

The First Teachings

Some essential foundations for the maturity of the believer

Introduction and objectives

If you want to build something great in life, you need a solid and adequate foundation to build on. Without this your house WILL fall down when the storms come, and come they will. I believe that in every generation God looks all over the earth for a person and a people who have laid a solid foundation for their faith, and as He finds such foundations He will build something significant on these to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and to glorify His Name.

The question is: How solid are your faith foundations right now? Is it time to strengthen your foundations so that you can go to the next level of relationship, ministry, leadership, and fruitfulness?

Hebrews chapter 6:1-3 lists a number of essential foundations required for every believer who wants to “go on to maturity” (maturity = growing/ becoming all God Created you to be). If you want to be more than a baby Christian needing to be taught over and over again, then it is vital to get to grips with these truths so that you know them, live them, and can teach and impart them to others.

Hebrews 5:12-14 *In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

Maturity here means:

- To understand, live, and be able to teach others the first teachings (Not an infant/ Gk: “Nepios” – cannot speak).
- Being able to handle the “meat” of Gods word, not only the “milk.”
- Growing up from being a “baby” into who you are born/born again/called to be.
- Being “skilled in the word/doctrine of righteousness.”
- Being able to distinguish between “good and evil” through the life application of truth.

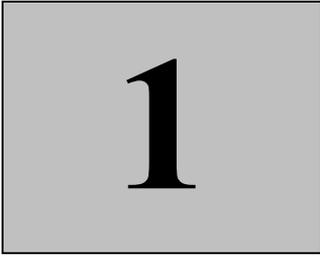
Underline the six first / foundational teachings/ in the passage below:

Hebrews 6:1-2 *Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works / acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, ² instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

Course Assignment:

Purchase a “Purple Book” (Biblical Foundations Workbook) and complete it, preferably with someone else. (Available at any Every Nation church or on Amazon)

Set a goal: Look for an opportunity to go through the “Purple Book” (Biblical Foundations) in the next 9 months.



THE DOCTRINES of REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS and FAITH TOWARDS GOD

A proper understanding this doctrine is essential to ensure that we root out (“put off”) everything in us which tries to earn our salvation through works, and that we fully embrace the amazing grace received by faith in Christ alone.

1. WE ARE SAVED BY GOD’S GRACE NOT OUR WORKS

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

Read this in the Amplified Bible: *For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favour) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God;*

⁹ *Not because of works [not the fulfilment of the Law's demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]*

1. This doctrine establishes that we cannot be saved by keeping the Law, but only by putting our faith in Christ. We are justified by faith in Christ alone – by His work, not our works.

John 1:17 *For while the Law was given through Moses, grace (unearned, undeserved favour and spiritual blessing) and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

Rom 8:3-4 *For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*

Rom 5:1-2 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

2. When you put your faith in your “good works” instead of in Christ, they become “dead works”.
3. Any good work that we boast in becomes a dead work.
4. We are called to “work out” our salvation, but we cannot “work for” our salvation.

5. This doctrine also clearly and firmly establishes repentance as essential in salvation. We cannot “turn to God” without repentance. It is by repentance that we turn to God.



Definition of “repentance”: The word repentance is translated from the Greek “Metanoieiu,” = literally: to change one's mind and heart, resulting in a change of actions. Biblical repentance includes this change resulting in a turning to God in faith and obedience to His ways.

- True repentance accepts the grace, forgiveness and goodness of God in Christ
- True repentance is always linked to faith.
- Repentance without faith is penitence, and this in itself is a dead work.

2. THE MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE

2.1. Repent AND live!

Eze 18:31-32 *Rid yourselves of all the offences you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!*

2.2. Repent AND believe!

Mark1:14-15 *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”*

2.3. Repent AND receive!

Acts 2:37-39 *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, 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. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

2.4. God’s goodness AND Repentance

Rom 2:4 *Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?*

- Repentance is always, while faith is always

2.5. Heaven rejoices at repentance!

Luke 15:9 *And when she finds it [the lost coin], she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

2.6. John the Baptist to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law:

Matt 3:7-9 ⁷*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*

2.7. Jesus to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law:

Luke 5:31-32 Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

2.8. Confession and repentance:

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

2.9. True and False repentance:

2 Cor 7:8-11 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

List the fruits of repentance you see mentioned in 2 Cor 7:11:

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True & False repentance:

False repentance will appear in:

- 1. A sense of guilt and remorse over the past.
- 2. Regret of the consequences rather than the sin.
- 3. Strong fears of hell rather than a conviction of sin.
- 4. Penitence when one atones for his sin through suffering/sacrifice.

True repentance turns from dead works, such as:

- 1. All religious activity that is done to cover sin. Isa 64:6
- 2. All works of the flesh. Rom 8:8
- 3. All works of suffering. 2 Cor 7:10

Biblical examples of false repentance:

- 1. Esau Heb 12:16-17
- 2. Judas Matt 27:3-5

Biblical example of true repentance:

David 2 Sam 12:13; Ps 51

3. PREACHING REPENTANCE AND FAITH TOWARDS GOD:

3.1. Jesus to the disciples on the road to Emmaus

Luke 24:46 *He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

3.2. The early church

Acts 3:19 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...*

3.3. Paul to King Agrippa

Acts 26:19-20 *"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. ²⁰First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*

A parable of repentance: the prodigal son

Luke 15:11-32

<p>What principles of repentance can you see in this parable?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

4. THE WARNING OF RETURNING TO WORKS

Galatians 3:1-9 *You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ²I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? ⁴Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? ⁵Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?*

A prayer of repentance and faith towards God:

<p>Ps 139: 23-24</p> <p><i>"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."</i></p>
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2

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

Note: This doctrine is not stated in the singular, but in the plural: Baptisms. Therefore we will look at all the types of baptisms mentioned in Scripture, and their application to us.

1. WHAT DOES “BAPTISM” MEAN?

There are a variety of references to “baptisms” in the New Testament as part of the believer’s experiences and expression of their faith. It is therefore most important that we understand the meaning and application of this word and teaching.

The word "baptism" or "baptise" which appears in our English Bible is not a translation but a transliteration of the original Greek word "BAPTIZO" causing the true meaning to be lost in translation.

The concept of baptism would have probably been understood more accurately if it had been translated for what it really means, that is "immersion". "BAPTIZO" is derived from the Greek word "BAPSO", meaning "to dip under" or "to bath".

In fact, the word Jesus used in John 13:26 when he says, *"It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it"* is BAPSO.

We must, however, avoid getting into fruitless arguments over the word, and seek to understand the true meaning of the doctrines as taught in Scripture

2. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF BAPTISMS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. These are summarised below, and then we will study three of them in detail:

2.1 The Baptism of repentance

This baptism was unique to the ministry of John the Baptist in preparing the way for “the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.” This baptism is only found in the ministry of John, and so we understand its purpose to have been unique to that time of preparing the way for Jesus.

- John the Baptist Matt 3:5-6 , Matt 3:11

2.2 The Baptism into the Body of Christ

This speaks of the believers spiritual experience of being born again / becoming one / immersed / hidden in Christ through faith at salvation.

2.3 The Baptism in water

This is a symbolic physical identifying with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection, through the act of being lowered down into and under water, and coming up out of the water.

3.1 The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

This is a supernatural immersion / falling upon or clothed with power by the Holy Spirit of the believer for the primary purpose of enabling them to be a witness for Christ.

- A promise of baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire Acts 1:5
(We will study this baptism in more detail below)

2.4 The Baptism in fire

John the Baptist spoke about this baptism pointing forward to what Christ would come to do:

Matt 3:11 *"I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."*

On the day of Pentecost we see another reference to this fire:

Acts 2:3 *They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.*

The meaning of this baptism is open for some interpretation, but "fire" certainly refers to the working of the Holy Spirit that like fire would test, cleanse, consume, ignite, warm, and cause to shine.

2.5 The Baptism into the sufferings of Christ

Identifying with the cause of Christ through taking up our cross and following Him and His way, no matter what the cost or persecution.

Jesus' baptism of suffering Mark 10:36-39

Our suffering:

Rom 5:1-5 *...And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

Rom 8:18-19 *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.*

Acts 5:41 *The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.*

We will now study three of these baptisms in more detail:

- The Baptism into the Body of Christ
- The Baptism in water
- The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

3. THE BAPTISM INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

The baptism into the Body of Christ refers to believer's spiritual state of being the born again, through which the Holy Spirit takes you and unites you into the family of God "in Christ."

1 Cor 12:12-14 *The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

Eph 4:4-6 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all...*

The Baptism into the Body of Christ is about belonging to Christ, not about belonging to a specific local church.

Gal 3:26-28 *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

4. THE BAPTISM IN WATER



4.1 The meaning of baptism in water:

- Water baptism is a public symbolic identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. It is not the water which saves, but the identification with Christ with whom we have died and risen again.
- Water baptism is a symbolic burial of our "old man who has died with Christ."
- Water baptism is an outward sign / expression of an inward reality (the New Birth) which has already happened.

Rom 6: 3-9 *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin ⁷because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

Col 2: 11-12 *In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, ¹²having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.*

4.2 Water baptism does not save us, but identifies us with the One who saves us.

1 Peter 3:20-21 *In it [Noah's Ark] only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water,²¹ and this water symbolises 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,...*

NOTE: They were saved in the Ark water though the water, not by the water. It is by faith in God's Word through Noah's mouth that they entered into the Ark (Christ). And it is because they were already in the Ark (Christ) that they were saved through water.

Water baptism symbolises our salvation, it doesn't cause it or activate it. We are saved by being in Christ, not by just going into the water. And since a baby doesn't have the minimum understanding necessary to believe, he cannot have faith. Therefore, one cannot be saved through infant baptism.

4.3 Jesus' Baptism in water:

Mat 3:13-17 *Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John.¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?¹⁵ Jesus replied, Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness. Then John consented.¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, this is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*

Note:

- Jesus said: "...it is proper for US to fulfil all righteousness." He intended that not only would He be baptised, but that we too would be.
- Jesus came "up out of the water." Therefore he was in under the water in His baptism.
- There is a strong indication here of the blessing on this act of obedience, as well as the release of the Spirit upon Jesus through this act of obedience. This seems to have been the key moment of Jesus' release into His public ministry.

4.4 Examples of water baptism in Acts:

- The Ethiopian Eunuch - Acts 8:26-39
- The Philippian jailor - Acts 16:30-34

4.5 The question of infant baptism / christening / sprinkling

- It is clear that all instances of water baptism in the New Testament were of those who believed; therefore water baptism is only for those who believe.
- In some church traditions children are baptised or sprinkled (or “christened”) at a certain young age as a sign of dedication by their parents to the Lord, and the child is expected at some point to confirm this dedication, often called a “confirmation.” This practice is however simply a church tradition which is not according to a biblical pattern, and should in no way substitute what is clearly seen in the Bible as the believers water baptism by immersion.
- We do see Jesus encouraging the disciples to “let the little children come to Me”, and Him laying hands on them and blessing them - Matt 19:13-15
- Parents are also instructed to “*train up the child in the ways of the Lord, so that when they are older they would not depart from them*” - Prov 22:6
- There is thus a basis for parents committing themselves to raising their children in a godly manner, and for having their children blessed. There is however no Biblically specific format in which these commitments/dedications/blessings should take place, and therefore we should hold any such traditions very loosely.

YOUR PERSONAL BAPTISM IN WATER:

Have you made a public declaration of your faith by being baptised in water, identifying yourself with Christ’s death, burial & resurrection?

YES: NO:

If “yes” – when?

If “no” – why not?

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3

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In this doctrine of baptisms we must pay special attention to the Bible's teaching on the Holy Spirit, as Jesus clearly promised that those who would believe in Him would be *"baptised with the Holy Spirit."*

In Acts 1:3 Jesus Himself declared to His disciples, saying:
"For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."

1. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Notice first that the Holy Spirit is referred to as **"He"** or **"Him"**. Not "it," as some strange intangible influence. The word Holy Spirit and Holy Ghost are interchangeable.

1.1 Theologically the Holy Spirit is:

- Co-equal in the Trinity – The Holy Spirit is God just like the Father and the Son in the Trinity.
- Co-eternal in the Trinity – has always been, with no beginning and no end.
- Co-substantial with Christ – Greek: "Homo ousia" (The same as Jesus with us: "I will come back to you..."), not "Homo i ousia" (similar)

1.2 The Holy Spirit has been from the beginning:

Gen 1:1,2 [Amp / *NIV] *In the beginning God (prepared, formed, fashioned, and) created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was empty* and without form*, and darkness was upon the face of the very great deep. **The Spirit of God was moving (hovering, brooding) over the face of the waters.***

- The Spirit is still concerned with bringing life to that which is empty, chaotic, in darkness.
- Throughout the Old Testament we see the Spirit coming upon (anointing) specific people at specific times for specific purposes. In the New Testament the baptism with the Spirit is available for everyone.

1.3 The Holy Spirit is our Comforter / God with us, our Emmanuel:

Greek: "Parakletos," meaning to be called to one's side to aid. The term is used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defence, advocate, intercessor, one who pleads another's cause.

John 14:16-18 [Amp] *"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Comforter** (Counsellor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthenener, and Standby), that **He** may remain with you forever. ¹⁷The Spirit of Truth, **Whom** the world cannot receive (welcome, take to its heart), because it does not see **Him** or know and recognise **Him**. But you know and recognise **Him**, for **He** lives with you [constantly] and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans [comfortless, desolate, bereaved, forlorn, helpless]; I will come to you."*

1.4 The Holy Spirit is “The Spirit of Truth”

Nothing the Holy Spirit does will contradict the truth of Scripture. He is not the “Weird Spirit”...

John 16:13-14 [Amp] *But when He, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.*

1.5 The Holy Spirit is your advantage

The Holy Spirit would be “Jesus with us” like Jesus was with His disciples. With Him we are never alone – “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

[Matt 13:5]

John 16:7-8 [NKJV] *Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

John 14:12 *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*

1.6 There is a difference between receiving the Spirit of Christ at salvation (When we receive Christ as our Saviour), and being baptised in the Holy Spirit for power to witness.

Rom 5:5 *And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom **He has given us.***

Rom 8:9-16 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ...¹⁴ because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*

(Note: if you belong to God, you have the Spirit of Christ – He lives in you. Therefore you have the Holy Spirit when you receive / belong to Christ)

1.7 The Holy Spirit in us gives us assurance of to whose we are

Rom 8:15-16 *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶**The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.***

Through recognising the presence and working of the Holy Spirit in us, the believer can have 100% assurance of their being children of God. The Holy Spirit in us gives this assurance through a “peace with God.” [Rom 5:1]

1.8 The Holy Spirit within us is the seed for our producing “the fruit of the Spirit”:

Gal 5:22 - 23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control.*

2. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS PROMISED BY THE FATHER”

While we receive the Holy Spirit in us at salvation, there seems to be a clear indication and pattern of the Holy Spirit coming upon believers in demonstrations of the Spirit subsequent to salvation, with the primary purpose for empowering to be witnesses for Christ.

Jesus pointed to this promise of power after he had given his disciples His Great Commission to go into all the world, by instructing them to wait for the empowering of the Spirit before they tried to do it in their own strength:

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

Acts 1:3-5 *After his suffering, He showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but **wait for the gift my Father promised**, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptised with water, but in a few days **you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.**"*

Acts 1:8 [Amp] *But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth.*

- Here we see that the primary purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is to give the believer the power to bear witness to the work and gospel of Christ so that all may know, even to the ends of the earth.
- The word “power” here is translated from the Greek word “Dunamis.” This is inherent power, the ability to act, like “dynamite”.

While in the Old Testament the Spirit seemed to come upon individuals at specific times for specific purposes, the great promise is that the Spirit would come on all people:

Joel 2:28-29 *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. ²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.*

This is the Scripture promise to which Peter points to explain the somewhat strange occurrences on the day of Pentecost when onlookers described the believers of having “*had too much wine*” (Acts 2:13) when they were “*all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit enabled them.*” (Acts 2:4)

3. PENTECOST – THE INITIAL OUTPOURING / BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 2 ¹When the day of Pentecost came...⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them...

¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "**What does this mean?**"...

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ... let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say....
¹⁶...**this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:** ¹⁷"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people; Your sons and daughters will prophesy, ...²¹**And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved"**

Peter then witnesses / preaches the Gospel clearly, declaring:

³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptised**, 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.** ³⁹ **The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call.**" ⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The Baptism mentioned in verse 41 is most certainly a water baptism, as it was a public demonstration confirming that they had accepted the message, and was the sign of them being added to the body of Christ. There is no mention of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with these believers here.

From this point on the early church clearly experienced the power of the Holy Spirit upon them.

4. UNDERSTANDING THE GIFT OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

In the New Testament there are many clear references to the phenomenon of "speaking in tongues", most frequently (but not always) specifically associated with the believer's experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Definition of tongues: The term "new tongues" or "other tongues" comes from the Greek word "glossolalia" which is a term derived from the Greek glossa (tongue) and laleo (to speak) – it is the ability to speak a language that is not naturally learned. This could be a language understood by the hearers, or simply a language for speaking to God.

2.1 Tongues experienced in the early church

- In 3 out of the 5 accounts of the baptism of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts, speaking in tongues is recorded as a direct result.

- One of these times where tongues is not mentioned is when the Apostle Paul was filled with the Spirit, although we know that he definitely spoke tongues at other times - see 1 Cor 14:18
- The first gentiles to be saved received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues - Acts 10:44-46

Jesus Himself first said that speaking in new tongues would be a part of the believers experience in His command / commission to “go into all the world”:

Mark 16:17 *And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;*

2.2 Understanding the difference between Private and Public Tongues.

- **Public Tongues: When God speaks to us through the gift of tongues**

This is when the tongues are a “gift of the Spirit” as in 1 Cor 12 when functioning with the associated gift of the interpretation of tongues. Here the gift of tongues is one of the nine gifts listed which are the working of the Spirit, given “to each one as He wills, for the edification of the body.” [Eph 4:12] So here the gift of tongues blesses the body of believers, not the individual speaking them.

- **Private Tongues: For us speaking to God**

1 Cor 14:2 In this use of tongues Paul clearly says that “...anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God.

1 Cor 14:4 *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...*

2.3 Speaking in tongues is a spiritual activity, not an intellectual or soulish one.

1 Cor 14:14 *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.*

Note: The mind is not unfocussed or distracted by all sorts of other things. It is simply unfruitful, not understanding what the spirit is praying. We should be careful to continually set our minds on the things of the Spirit as we pray in tongues. Often revelation, understanding and insight will come to our spirits as we are praying in tongues like this.

2.4 Praying in tongues helps us pray the will of God

Rom 8:26-27 *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.*

2.5 Praying in tongues builds up our faith

Jude 1:20 *But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.*

1 Cor 14:4 - *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.*

2.6 Tongues help us express praise, worship and adoration to God

1 Cor 14:15b ...I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.

Acts 10:46... they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

2.7 The practice of speaking in tongues appropriately in the church

The last word on tongues is in **1 Cor 14:39-40** *Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.*⁴⁰ *But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*

- We should create an environment where:
 - The Holy Spirit is not quenched
 - There is spiritual liberty, but scriptural order
 - There is emotion involved, but not emotionalism

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1) Have you personally experienced or witnessed the baptism of the Holy Spirit? - share your experience with the group.
- 2) Do you have any questions, concerns about the Holy Spirit or being filled with the Holy Spirit?
- 3) Do you, or have you previously personally spoken in tongues? – share your experience with the group.
- 4) Do you have any questions / concerns about speaking in tongues?

5. THE BAPTISMS AS EXPERIENCED IN THE EARLY CHURCH AFTER PENTECOST:

5.1 The instruction to be baptised is repeated - Acts 2:37-41

Acts 2:38-39³⁸ *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins".*

5.2 The Samaritans and the Sorcerer - Acts 8: 9-13

5.3 Holy Spirit baptism after water baptism for the Samaritans

Acts 8:14-18 *When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.*¹⁵ *When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,*¹⁶ *because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus.*¹⁷ **Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.**¹⁸ *When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money*¹⁹ *Saying, Grant me also this power and authority, in order that anyone on whom I place my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.*

Notice: These Samaritan believers had accepted the word of God, and been baptised in water. Now Peter and John laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Note that that Simon must have seen some quite significant manifestation to offer them money for this power!

- Consider: What evidences of the Holy Spirit Baptism were there?

5.4 Water baptism after Holy Spirit baptism for Cornelius' household

Acts 10: 34,43-48 [NIV] *Then Peter began to speak: "I now realise how true it is that **God does not show favouritism**...⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.**⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.⁴⁶ **For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.** Then Peter said,⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.*

5.5 Saul's (The Apostle Paul) Baptism

Acts 9:17-20 [Amp] *So Ananias left and went into the house. And **he laid his hands on Saul** and said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, Who appeared to you along the way by which you came here, has sent me that you may recover your sight and **be filled with the Holy Spirit.**¹⁸ And instantly something like scales fell from [Saul's] eyes, and he recovered his sight. Then he arose and was baptised,¹⁹ And after he took some food, he was strengthened. For several days [afterward] he remained with the disciples at Damascus.²⁰ **And immediately in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus,** saying, He is the Son of God!*

Note: God used an ordinary disciple like Ananias to lay hands on Saul, who would become the mighty Paul used by God to write most of the New Testament.

The first thing Saul did after His conversion was to be baptised. He obviously understood the power of this public demonstration of identifying with Christ. Following this, he "remained with the disciples" [Acts 9:19] – he obviously also recognised the power of growing in community and fellowship. And of course he ate!

5.6 Twelve disciples in Ephesus are baptised in water and in the Holy Spirit Acts 19:1-7

Note: All these disciples knew till now was John's baptism! Sometimes we too are in ignorance about many of God's ways, but like these disciples we must respond in obedience and faith when we do receive the full teaching of God's Word.

The truth which they received that day from the apostles resulted in:

- Them being baptised in water
- The Holy Spirit coming upon them
- They spoke in tongues
- They prophesied!



6. HOW DO I RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

6.1 REPENT, be Born Again

Acts 2:38-39 [NIV] *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.³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off; for all whom the Lord our God will call.*

Note: being baptised in water was not a requirement before being filled with the Spirit in Acts. Your disobedience to the instruction of water baptism could however be a hindrance to you receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

6.2 BE THIRSTY, have a desire for the promise and presence

John 7:37-53 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet."⁴¹ Others said, "He is the Christ."*

- Be Thirsty - recognize a need for more...
- Come - accept the invitation
- Believe - let faith come from what the Scripture has said. "He is the Christ"
- Receive - The gift which is "for you and your children and for all..."

6.3 CONSIDER SOME COMMON OBSTACLES WHICH NEED TO BE REMOVED:

Fear - Don't be afraid to receive something false or evil Luke 11:11,12
- You are not mocking or cursing Jesus 1 Cor 12:3

Intellectualism - Your mind will not understand what you are saying
2 Cor 14:14

Doubt - Believe / put your trust in the Scriptures

Resisting/ Quenching - Do not quench (suppress or subdue) the [Holy] Spirit;
1 Thes 5:19

Passivity - You are in complete control of your Spirit therefore it is an act of your will. You are not turning God on and off 1 Cor 14:32

- You do the speaking, not angels or the Holy Spirit. He gives you the utterance / enables you (motivation inside you).
1 Cor 14:14

Feeling Unworthy Or Inadequate - it's a gift, not a reward.

6.4 NOW SIMPLY ASK

Luke 11:11-14 *Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*

7. STAY FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Eph 5:18 [Amp] *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but ever be filled and stimulated with the [Holy] Spirit.*

- “Be filled” is the present continuous tense – It starts with a divine encounter at or after salvation, and is to be a believer’s continuous lifestyle.

8. CONCLUSION

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the door to supernatural ministry. The supernatural did not stop with the apostles, it stopped when the Church no longer "thirsted", to receive the power of God in the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- If we could go back to the pattern of Acts, the Church would have the of Acts.

PERSONAL APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

What evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit have you experienced in your life?

Have you experienced the gift of speaking in tongues?

4

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

The fact that the Bible mentions the laying on of hands as a foundation doctrine calls us to take note of its place in ministry. The hands are significant in the ministry of the Spirit.

Our hands are very much an expression of our inner being, e.g. raised hands speaks of surrender; clenched fists speak of anger, etc.

1. THE PRACTICE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

- 1.1 Aaron laying his hands onto the head of a goat on the day of Atonement, symbolically transferring the sin of Israel to the goat as a substitution sacrifice. Lev 16:21-22
- 1.2 Jacob, in blessing his grandchildren. Gen 48:14
- 1.3 Moses, in dedicating the Levites to work for the Lord. Num 8:10-11
- 1.4 Moses, in commissioning Joshua as the new leader over Israel. Num 27:18; Deut 34:9
- 1.5 Elisha, in strengthening King Joash and imparting vision. 2 Kings 13:16

2. THERE ARE AT LEAST 5 PURPOSES FOR THE LAYING ON OF HANDS FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

- 2.1 For setting aside people for ministries in the Church Acts 6:1-7
NOTE: This resulted in two mighty men of God: Stephen and Phillip. Acts 13:1-3
CAUTION: The laying on of hands is not to be done hastily.
1 Tim 5:22 *Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.*
- 2.2 For imparting a blessing from God Matt 19:13; 10:16

2.3 For the impartation of spiritual gifts

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

2.4 In many cases the laying on of hands was ministered to those receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:15,17; 9:6,17

2.5 The laying on of hands is associated with the ministry of healing.

- Jesus Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32
- The Apostles Acts 5:12; 14:3; 19:11
- Jesus commanded the church to lay hands on the sick

Mark 16:17-18 *And these signs shall follow those who believe. In My name ... they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.*

Note: The above scripture define that this ministry is FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE, not only for the pastor or vicar. This includes YOU. [Eph 3:20]

3. LET'S DO IT!

As Christ's Body on earth, our hands are His hands which He wants to use to impart His and power. This is real as a result of His indwelling the believer of the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands on people is a point of contact for them to touch the power and presence of God manifested in the believer.

Don't "theologise" the laying on of hands - just be and do it and see Jesus confirm His Word with signs following.

Mark 16:19-20 *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.*

5

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

1. Jesus clearly taught the resurrection from the dead.

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

What one question about the resurrection / life after death would you most want answered?

.....

.....

The Apostle Paul deals most extensively with this subject of the resurrection of the dead in 1 Cor 15.

2. The Resurrection of Jesus from the dead is central to the Gospel, as declared in 1 Cor 15:3.

If Jesus did not rise from the dead, the Christian faith is a foolish fantasy. However, if the resurrection of Christ did occur, it confirms His life, message, and atoning work. It is the basis of our hope of life beyond the grave.

1 Cor 15:1- 4 *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. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

2.1. God's redemption includes the body through the resurrection.

Isaiah 26:19 – *But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.*

2.2. Both the good and the evil are resurrected in eternity.

John 5: 28, 29 - *Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*

Dan 12:2 *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*

2.3. Resurrection is a great hope beyond this life for the righteous.

Job 19:25-27 *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. ²⁶And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*



3. Evidences for the resurrection of Jesus:

1 Cor 15:5- 8 *"he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born".*

Christ is alive, and the evidence is overwhelming. Here are some of the reasons we can be so sure.

- 3.1. Jesus predicted His resurrection (Matt 16:21; Mark 9:9-10; John 2:18-22).
- 3.2. The Old Testament prophesied it (Psalm 16:10; compare Acts 2:25-31; 13:33-37).
- 3.3. The tomb was empty and the grave clothes vacant. If those who opposed Christ wished to silence His disciples, all they had to do was produce a body, but they could not (John 20:3-9).
- 3.4. Many people saw the resurrected Christ. They looked on His face, touched Him, heard His voice, and saw Him eat (Matt. 28:16-20; Luke 24:13-39; John 20:11-29; John 21:1-9; Acts 1:6-11; 1 Cor. 15:3-8).
- 3.5. The lives of the disciples were revolutionised. Though they fled and even denied Christ at the time of His arrest, they later feared no one in their proclamation of the risen Christ (Matt 26:56, 69-75).
- 3.6. The resurrection was the central message of the early church. The church grew with an unwavering conviction that Christ had risen and was the Lord of the church (Acts 4:33; 5:30-32; Rom. 5:24).
- 3.7. Men and women today testify that the power of the risen Christ has transformed their lives. We know that Jesus is alive not only because of the historical and biblical evidence but also because He has miraculously touched our lives.

4. Because Christ rose, we too shall rise from the dead. - 1 Cor 15:12-23

1 Cor 15:19-22 *If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. ²⁰But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*

5. The resurrection destroys the fear of death.

1Cor 15:24-28 *...The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For he "has put everything under His feet.*

(See also Heb 2:14-15)

6. What kind of body will we have after the resurrection? – 1 Cor 15:35-54

1 Cor 15:49 *And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.*

The composition of our body will be changed at the resurrection like the body of Jesus.

Phil 3:21 *...by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

7. What was Jesus' body like after the resurrection?

7.1. It was flesh and bones.

Luke 24:39 *Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.*

7.2. The resurrected body is imperishable, glorious, and powerful.

1 Cor 15:42-43 *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.*

The body will no longer be subject to death and

7.3. The body will be changed from a natural body to a body.

1 Cor 15:44 *...it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

The spiritual body is just as real, but adapted to live in the spiritual realm. Not blood, but the Spirit will be the life principle.

7.4. It did not have physical limitations

John 20:26 *A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"*

8. In Christ we can have resurrection life NOW and INTO ETERNITY!

Rom 8:11 *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.*

Eph 2:1, 5-6 ¹*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ...⁴But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions; it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.*

9. What happened to those who died before Christ was crucified and resurrected?

9.1. The rich man & the poor man Lazarus went to the same place Hades when they died.

The Greek word "Hades" is often translated "hell", and has the same meaning as the Hebrew word "Sheol" in the Old Testament. They both refer to "the waiting place of the dead." This place had two compartments, with Lazarus going to "Abraham's Bosom" and the rich man going to a "place of torment"

Luke 16: 22-31 ...²²*The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³In hell ("Hades") where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'*

²⁵*But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'*...

9.2. Where was Abraham, and where were all the Old Testament Saints that had believed by faith?

Abraham had "believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness." (Gen 15:6). He and the other OT saints had an "I.O.U

righteousness” from God, and waited for its completion through the death of Christ on the cross. They were in Hades – the same place that poor man Lazarus went to awaiting the “it is finished/paid in full” of the cross. This was the fulfilment of God’s promise to all those who had believed looking forward by faith to the revelation of the cross.

- 9.3. Jesus and the repentant thief next to Him on the cross went to “Paradise” that same day. This is the same place where Abraham and Lazarus were waiting

Luke 23:43 *Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.*

- 9.4. What did Jesus do in Hades?

- 9.4.1. He took the keys of death and Hades.

Rev 1:18 *I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*

- 9.4.2. He set the captive Abraham’s free!

Eph 4:8-10 *This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." ⁹(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)*

Matt 27:51-53 *At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. ⁵²The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.*

- 9.4.3. Jesus conquered satan through His death on the cross. He did not suffer in hell to save us, but died on the cross to save us. It was on the cross, not in the grave or at the resurrection, that Jesus cried out “it is finished / paid in full.”
(John 19:30; Heb 2:14; Col 2:13-15; Phil 2:8-11)

10. What happens to those who died since Jesus was resurrected?

- 10.1. Believers go straight “home” with the Lord the moment they die. In spirit we are with the Lord, but our bodies will be resurrected at the end of time.

2 Cor 5:8 *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

Phil 1:21 *“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” – If Paul was not going to immediately be with His Lord at death, what then would be the “gain” in death?*

- 10.2. Unbelievers go to the same place in Hades where the rich man went, awaiting the judgement

When “the End” comes, all bodies will be resurrected and judged:

Rev 20:12-15 *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. ¹³The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

6

ETERNAL JUDGEMENT

Heb 9:27-28 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

Rom 14:11-12 *It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' " So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

"To judge" literally means to separate; to make a distinction between; to bring to trial; to sentence; to govern.

Jesus said that one of the functions of the Holy Spirit would be to "convict the world ... of judgement" (John 16:8)

6.1. Judgement begins in this life.

- The judgement of sin begins now - the consequence of sin is a judgement of sin.

Gal 6:7-8 *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

- The individual Christian should judge himself. (1 Cor 11:28-32)
- Judgement within the church must begin

1 Pet 4:17 *For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

6.2. Judgement after physical death

Dan 12:2 *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*

John 5:28-29 *Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*

A. The Judgement Seat of Christ for Believers

2 Cor 5:10 *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.*

Rom 14:10, 12 *You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ... ¹²So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

God will not judge the believer for his sin because He has already judged Jesus in our place for it on the cross. Salvation is not a reward, but a free gift. (Rom 6:23)

1 Cor 3:11-15 *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.*

- Believers will have their works judged and be
- The foundation of a Christian's works is Jesus Christ.

Every believer will give an account of themselves before God, and be rewarded according to their faithfulness over what God has entrusted to them.

Matt 16:26-27 *What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.*

Rev 22:12 *Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.*

Matt 6:19-21 *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Conclusion: Don't squander your life on temporary things, but your life in things which have eternal value. (Matthew 6:19-21) This life is the only you have - invest it wisely for eternal rewards.

B. The great White Throne of Judgement for the wicked

(2 Thess 1:5-10; Matt 25:41; John 3:17)

Rev 20:11-15 *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. ¹²And 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. ¹³The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. ¹⁴Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

Here their judgement will be based on two books: the Book of Life and the book of works.

- Their works which are not built on the foundation of Jesus Christ will not stand in the judgement.
- None of their names will be found in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The "judgement" is more accurately described as a s....., for according to the description of the event in Revelation 20:11-15 there is no ray of hope of salvation for appearing before this throne.

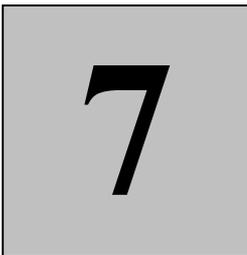
Matt 25:41 *Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Remember that Jesus desires to save, not condemn:

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

From this judgement all the wicked will be cast to the. "lake of fire," (Greek: *Gehenna*) - the place of eternal torment for the wicked. Ultimate judgement and the greatest "torment" is eternal separation from the presence of Creator God.

The doctrines of the Resurrection and Eternal Judgement should MOTIVATE us to PURITY, LOVE, SHARING THE PRECIOUS GOSPEL, and GOOD WORKS. This is our hope as believers - the fulfilment and culmination of all that that Jesus accomplished on the cross.



GOING ON TO MATURITY

1. Jesus is our model.

Eph 4:13-14 *...till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the full measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed about by every wind of doctrine...*

Col 1:26-29 [The Message] *The mystery in a nutshell is just this: ²⁷Christ is in you, so therefore you can look forward to sharing in God's glory. It's that simple. That is the substance of our Message. ²⁸We preach Christ, warning people not to add to the Message. We teach in a spirit of profound common sense so that we can bring each person to maturity. To be mature is to be basic. Christ! No more, no less. ²⁹That's what I'm working so hard at day after day, year after year, doing my best with the energy God so generously gives me.*

2. We must persevere towards maturity.

James 1:4 *Perseverance must finish its work so that you may become mature and complete, not lacking anything.*