eternity.

By the act of creation, God brought the present world into being with the order of time including the past, present, and future (see Genesis 1). Someday God will bring this present world to an end and time, as we now know it, will cease to be.

The Bible reveals that for the world as a whole, the end of time will come at a special moment ordained by God. There are many events which will happen in the world at this end of time. Only God knows the exact timing of these events.

As individuals, however, a moment awaits each of us when “time shall be no longer”. This is when we come to the end of our earthly lifetime and step from time into eternity - the final frontier. For each person, the end of physical life is the end of time and just the beginning of things to come.

There are some mysteries surrounding the end of time and eternity which the Bible does not explain. But the doctrine of the “resurrection of the dead” provides some knowledge of the end of time and eternity which follows.

Definition

The meaning of the word “resurrection” is a raising or rising up. It means to cause to rise or raise up from the dead.

The Bible confirms that Jesus is the “resurrector”, the one who will resurrect the dead:

“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies” (John 11:25)

Importance of the resurrection:

Why is the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead so important to the Christian faith?

“If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.” (1 Corinthians 15:13,14)

Believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is necessary to become a true believer:

“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9)

Paul presents the resurrection of Jesus as a part of the message of the gospel:

“Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on

“Baptism in water is an outward sign of death to the old life of sin and the spiritual resurrection of the believer in Jesus Christ.”

Notes: _____

UNIT SEVEN: ETERNAL JUDGMENT

Key Verse:

“For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; it is he who will save us.” (Isaiah 33:22)

Introduction

Eternal judgment is the last of the six basic, foundational principles of the Christian faith listed in Hebrews 6.

In the Old Testament the word “judgment” is used two ways. One refers to the statutes, testimonies, and laws of God. The other way concerns God’s judgment on men and nations. The latter meaning is how the word “judgment” is used in the New Testament. It is this meaning that we will review in this portion of our study.

Definition

The word “to judge” means to separate or make a difference between. This includes bringing to trial, examining evidence, determining guilt or innocence, and deciding the penalty for sin. Eternal judgment is the great and final judgment spoken of in the Bible which determines the eternal destiny of all souls.

The Judges

- God

“For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.” (Isaiah 33:22)

“to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,” (Hebrews 12:23)

God judges the sinful behavior of mankind. God’s real desire is not judgment but that all men come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ:

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (John 3:17)

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

“In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30,31)

- Jesus

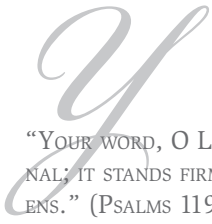
God has given Jesus authority to judge:

“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.” (John 5:22-27)

- The saints

In the final judgment true believers will help judge the world. The word “saints” in this verse means all true believers. They will help judge the “world” (the unrighteous):

“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!” (1 Corinthians 6:2,3)



“YOUR WORD, O LORD, IS ETERNAL; IT STANDS FIRM IN THE HEAVENS.” (PSALMS 119:89)

Notes: _____

tain acts in different ways. The same act interpreted as wrong in one culture may be acceptable in another. For example, killing of a cow is viewed quite differently in America, where it is used for meat, than in India where cows are considered sacred by some people.

The judgment of man varies because the standards by which they judge vary. But the principles of God’s judgment do not change. God judges:

On the basis of His Word:

God’s law and the principles of judgment are fixed in His Word:

“Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.” (Psalms 119:89)

According to knowledge:

Men and nations will be judged according to the knowledge of God which was given them. Jesus said some would be judged more severely than the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Ninevah, Tyre, and Sidon. These were evil cities mentioned in the Old Testament which God judged and punished.

The reason Jesus pronounced more severe judgment on some New Testament cities was because these cities had more revelation of God. Jesus Himself had ministered in these cities and performed mighty works of healing and deliverance. Still, the people of these cities would not repent. Jesus warned:

“Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.” (Matthew 11:21-24)

“The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.” (Matthew 12:41)

A general revelation of God is given to all men through the wonders of creation:

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)

This general understanding of God given to all men through creation is the basic standard by which men will be judged. Those who receive additional revelation by hearing God’s Word will be judged by a higher standard of knowledge.

Individually:

Each person will be judged individually:

“The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him.” (Ezekiel 18:20)

Judgment determining individual eternal destiny will not be on a group basis. It will be on an individual basis.

According to truth:

Paul wrote:

“Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.” (Romans 2:2)

On the basis of personal conduct:

Each of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and will be judged according to our deeds. The Bible also calls this judgment according to “works”:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10)

“God “will give to each person according to what he has done.” (Romans 2:6)



“BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME LIKE A THIEF. THE HEAVENS WILL DISAPPEAR WITH A ROAR; THE ELEMENTS WILL BE DESTROYED BY FIRE, AND THE EARTH AND EVERYTHING IN IT WILL BE LAID BARE.” (2 PETER 3:10)

Notes: _____

“Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.” (1 Peter 1:17)

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.” (Revelation 20:12)

“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

Without partiality:

The eternal judgment will be without partiality. This means without special favor. People will not be judged on the basis of their wealth, social position, nationality, or education.

“Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.” (1 Peter 1:17)

To have respect of persons means to be influenced in judgment by some external factor of appearance, relationship, position, wealth, etc.

God’s judgment is not influenced by any of these things:

“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

According to the Law:

“All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.” (Romans 2:12)

According to righteousness:

“He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice.” (Psalm 9:8)

“they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.” (Psalm 96:13)

“For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31)

“But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.” (Romans 2:5)

“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:8)

According to motives and thoughts:

“Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.” (1 Corinthians 4:5)

“This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.” (Romans 2:16)

The time of judgment:

The Bible indicates there is a past, present, and future judgment:

Past judgment:

The Bible contains a history of God’s past judgment. From the time of Adam and Eve it records God’s judgment of nations and individuals.

The Bible records two special past judgments that are important to believers. These are the judgments of Satan and the world. God has already passed judgment and set the penalties for both.

-Satan and his angels:

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God passed final judgment on Satan:

“Believers will be judged for their works and rewarded accordingly.”

Notes: _____

as making a profession, as having a name to live, and that name may come to be blotted out of the roll, when it appears that it was but a name, a name to live, without spiritual life; such often lose the very name before they die, they are left of God to blot out their own names by their gross and open wickedness. But the names of those that overcome shall never be blotted out.”

“He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.” (Revelation 3:5)

The destiny of the righteous:

The righteous are destined to eternal life in the presence of God. The presence of God is called Heaven. In the Bible it is described by several names:

The Father’s House:

Jesus described it as “His Father’s house”, a place of home, rest, and fellowship:

“In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.” (John 14:2)

A heavenly country:

The Bible compares Heaven to a country to which we are traveling just as Israel traveled to the Promised Land:

“Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.” (Hebrews 11:16)

A city:

Heaven is compared to a city:

“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.” (Revelation 21:2)

The Bible reveals some wonderful things about Heaven. It is a place of:

Holiness:

“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Revelation 21:27)

Joy:

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Revelation 21:2)

Beauty:

“The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.” (Revelation 21:18)

Service:

“Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.” (Revelation 7:15)

Reigning with Christ:

Jesus promised...

“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Revelation 3:21)

Worship:

The Bible records that those in Heaven worship God:

“The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.” (Revelation 5:14)

Light and glory:

“The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.” (Revelation 21:23)

“God does not send people to Hell. Man chooses to go there by rejecting Jesus Christ and living a sinful life.”

Notes: _____

Proverbs 16:18; 18:12; 1 Timothy 3:6; Luke 10:18; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 John 3:8; John 8:44; 2 Thess. 2:7; Genesis 3:1-6; James 3:15; Matthew 25:41; Jeremiah 4:23-26).



“IT WAS JUST BEFORE THE PASSOVER FEAST. JESUS KNEW THAT THE TIME HAD COME FOR HIM TO LEAVE THIS WORLD AND GO TO THE FATHER. HAVING LOVED HIS OWN WHO WERE IN THE WORLD, HE NOW SHOWED THEM THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS LOVE.” (JOHN 13:1)

Evil Spirits:

Evil spirits are Satan’s servants (see 1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 6:12; 1:21; 3:10; Rom. 8:38; Titus 3:1; Col. 2:5, 10; Dan. 10:13, 20-21; Luke 22:53; Col. 1:13).

Fallen Angels:

(a partial listing of Scripture - Ps. 78:49; Rev. 12:7-9; Rom. 8:38; Rev. 12:4; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 9:14-15; 2 Cor. 11:14-15; 1 Cor. 6:3; Mth. 25:41).

Demon Spirits (there are 3 viewpoints):

- 1) They are angles who fell with Satan, some of which were bound while others are still loose (Ps. 78:49);
- 2) They are disembodied spirits of pre-Adamic race of beings;
- 3) They are spirits of the unnatural offspring of angels (Gen. 6:1-6), the Bible does not state their origin, it does reveal that they have real personalities and desire to express themselves through mankind; it appears that the difference between fallen angels and demons is that fallen angels do not seek to inhabit a human body; (Ps. 78:49; Gen. 6:1-6; Mark 5:1-20; Mth. 8:29; John 13:27; Mark 1:34; 16:17; Luke 9:1; 10:17; James 2:19; 1 Cor. 10:20-21; Mth. 9:33-34)

Their nature:

Totally depraved in all ways; their character can be determined by their names: devils; evil spirits; unclean spirits; dumb spirits; blind and dumb spirits; deaf and dumb spirits; foul spirits; lying spirits; spirit of infirmity; spirit of divination; seducing spirits; lunatic spirits; antichrist spirits; spirit of whoredom; spirit of the world; spirit of error; spirit of fear; perverse spirit; familiar spirit.

Notes: _____

Their Work:

To deceive, oppose, pervert, hold captive, blind, sow tares, seduce, trouble, oppress, vex, bind, possess, torment, buffet, and resist people.

Christ’s conquest of Hell:
Ultimately, there are three major views of where Christ went during those three days following His death. We must understand that the death of Christ was the conquest of Satan’s kingdom: (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-16; John 12:31, 32). Satan held the power of sin, sickness, disease and death, as well as control over his own kingdom of principalities, powers and wicked spirits of this world system. At Christ’s death, He disarmed the princes and powers of Satan, stripping Satan of the keys of death and hell. He turned what seemed to be the greatest defeat into the greatest victory. He spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, and triumphed over all in the Cross. The death of Christ was the conquest of the whole of Satan’s realm.

Three days and three nights:

Jesus expressly said that He would be in the heart of the earth for a period of three days and three nights, thus fulfilling the sign of the prophet Jonah when he was three days in the heart of the great fish (Mth. 12:39, 40; Jonah 3:3; Mark 8:31; John 2:18-21; Mth. 27:63; Mark 14:58; 15:29; Eph. 4:8-10). This period of three days relative to the death and burial of Christ was shadowed forth in Old Testament (Josh. 1:11; 2:16-22; Esther 4:16; Jonah 1:17; Numbers 10:33; Gen. 22:1-14; Ex. 3:18; 10:22; 15:26; Gen. 40:12-19).

These three days act as a bridge between Christ’s crucifixion and His resurrection.

Three Views:

His descent to Hades: this view teaches that Christ descended to hell (Hades) or Sheol (Hebrew) and preached to the spirits in prison during

the three days that His body was in the tomb.

His ascent to Heaven: this view teaches that Christ ascended to His Father and was with the Father during the three days and nights of Calvary. He took the repentant thief with Him to Paradise, which is the third heaven. His ascent and descent: the third view is between the previous two views. It teaches that Christ did go to heaven, or Paradise, and was with the Father during the three days and nights of Calvary. It also holds that Christ, at either the beginning or close of the three day period, released the spirits of the Old Testament righteous who were being held in a division of Hades into Paradise.

The primacy of the third viewpoint:

Jesus promised the repentant thief that he would be with Him in Paradise that day (Luke 23:39-43).

At His death, Jesus committed His spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46).

Before His death, Jesus clearly told the disciples that He was going “unto the Father” not Hades (John 13:1, 36; 14:1-6, 28; 16:5, 16-22; 17:11, 13). Jesus went to be with the Father.

Scriptures also say the Christ descended into the lower parts, or the lower down divisions of the earth and then led captivity captive (Eph. 4:8-10). Christ conquered Satan, sin, sickness, disease, the curse, demons and death (Judges 5:12; ob 42:10; Ps. 68:18; 126:1).

“We come nearer to God and resist temptation by submitting to God, yielding to His authority and will, committing our life to Him and His Holy Spirit control, and following Him.”

Notes: _____

How then should we live?

How should the doctrine of eternal judgment affect our lives as believers?

When writing on the subject of future judgment, the apostle Peter answered this question:

“Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.” (2 Peter 3:11-14)

Understanding of eternal judgment should result in a serious and sober mind-set toward God and His Kingdom as well as great joy, mercy, and peace. Understanding eternal judgment assists the believer in developing spiritual maturity.

The subject of Christian maturity, which Paul calls “going on to perfection”, is the final subject of our study.

Summary

1. All men, saved and lost, will be resurrected, and after their resurrection, they will face judgment.
2. Sin can be against other men, and sin can be against yourself. However, all sin is ultimately against God. God is the One who will judge man for his sin.
3. God is the moral Judge of the universe. He is a righteous Judge, and He will give to everyone his due with unvarying impartiality.
4. The principles of divine judgment are:
 - God will judge all men.
 - God’s judgment is according to truth.
 - God will judge every man’s deeds.
 - God will judge the hidden motives of the heart.
 - God will judge without partiality.
 - God will judge men according to the “light” that He made available to them.
5. There are six great “eternal” judgments of God:
 - The judgment of sin at the cross.

whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.” (Hebrews 2:10)
“and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (Hebrews 5:9)

God planned believers to be conformed (be made like) Jesus who is our example of perfection:

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” (Romans 8:29)

The standard of perfection:

The standard of perfection by which believers are measured is God’s Word. Jesus was the example of perfection and conformed perfectly to the Word because He was the visible revelation of God’s Word. God has set standards in His Word which are to govern our lives. The first standards He gave man were called the “Law” and are recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament.

“It is only through the Spirit of God that you can overcome the evil desires of the flesh and conform to God’s standards.”

Much of the history of the Old Testament records the inability of man to keep God’s laws. God knew man would not be able to keep the Law through his own efforts. But God had some specific purposes for giving the Law. One of the purposes of the Law was to show men their sinful condition. Another purpose was to show them that they could not become righteous by their own efforts:

“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.” (Romans 3:20)

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God did not leave us in this hopeless condition. Through the Law He promised the Messiah:

“I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.” (Deuteronomy 18:18,19)

In Acts 3:22-26 these same words are quoted by the apostle Peter and applied to the Lord Jesus Christ:

“For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.’ ‘Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’ When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.” (Acts 3:22-26)

In the Old Testament, various sacrifices were required by God for sin. After Jesus sacrificed His life for the sin of all mankind, the Old Testament sacrifices were no longer necessary:

“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.” (Hebrews 10:1)

“because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” (Hebrews 10:14)

The purpose of the law is summarized in these words:

“But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.” (Galatians 3:22-24)

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.” (Romans 7:15-23)

Paul wanted to live by God's standards, but he realized that by himself (in his flesh) he could not achieve this goal. There was a constant battle between his flesh and his spirit. His spirit wanted to keep God's laws (Romans 7:22). His flesh wanted to sin. He discovered that the only way he could achieve perfection was through Christ:

“But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:10-13)

It is only through the Spirit of God that you can overcome the evil desires of the flesh and conform to God's standards. When the “flesh” results in you doing those “things we would not”, God has provided a way to restore you to perfection:

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” (Romans 8:11)

The Holy Spirit is God's promise or guarantee of eternal life for those who believe in Him. The Spirit is in us now by faith, and by faith we are certain to live with Christ forever (see also Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:14):

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

You do not have to try to live this new life in your own strength. You live it through “faith in the Son of God” by the power of the Holy Spirit. Whenever you fail, you can be restored to perfection before God by confessing your sins and asking forgiveness.

As said, confession frees us to enjoy fellowship with Christ. It eases our consciences and lighten our cares. But some Christians do not understand how it works. They feel so guilty that they confess the same sins over and over; then they wonder if they might have forgotten something. Other Christians believe that God forgives them when they confess, but if they died with unconfessed sins, they would be forever lost. These Christians do not understand that God wants to forgive us. He allowed his beloved Son to die just so he could offer us pardon. When we come to Christ, he forgives all the sins we have committed or will ever commit. We don't need to confess the sins of the past all over again, and we don't need to fear that God will reject us if we don't keep our slate perfectly clean. Of course we should continue to confess our sins, but not because failure to do so will make us lose our salvation. Our relationship with Christ is secure. Instead, we should confess so that we can enjoy maximum fellowship and joy with him.

True confession also involves a commitment not to continue in sin. We wouldn't be genuinely confessing our sins to God if we planned to commit them again and just wanted temporary forgiveness. We should also pray for strength to defeat temptation the next time we face it.

If God has forgiven us for our sins because of Christ's death, why must we confess our sins? In admitting our sins and receiving Christ's cleansing, we are:

1. Agreeing with God that our sin truly is sin and that we are willing to turn from it;
2. Ensuring that we don't conceal our sins from Him and consequently from ourselves, and;
3. Recognizing our tendency to sin and relying on His power to overcome it.

When you are born again, you are just like a baby in the natural world. You have much to learn spiritually. While you are learning you make mistakes. When you make mistakes, you confess your sins.

As a believer, you fight your enemy, Satan. This is a spiritual battle which takes place in your mind and through the circumstances of life around you. On occasion, you may lose a battle to the enemy. But this does not mean he has won the war. You may temporarily

“God uses spiritual leaders in the perfection process. You should submit to the leadership of those God sets in authority in the church.”

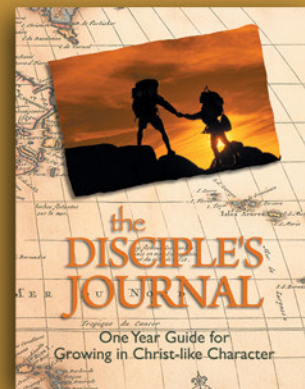
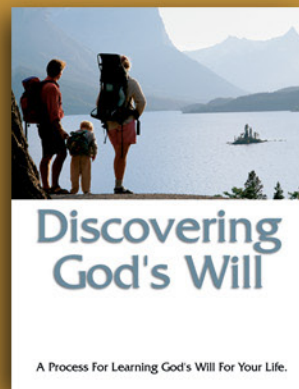
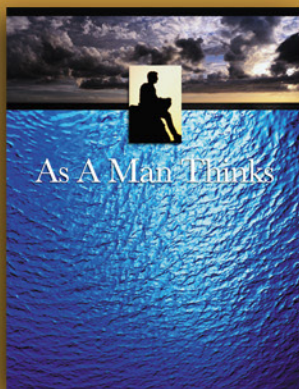
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His disciples by His grace,

Doug & Suzie Morrell
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