

Jesus Christ, The Way

Christian Basics

James K. Roberts

**Part 1 – Faith:
The Importance of Christ**

**Part 2 – Water Baptism:
Identity With Christ**

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

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Note: *Various translations of the Bible are used here:*

(ASV)*American Standard Version* - **(NAS)***New American Standard*
(KJV)*King James Version* - **(NKJV)***New King James Version*
(RSV)*Revised Standard Version* - **(NRS)***New Revised Standard*
(NLT)*New Living Translation*

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All I ask is that no part of it be altered in any way.

Thank you,
James Roberts

Faith Introduction

**Part 1 – Faith:
The Importance of Christ**

To begin, let me state my major presupposition:

The Holy Bible is what it appears to be:
- Writings that were inspired by God
- God's way of revealing Himself to us

I know that this may not be one of your presuppositions, and as you explore the Bible more, you may or may not be compelled to believe as I do. But I state my belief because Christians traditionally have accepted this position, making the Bible the origin and final authority on our faith about God and humanity. I will be using Bible references to establish the things I write here.

On the other hand, of course, there are many who call themselves Christians while not believing that the Bible really is God's inspired Word. In my opinion, this eventually leads to "Christians" being and believing almost anything. In the end, this thinking reduces the Christian faith to something largely unidentifiable and impotent.

I have written this because I believe God has spoken to us in the Bible, yet **there are many people who know very little about what He has said**. So here are the basics -- I hope you find them helpful -- and even more, I hope they bring you and God closer together!

Here is a little teaser to wake you up a bit:

**There is a way {which seems} right to a man,
But its end is the way of death.** Proverbs 16:25 (NAS)

Knowing our tendency to go wrong when we think we are going the right way, God has told us about it and done something to help. In the next few pages you will learn:

- 1) **Why Christ's death, burial and resurrection are important to you.**
- 2) **Why God says you need a Savior.**
- 3) **How you can align your life with the purposes of your Creator.**

As an author, I fully realize that you may be just taking a quick look at this book – to see if it comes any where close to something you might be interested in or believe.

Thank you for looking, but I hope you will:

1. Relax a little
2. Lay aside your presuppositions
3. Just follow along and think with me

You would be doing me a great favor if you would reserve judgment until you have read the entire book and taken it as a whole

Thank you in advance for giving me the privilege of sharing my thoughts with you!

God Created Us

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In the beginning **God created** the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1:1 (KJV)

The simple statement that "**God created the heaven and the earth**" seems to fly in the face of today's popular theories of science.

Without getting into a long discourse about it, please understand that with regard to the origin of the universe, **methods of science are very difficult (and at some point, impossible) to use.**

No one can go back and repeat the experiment, nor can anyone observe the "beginning". All scientists can do at this point is observe what is going on right now and make educated guesses about the past.

There is One who was there, however, who is known to us as the God of the Bible.

If the Bible is what it appears to be, then the Creator Himself chose to give us a brief and beautiful explanation of what He did.

To believe the Genesis account is to **color** our entire approach to life. On the other hand, to accept an "accidental" explanation for everything is to paint all of life and humanity in entirely different **hues.**

Here is more specific information about the creation of mankind:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:27-28 (KJV)

This passage says that "**God created man in his own image**". Think about this for a moment:

Physiologically and taxonomically, we may bear many resemblances to the chimpanzees, but is it not abundantly evident that when it comes to the mind, people are not even close to the great apes?

I contend along with the Bible that man's relationship to the apes is one of a common Creator, not of a common ancestry.

The Bible reveals that God made man in His own image.

He made us like some of the animals physically, but He made us like Himself mentally and spiritually.

We were made to inter-relate with Him.

It seems that the plants and animals (the entire universe, in fact) were all created to facilitate God's purpose with mankind.

This is the Bible perspective.

The way in which people look at other people, the kinds of laws that are adopted by society, the ideas for which people are willing to work and sacrifice are all greatly affected by their view of origins!

If every living thing is nothing more than the result of unplanned chance developments, then human life is no more special or valued than plant life.

In fact, there seems to be more concern in some people's minds about saving whales than there is about saving unborn babies.

If one accepts what God has revealed about man's origin and makeup, then human life becomes very important!

How we treat or mistreat others becomes a moral issue, because every person is made in God's image. In a sense, **what we do to our neighbor, we do to God!**

God Tests Us

The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the **tree of life** also in the midst of the garden, and the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. Genesis 2:8-9 (NAS)

God planted a garden for the benefit of Adam and Eve. We are told that this paradise provided both pleasant surroundings and good food. It must have been a wonderful place to live. **God reveals here His kindly and caring intentions toward the people He has made.**

In addition to the general description given about that place, we read of a "**tree of life**" that was put into the middle of the garden. This first couple were given permission to enjoy all the benefits of the garden, including the "**tree of life**". However, **God did have one condition** that he placed upon his people:

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Notes:

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The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." Genesis 2:16-17 (NAS)

Yes, they could enjoy the entire garden, but there was one tree that God withheld from them, known as "**the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**".

Then, as now, it seems to be those controls on our freedom that bother us the most about God.

Please notice all the good that God made available to them ... much more than He withheld.

It is important
for you to know this about God:
He always has a TEST for man.

He is not shy about giving to man. He sends rain on the fields of the wicked and righteous alike, but something more is at issue within God's purposes than just getting us through life.

God cared about Adam and Eve, giving them everything they needed, but He wanted something **from them** as well.

To not give God that response
for which He is looking
is to fail the TEST
and to miss the whole reason
for our being created.

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O.K.,
Are you getting it?

God had a test for Adam and Eve – He placed one control on their freedom.

And He has a test for you, too. He places controls on your freedoms:

1. Parental controls
2. Governmental controls
3. Controls of your conscience

(Did you ever notice that there are some things you won't do just because they seem wrong to you?)

The real key to God's test for us is this:

He is looking to see if we will choose Him and His way of our own volition.

He wants us to choose Him and His way:

1. Because we want to
2. Because we see Him as good
3. Because we trust Him
4. And ultimately because we love Him

The First People Failed

Toward evening they heard the LORD God walking about in the garden, so they **hid** themselves among the trees. The LORD God called to Adam, "Where are you?"

He replied, "I heard you, so I hid. I was **afraid** because I was **naked**."

"Who told you that you were naked?"

the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten the fruit I commanded you not to eat?"

"Yes," Adam admitted, "but **it was the woman you gave me** who brought me the fruit, and I ate it."

Then the LORD God asked the woman, "How could you do such a thing?"

"**The serpent tricked me**," she replied. "That's why I ate it." Genesis 3:8-13 (NLT)

Without God, man would not have existed. Without Him, there would have been no garden and no earth to support man. So people are totally dependent upon the Creator for every aspect of life, and **God wants our acknowledgement of these facts.**

The Bible is quite explicit in its treatment of mankind as the most special part of creation.

We are the only creatures
to whom God seems to have given the ability
to conceive of spiritual realities;
the only ones to whom He gave
the power of choice.

Here then may be a key to the Lord's reasoning in making us. It is easy to conclude from an overall reading of the Bible, that the whole of creation is merely a stage for God's unfolding drama with people.

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Isn't it true that we all live with a universal dilemma?

On the one hand, most people have some sort of conscience. This conscience either commends or condemns their behavior. This conscience implies some set of morals or absolutes to which they ought to conform. May I suggest that this conscience is evidence of a moral God who has made us in His likeness?

On the other hand, most of us have a strong sense of self-preservation and selfishness. We easily put our desires before the needs of others. We easily put blame for problems upon others. We'd prefer to dismiss the idea of accountability to God rather than control ourselves and obey Him.

This dilemma creates a tension between what we believe we ought to do and what we want to do.

Both our character and relationship with God develop into what they will be as we choose how to resolve these conflicting issues within us.

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- Adam and Eve **disobeyed** God. They **sinned**.
- .. **Disobedience** caused them to recognize their nakedness.
 - ... **Nakedness** caused them to fear an encounter with God.
 - **Fear** caused them to hide from God.
 - When they couldn't hide anymore, they **blamed** others.

All of this seems so logical and natural to us because **we have experienced it ourselves**. Our consciences have bothered us many times as we have violated what we knew would have been the "right" thing to do.

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No matter how strongly we resist the idea of absolute morals and responsibility to God with our intellect, **our hearts agree with the Bible.**

Notes:

We do the same things Adam and Eve did. We try to avoid God because we do not want the controls He imposes upon us.

Or we **hide from Him behind ideas** that help us to rationalize our lack of restraint.

For example, it takes as much or more faith to believe evolution as it does to believe that God created us, but it is much less demanding on us personally - until we meet God!

God confronts us: "Have you eaten of the tree?"
Yes, we've eaten ... but we have excuses!

We Are Sinners

... sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin ... Romans 5:12 (NRS)

... many died through the one man's trespass ...

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... the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation ...
... because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion ...
... one man's trespass led to condemnation for all ...
... by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners ... Romans 5:15-19 (NRS)

We reason that:

- if a man steals he is a thief
- if a man kills he is a murderer

if a man sins he is a sinner

OOPS! The analogy is not completely accurate here.

... by the one man's (*Adam's*) disobedience the many were made sinners ...

The verses above indicate that we are not sinners just because we have sinned, but that we sin also because we are sinners at birth.

Adam began in a different realm than we do; he started from a position of innocence with a God-given power of choice. Adam became a sinner because he consciously chose to heed his wife's suggestion and disobey God. (The sin is not attributed to her, since the Bible says she was deceived.)

We sin because we are sinners.

It is different for us. **We begin from the position of a sinner, and we sin as naturally as we breathe air.** No conscious decision is needed on our part to sin; being a sinner is a part of our nature that we inherited from Adam.

So you see, not only is it impossible for us to quit sinning on our own, but even if we did, that wouldn't solve the whole problem. **There is still the problem of the sins we have already committed, and worse yet, the deeper problem of what we are.**

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What is sin?

According to Unger's Bible Dictionary (Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois). Literally, the Greek word "hamartia" means "a falling away from or missing the right path."

The underlying idea of sin is that of law and a lawgiver. The lawgiver is God and sin is everything we do that is contrary to the expressed will of God.

The sinfulness of sin lies in the fact that it is against God, even when the wrong we do is against others or ourselves.

Selfishness is at the root of all disobedience to God. Therefore, selfishness is the root of sin. This selfishness can turn to hostility when confronted with the law of God.

Notes:

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God told Adam that in the day that he ate of the tree, he would surely die. He died to innocence, he died to his relationship with God, and physical death began working in his body.

What God didn't tell him was that we, his children, would die too. Death exercises dominion! And not just physical death. We were in Adam when he sinned, and we have inherited his fallen nature!

Sin Gets Worse

Adam and Eve ate from "**the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**". Prior to that time, they had known only good. Everything God had made was good, and it was theirs. But when they disobeyed, for the first time they knew evil: they became aware of guilt, fear, toil, pain and a great sense of loss as they were cast away from "**the tree of life**" in the garden.

All of that was a great catastrophe, but it was just the beginning.

Sin goes further than we intend;
it always takes us farther
than we thought we would go.
Sin is progressive!

Adam and Eve's son, Cain, murdered their other son, Abel.

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. Genesis 4:8 (KJV)

Later, just before God destroyed almost all of mankind with the Great Flood, we see how seriously sin had advanced in the population:

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
Genesis 6:5 (KJV)

After the Flood, when the numbers of people had grown again, the men of Sodom gained this infamous distinction:

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Sin has a progressive nature to it. It grows and manifests itself in larger proportions as time goes on. The 20th century, the last complete century in human history, was more destructive than any of its predecessors in terms of wars and people who died in them.

As science, technology and communications advance, so do the ways in which sin can express itself. All this will eventually culminate in the rule of the antichrist.

Notes:

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... the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly. Genesis 13:13

A prediction by the apostle Paul of what it would be like in his future goes like this:

(hint: Doesn't it sound an awful lot like the world we live in now?)

You should also know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control; they will be cruel and have no interest in what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. 2 Timothy 3:1-4 (NLT)

But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will go on deceiving others, and they themselves will be deceived. 2 Timothy 3:13 (NLT)

Finally, the apostle John foretells of a time when God will pour out His wrath and judgments upon evil men during the reign of the antichrist. He says that **their hearts will be so hardened by that time that they will not repent in spite of their pain.**

Everyone was burned by this blast of heat, and they cursed the name of God, who sent all of these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. Revelation 16:9 (NLT)

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Sin progresses on a personal level, too.

Countless drug addicts began with a little recreational “weed”.

All alcoholism begins with that first drink.

One little lie usually necessitates more lies and how many divorces have developed from a few selfish indiscretions?

People only think they can control sin, but actually the reverse is true!

Notes:

Sin Has Consequences

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

For the wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23

The Bible states here very clearly what, in God's eyes, the issues really are.

Regardless of
... how good I have been,
... how honest I have been.
... how generous I have been,

God now informs me that:

I have sinned!
and fallen short of His glory!

We need to remember that God made man in His image. Part of His image is His glory, and when we sin, we tarnish that glory He shared with us.

Some people try to accuse God of being unmerciful when He warns us that there will be punishment for sin. They wonder what is so bad about some sins.

Why would God be so severe as to put people to death, and even worse, condemn them to the lake of fire for eternity?

This is the answer: **God is God, and we are His creation. What He calls good ... IS GOOD, and what He calls evil ... IS EVIL.**

The destructiveness and wickedness of sin
is not defined by the way we perceive it,
but by the way God feels about it!

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One of the problems, as I see it, is this: we do not agree with God!

In our arrogance, we judge God and His word as to their reasonableness to us.

In essence, we place ourselves in God's seat and we make our judgments supreme, instead of recognizing our need of God and depending on His leadership.

Because we really like some of our sins, we figure the Bible must be wrong.

The truth is that God knows what is best for us, and we are foolish to argue with Him!

Notes:

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The scriptures make it clear that sin is the utter opposite of God's nature. It is extremely repulsive and an abomination to Him. Eventually, those who do not repent, that is, turn away from their sin will learn of God's wrath and judgment!

Because we are born sinners, thanks to our father, Adam, **we do not have this instinctive repulsion to sin.** As a matter of fact, we rather like sin in some of its forms. **No, let's be honest: we fervently love some of our sins!**

If the wages of sin is death,
then sin must be worse than we think it is!

And because God doesn't feel the same way we do about these things, we question the rightness of His judgments! Frankly, we are getting ourselves into more trouble all the time!

Sin Has Dire Consequences

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done.

And the sea gave up the dead in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and all were judged by what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:12-15 (RSV)

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Notes:

Some people say that a loving God would never send people to hell.

What they forget is that God is not only a loving God, but a God of justice. They also forget the possibility that sin might be worse than they think it is.

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Even though this passage of scripture is written in the past tense, it is still yet to happen. The past tense is used only because John is telling what he saw in the vision God gave him.

The Lake of Fire is called the Second Death!

This scene is extremely frightening! The thought of picturing ourselves among these people whose names are not found in the Book of Life is disconcerting. As a matter of fact, it ought to sober us to the point of realizing that we will be accountable to God, and that we must not ignore this issue of sin.

A new idea is introduced here:

Everyone understands that someday they must die. Genesis explains that the reason for death is sin. Now, however, we see that there is a second death, the lake of fire!

Many believe that when they die, it is all over, but the Bible is very clear on this. **After death we will be judged, and if our names are not in the Book of Life, there is a Second Death.**

Most people would do almost anything to avoid natural death ... a death that is certain to come eventually anyway. Yet God offers us a way to avoid the Second Death, and many never give it a thought. So many never trouble themselves to read God's Book or go to church. They work hard and struggle to afford **health insurance**, but nothing excites a concern in them about **soul insurance!**

Why is this? What could be more important than avoiding the Lake of Fire for eternity?

Could it be that our sinful nature blinds us to the more important issues?

No, God is not unmerciful by telling us about the consequences of sin. **His warning is an act of mercy!**

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God has shown His love in giving His Son to save us. He has told us that Jesus is the “way”.

God will show His justice in condemning the wicked (those who would not accept God’s “way” to save us) to the lake of fire.

Those who do not acknowledge Jesus as the Savior are in a “contest of the wills” with God.

Who do you think will win?

Notes:

God Loves People

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16 (KJV)

God loves the world. Here the Lord is speaking of the people of the world, not the cosmos itself. Let's bring this closer:

God loves YOU!

Because God loves you, and all other people, He was not willing to let Adam's sin condemn us forever. In fact, even before Adam sinned, God had a plan in place for redeeming us (buying us back). **When Adam disobeyed, he sold us all into the slavery of sin, but God had a plan for buying us back.** That is what we mean when we talk about salvation. We mean being saved from our lost, condemned state and being made right again in God's sight.

That "way" is through Jesus Christ,
God's Son

Salvation implies being made "whole" again. We lost our "wholeness" in Adam, but there is a way to be made "whole" again.

Until we allow Jesus to come into our lives, we are doomed to perish. The wonderful result of God's love, however, is that a Savior has been provided. **Our first responsibility is to believe in Him.** If we fail to put our faith in Him, we will still perish ... not only through death, but through much unnecessary sorrow in this life, as well as the Second Death.

BUT
whoever believes in Him
may have everlasting life!

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I am so glad
that you have made it
this far!

This is where
the "good" begins
in "Good News".

By the way, in case you
didn't know, the word
"gospel" means
"Good News".

We have established so far
that we are sinners,
and that puts us
in trouble with God.

What you need to
understand now,
and comprehend fully,
is this:
We cannot reverse our
sinful position
by just starting
to be "good" now.

God has His own "way"
of saving us.

Our way will not do.

God's "way"
is through Jesus Christ,
His Son!

God Made A Way To Help Us

... and they took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: Where they crucified him ...

John 19:16-18 (KJV)

Has God gotten soft on sin? Has He backed down on His threat to punish sin? It might seem so when He offers us salvation, but here is something we need to know about God:

God is BOTH
Just and Merciful

God loves us and seeks to make us "whole" again - that is His mercy, but His justice demands death for sin.

This is why Jesus Christ went to the cross! God had to remain Just ... BUT ... He wanted to save us from the consequences of sin.

The cross accomplished all this
because Jesus Christ died in your place!

God inflicted His justice upon Christ,
as if Christ had disobeyed in the garden of Eden,
as if Christ had been you and me,
as if Christ had lied, stolen, murdered or been immoral,
as if Christ had been the sinner.

How does all this work? ... Why does this work from God's point of view?

Jesus was born of the virgin, Mary. The Bible explains that the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and she conceived without "knowing" a man.

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Remember when I told you that God is not only a God of love, but a God of justice?

Make no mistake.
Sin will be punished!

Either you will be punished for your sins, or you will come to Jesus, God's Son, and through faith in him will place your sins with him on the cross and let him take the punishment for you.

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In this way, Jesus Christ was the most unique person to have ever lived. Like Adam, he had no human father. Unlike Adam, he did have a human mother.

It was the Holy Spirit that brought conception in Mary and so Christ's Father was God. Because Jesus Christ had a human mother, he was a man, and because his Father was God, he was also God.

When we think of Jesus in all these aspects, it is appropriate to refer to him as **Son of Man** (he was the son of Mary, who was of mankind), and as **Son of God** (he had no human father, it was God who caused Mary's conception), as **Man** (he received a real human life from Mary), and as **God** (he was, in fact, God in the flesh).

In his humanity, Jesus Christ was the second Adam who came back to live as Adam should have. Jesus Christ, being more than Adam, being also God in the flesh, never sinned. Jesus Christ was not a sinner!

When Christ died on the cross of Calvary,
he died entirely as our substitute
and not for any sins of his own.
Our sins were placed upon him,
and he suffered for us.

This was God's way of taking responsibility
for giving us the power of choice
and correcting the condemnation
that the first Adam gave us.

God's love and mercy toward us moved Him
to become a man
and bear his own justice for our sins.

Remarkable as it sounds, the Bible tells us that "**God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself ...**" The Book of Acts reminds us that Christ's blood was God's blood. It was the humanity of Christ that finally died on the cross, but his Deity was intimately connected to the suffering, **taking personal responsibility for His lost creation.**

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This is God's plan.

He made you.
He gave you
the power of choice
and
He has made a "way" to
clear you
of your wrong choices.

I say we should accept
God's offer
and be thankful!

Notes:

Jesus Is The Only Way

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 14:6 (KJV)

Can a Christian who knows what there is to know about Jesus Christ concede to Christianity being an equal with other religions?

Based on Jesus words here:

True Christianity is either right or it is wrong, but it is not just one among many choices!

Jesus made it really clear:

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

He said it ... we have no approach to this holy God apart from him. Why? Because we are sinners and God is holy and separate from sin. Until we have appropriated Christ's work on the cross into our lives, we cannot approach God.

It all begins with our belief in what Jesus did for us. When we do, we can then identify our own lives with Christ's death and burial in repentance and baptism, and be united with him in his life through the gift of the Holy Spirit. In this way, we apply Jesus' death, burial and resurrection to our own lives.

Jesus did not say that he was “a” way.
He said that he was “the” way!

Other religions offer various ways for people to follow; they may even share some of the truths that the Bible teaches; and they all promise us better lives of some form, BUT **any faith that ignores or is incompatible with God's provided Way, Jesus Christ, is doomed to hinder more than help us.**

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

My friend,
through this booklet,
I am preaching and teaching
Jesus Christ
as the only hope you have.

Some religions are really
atheistic in nature.

Some have so many gods
that you couldn't hope
to know or please them all.

Others produce such
negative overall results
in areas where they
predominate
that they discourage me
from believing
that they are true.

In my opinion,
Christianity
is the only religion
that really offers a hope –
and that hope
is entirely bound up
in Jesus Christ himself.

It appears to me
that either He is right –
or nothing is!

Notes:

We Get To Choose

"You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose the easy way.

But the gateway to life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.

"Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep, but are really wolves that will tear you apart. Matthew 7:13-15 (NLT)

Do you feel the pressure to be broad-minded?

To stay out of trouble, we are supposed to be: **Sensitive** - to other people's feelings, **Politically Correct** - in all our communications, **Tolerant** - of everyone else's ideas and **Open** - to the opinion of other faiths. In other words, make the gate wide and don't get accused of being a bigot or being "narrow-minded".

This is the message that the world presses upon everyone. Satan continues to influence politics, religion, education and entertainment to push for these ideas: "Everybody is O.K.", "Nothing is really a sin" and "It doesn't matter what you believe, just be tolerant".

Jesus' warning is very appropriate for our day. There is clearly a spiritual and philosophical battle going on for our hearts and minds.

Will you be the broad-minded man or woman of the world?

OR

Will you be the faithful follower of Jesus who leads you to that hard-to-find "narrow" road.

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

There is an old saying:
"If you don't stand for something,
you'll fall for anything."

The issues with which we are dealing are matters of faith. They are matters that require a great deal of thought and evaluation. No one is going to prove what is the right answer.

You will have to look at all the information available to you, and make the most informed decision you can as to what is true.

But let's get one bit of nonsense out of the way right now – two conflicting philosophies cannot both be true!

It is ridiculous to state that two different religions are both correct when one states that Jesus is the Son of God and the other declares that he was not.

One has to be right and the other has to be wrong!

It cannot be any other way!

Jesus Christ, The Way

The most important element that makes God's way narrow is JESUS CHRIST. He is either "the" way or he is not even "a" way.

We all get to choose what we believe to be the truth about this. Let me ask you this, though: Who or what in the world is more credible than Jesus?

Remember:

The highway to hell is **BROAD**
The gateway to life is **SMALL**

Faith Is An Active Force

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?" Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers." Matthew 7:21-23 (NRS)

The word "Lord" means "Master", and Jesus' warning here is that many people use the word "Lord" without actually practicing what that title implies. They merely hope to pacify Him and get into heaven without really letting Him be their Master.

Likewise, many claim to believe in Jesus who have no real commitment to Him.

Faith in God is not an idle thing. It is living; it is a force that directs the life of the believer. Faith that is genuine propels us toward the will of God.

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

I realize that we have to be tolerant and respectful to people whose ideas differ from our own, but let's not fall for the idea that all concepts are of equal merit, or that it doesn't make any difference what a person believes.

All beliefs eventually have consequences!

Could I ask you a personal question?

How concerned are you about God's will in your life?

Evidently there will be people who are evildoers, who practice some form of religion and who expect to get into heaven, but who will not be allowed into heaven.

Jesus emphasized that only those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus Christ, The Way

Faith in Jesus Christ leads us to:

- An obedient life
- An open confession of our faith
- Repentance from sin
- Water baptism
- Receiving the Holy Spirit
- A life of holiness
- Power for witnessing to others
- Eternal life**

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

Notes:

In choosing to take Jesus Christ as your Lord and Master, please understand that He will lead you along His narrow way. His love for you is unquestioned - it was proven on the cross. But His intentions are also very clear ... **He expects sincerity, humility and devotion.**

We must take up the cross of reproach that comes to those who walk the narrow and unpopular way. We must learn to reject sin and the things that harm our relationship with God.

This can only happen if our **faith** turns into **love** for Him.

Faith Is Essential

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

Faith is essential. Without it, it is impossible to please God

What do you think might be the biggest possible insult to God?

I don't know for sure, but I am going to guess that it would be denying His existence.

Jesus Christ, The Way

Some people laugh at faith, as if it is merely a figment of the imagination. They pride themselves in relying solely on concrete things using only their five senses. These same people, however, are very susceptible to other intangible emotions such as love or hate.

Faith belongs to this same realm of the abstract and it is just as real as love, just as important as love. Without it you cannot operate in God's economy!

**If we are to have a relationship with God,
we must first believe that He exists.**

Not only that, **we must also understand that He is a personal God**, not just some impersonal First Cause. **We will also need to realize that we are made in His image**, as Genesis tells us, and as we look at some of our own characteristics, it helps us to know something about Him.

God is intelligent and makes decisions. He loves, hates, seeks company, and has goals. He can be jealous and has moral character.

God rewards those who diligently seek Him.

Because God has goals and moral character, He blesses good behavior and punishes wrongdoing. In fact, He defines for us what "good" and "evil" are.

The Creator of this vast universe, who cared enough about us to go the route of the cross to save us from sin, will reward us if we will seek Him and His will for our lives. Certainly, **He deserves more than our casual attention.**

**Part 1 – Faith:
The Importance of Christ**

The scriptures specify
that the heavens declare His
glory
and
the fool has said
in his heart
there is no God.

The passage we are
discussing on this page tells
us that God expects us to
believe in Him
and
that we can never
please Him
unless we do.

Further,
He promises to reward us
if we not only believe
in His existence,
but if we will seek
to know Him!

Notes:

Faith Causes Us To Confess

**Part 1 – Faith:
The Importance of Christ**

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Matthew 10:32-33 (KJV)

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:9-10 (KJV)

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 1 John 4:15 (KJV)

Here we are not talking about confessing to a crime or to some sin we have committed. We are referring to a willingness to tell others of our relationship with the Lord. Our mouths are involved with our salvation and we must come to the point where we are unashamed to confess our faith in Jesus Christ before others.

This is important enough to Jesus for him to make the following statement:

If you confess me before men ...
I'll confess you before my Father,
but
If you deny me ... I'll deny you.

Yes, faith will be active in your life. It will show itself in a number of ways, but one of the chief ways will be in what you say!

We all know that the mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart.

When something significant takes place in our lives (good or bad), we cannot keep still. We have to tell someone!

Sincere Christians witness about what Jesus Christ has meant for them and done for them ... because they just can't keep still about it!

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

You might say it takes a recommendation to get into heaven, and one of the qualifications for getting that recommendation is confessing your faith in Jesus Christ before others.

The apostle John wrote that confessing our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God was one of the evidences that:

GOD DWELLS IN US and WE DWELL IN GOD

Faith Leads To Repentance

... The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. Mark 1:15 (NAS)

... unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Luke 13:5 (NAS)

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation ... 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NAS)

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. Acts 3:19 (NAS)

... there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Luke 15:7 (NAS)

Faith and repentance go hand in hand. Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached repentance very strongly. Once we believe their preaching and the things we read in the Bible, the next step is to turn from our sins and to God for His help.

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

Notes:

Repentance is essential to serving God.

We all begin our lives with the major consideration being what we want.

Repentance means changing our concern to what God wants, then what we want.

Without such a change of heart and purpose, we will eventually perish in the pursuit of our desires.

Jesus Christ, The Way

Look at the benefits of repentance:

Repentance saves us from perishing.
Repentance is a part of our salvation.
Repentance positions us to receive refreshing.
Repentance enables our sins to be wiped away.
Repentance is a cause of rejoicing in heaven.

What is repentance?

It is a **turning around or changing of direction**. Repenting means that we alter our outlook on things; it is to become sorrowful for the old self-directed way of life.

When people repent, they have begun to understand that they have not been following God's way, that they are sinners and that they need forgiveness from God.

Not only do they realize these things, but **they determine to begin the life** that follows the Lord's way. **They confess their sins** to God, **ask His forgiveness** and **seek His help** in starting a new approach to life.

There is great power in repentance. The first thing it can do is lift from your shoulders a great load of accumulated bitterness, anger, worry and grief.

Many people are amazed
at the **sense of relief** they feel in their spirit
as they turn their lives over to the Lord.

If and when you make a decision like this, and do so with utter sincerity, **your heart and mind will be blessed**. Often people are moved to tears as they finally put God on the throne of their heart.

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

Repentance is really God's plan for correcting a relationship that has gone bad in some way.

Since we are born into sin, our relationship with the Lord begins on a poor footing. So the first thing we need to do is get that relationship turned around.

We do not use repentance just once, however.

As with all relationships, there is a need for repairing breaches in the relationship that are bound to occur from time to time.

Repentance is appropriate and needed on such occasions in the Christian's walk with the Lord to keep things where they should be.

Jesus Brings Rest

Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke fits perfectly, and the burden I give you is light. Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

This passage is one of the most beautiful in the Bible, and the hope it offers has always moved me greatly.

**Am I weary and burdened down?
Yes, very often I am!**

**Does life just get overwhelming at times?
It sure does!**

**Do I sometimes wish there were someone who would be willing to help me through the rough times?
Oh! How I wish it!**

Jesus says, "**Come unto me ...**"

Jesus is humble (not haughty and harsh)
Jesus is gentle (not angry and difficult)

**Christ's yoke fits perfectly
His burden is light!**

A yoke was put around the neck of two oxen so that they could pull together, sharing the weight of their burden.

**Part 1 – Faith:
The Importance of Christ**

Sin wears people out.

A life of sin is harmful physically and emotionally, as well as always being spiritually detrimental.

This kind of life is leaving billions of people weary as they carry the heavy burdens of bitterness, hatred, alcoholism, drug abuse, physical-mental-sexual abuse, theft, murder, selfishness and pride.

However, the “good news” is that Jesus can bring deliverance from these things and give rest for your soul!

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

Jesus called this his yoke. Are you afraid of the yoke? **The yoke is obedience to Christ, to his ways and to his laws of love and selflessness.** I think what he was saying is that he is placing himself in the yoke with us. Whatever our burdens are and whatever his are, **we pull a little and he pulls a lot.** The yoke is a perfect fit for whatever situations we encounter. **Do not fear the yoke!**

Think about it:

It is the Christ-less life
that must carry a heavy burden.
It is the Christ-less life
that is yoked with weariness.

Jesus promised,

"I will give you rest!"

Jesus Brings Understanding

... learn of me ... and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:29 (KJV)

What did Jesus mean when he said,
"Learn of me"?

1. He meant for us to learn ABOUT Him.

If you want to find rest for your soul, you must learn about Jesus. You need to know **what He has done** in the past and **what He can do** for you now. The Bible even tells us some of **what Jesus is going to do** in the future! You need to understand that **He is the Creator, the one and only God** of the universe. You need to know that **He is the only Savior** and **the world's greatest Teacher**. You need to know about His **healing power**.

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

Notes:

Jesus
will bring
new understanding
to you.

First,
through His teachings
and then through
getting to know Him
personally.

Jesus Christ, The Way

2. He meant for us to learn FROM Him.

Jesus taught on many different topics that span the entire scope of **human purpose** and **relationships**. He gave us **commands**, **warnings** and **encouragement**. He also inspired and authorized his apostles to leave us more teaching on Christian living.

3. He meant for us to learn HIM.

In the final analysis, Jesus is a bridegroom and we are to be His bride. The Bible, prayer, ministers, church and even the difficulties we go through are all means to an end: **Jesus wants us to develop a fervent love for Him. He wants us to know Him, to enjoy His presence and to be His counterpart.**

God's plan is very complex, as is His universe. **Your understanding of these things, however, begins in a very simple way.**

Recognize Him for Who He is.
Understand who you are.

He is the Creator you are His creation. **He asks for faith and repentance.** If you will take those measures, He will lead you further, step by step.

As you learn of Him, you will find
rest unto your soul!

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

If you decide to follow Jesus, you will eventually be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And when you receive the Holy Spirit, that is Christ's Spirit dwelling within you.

By His Spirit, He will guide you through your life.

As you learn about Him and from Him, you will be getting to know Him.

And this understanding will bring rest unto your soul!

Notes:

Faith: First Sign Of New Life

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death?**

We were **buried** therefore **with him** by baptism into death, so that **as Christ was raised** from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life.**

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We know that our **old self was crucified with him** so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.

For he who has died is freed from sin.

But if we have died with Christ,
we believe that we shall also live with him.

For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6:3-11 (RSV)

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

In my opinion,
it is a mistake
to treat faith
as if it is an entity
that can live alone.

I also believe
it is a mistake
to speak of faith
as if it is all that is needed
for salvation.

Faith
should not be set apart
from repentance,
baptism,
the infilling of the Spirit
or holy living.

In fact,
genuine saving faith
implies all of these things
and leads to obedience
in all of these areas.

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

Faith gets us dead, buried and risen with Christ.

What **conception** is to natural birth,
Faith is to the New Birth

Faith is the **beginning**, the **first sign** of life, the **seed** that grows into a fully developed Christian life. Faith carries all the **spiritual genes** that will eventually be expressed in our walk with God.

As faith develops, the gospel of Jesus Christ becomes personal for us:

Repentance is formed in the heart.
We die with Christ,
abandoning the old self-directed life.

Water baptism is obeyed.
We are buried with Christ.

The Holy Spirit is received.
We live in Christ;
we walk in newness of life.

When Jesus remarked that we must be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God, he was merely describing the normal New-Birth process that results when faith is conceived in the heart.

When Jesus **died**, was **buried** and **rose from the dead**, he was making the "way" for our salvation.

As faith leads us through the New-Birth process, we **die**, are **buried** and **rise** again with a new Spirit of life in us.

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

In one sense,
it is our faith in Jesus Christ
that saves us;
but only in the sense
that this faith propels us,
heart and soul,
to be ready to obey God
in whatever He wants us
to do or be.

Yes,
we trust in Christ's work
on the cross
and we know
that we will never be
good enough
to deserve heaven
on our own.
At the same time,
that faith produces
gratefulness and obedience.

The faith of Jesus Christ
allows us to enter
into his
death, burial and
resurrection
through
repentance,
water baptism
and
receiving the Holy Spirit
– this is the New Birth!

Faith Steps Forward

**Part 1 – Faith:
The Importance of Christ**

We began this Part 1 of the Christian Basics Series with the following verse:

"There is a way {which seems} right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Proverbs 16:25 (NAS)

Jeremiah, the prophet, adds a related thought:

I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.
Jeremiah 10:23 (NAS)

These things being true, we desperately need the Lord. It is He who knows what is best for us, and it is not so difficult to accept this when we remember that He is our Creator.

Perhaps your present worldview has really left you anchored to nothing.

We are now at the point where I am wondering if you are ready to take a step.

You may or may not be ready.

It might have taken you only an hour or two to read this far, if you did it in one sitting.

If that is true, you may need to digest what you have learned for a while, or review some of it and think more upon it.

That is O.K.!

If you are ever to be anchored to the solid Rock, you will need to discover God's provided "way", **Jesus Christ.**

Your way may suffice for a while, but life and death are too treacherous for it to work effectively for long. Sooner or later, we all have to grasp for something more stable than ourselves. **When we do, we find that the hand that lifts us is nail-scarred.**

May I encourage you to take the most important step of your life right now, today? It is the most important step, not because it is the only step, but because it is the step that sets your life on a new course: the course of truth, life and God's "way".

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

Would you accept Jesus
as God's provided "way"?
Would you ask Him to forgive your sins?
Would you ask His help
in forgiving those who have hurt you?
Would you thank him for His love
in going to the cross?

If you have sincerely acted upon the thoughts above, **you can begin trusting God for direction in your life. He will lead you now.**

Congratulations, you have begun!

1. Begin learning to pray
2. Begin reading your Bible
3. Go on to Part 2 - Water Baptism

Part 1 – Faith: The Importance of Christ

Weighing the truth of all this is an important part of the process, but when you have done so, and if you can see the truth of Jesus Christ being God's "way" to save you, you must eventually respond to Him.

Tell Him that you accept Him as your Savior. Ask forgiveness for the sins you can recall, and for sin generally in your life.

Thank Him and seek His help in turning your life around. Begin expecting His help and guidance as you pray to Him.

Rejoice in the step you have taken!

Water Baptism

Introduction

**Part 2 – Water Baptism:
Identity With Christ**

Once a person has come to a **sincere belief** in Jesus Christ, has **accepted him** as God's provided "way", has begun to **turn away from a life of sin**, and is **earnestly seeking God's will ...**

... it is time to consider water baptism.

Water baptism has endured as a practice in the church for two thousand years. This is because it is so well founded in the scriptures. Unfortunately, this great span of time has also allowed much confusion to develop around the subject of baptism within the practices of various denominations.

Some churches immerse the convert in water, **others** simply sprinkle a little water over their head.

Some quote Matthew 28:19 over the person being baptized ("in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"), while **others** follow the example of the apostles and use the name of Jesus Christ ("in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ").

Some believe that water baptism is not essential, but merely a public testimony to their faith in Jesus, while **others** feel that baptism is essential to salvation.

Some throw up their hands and proclaim that none of these things are critically important, and it does not matter how you practice baptism.

But we should not let human inconsistencies discourage us.

What we should do is:

Simply open our Bibles and study ...
Then decide to follow the Bible carefully

Today, it is very common for people to be unwilling to enter the debate.

They reason that if there are a lot of differing opinions on a subject, then there is no way to resolve the question, and instead of engaging their minds to find the most reasonable answer, they simply assert that it doesn't really matter anyway!

My question is this: Who are we to do decide what matters and what does not matter? Isn't it just a bit arrogant to tell God and others that it doesn't matter how we interpret the Word of God?

Shouldn't we quit deciding what is important and what is not important, and just get down to the business of carefully studying God's Word, so we can be following His instructions as carefully as possible?

Jesus Christ, The Way

The purpose of this part of the study is to:

- 1) Help you find the pertinent Bible passages that relate to water baptism.
- 2) Help you gain a thorough understanding of this important topic.

I think it would be safe to say, that after you have studied this section, **you will be better informed on this subject than well over 90% of all Christians.** See if you agree when you are done.

Baptism And Our Conscience

... God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, **eight persons, were saved through water.**

And **baptism**, which this prefigured, **now saves you**—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as **an appeal to God for a good conscience**, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:20-21 (NRS)

This is a very interesting passage and there are several observations that we can make from it:

The Great Flood foreshadowed water baptism.
Baptism is a part of God's way of saving us.
Baptism is an appeal to God for a clean conscience.

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Take the challenge!
Tackle the topic of baptism!

Jesus said that the truth
would make us free.
I want the freedom
that Jesus offers,
so I have to be concerned
about the truth.

Don't you?

No one can have it all.
We cannot continue
in a sinful life
and serve God, too.

There must come a point
where we cross the line,
resolve the past
and head into a new life.

Water baptism is at least
a part of that process.
The apostle Peter says here
that baptism saves us
by giving us
a good conscience!

Jesus Christ, The Way

Usually we think of Noah and his family being saved **FROM** the flood. This was certainly true with regard to their physical lives. But here we see Noah and his family being saved **BY** the flood.

If you read Genesis 6 carefully, you will notice that God used the Flood to save eight people from a world that was so wicked that it had to be destroyed. The Flood saved this family from that world and let them start over.

Baptism in our day corresponds to that Flood.

Water baptism ...
Separates us from our sinful past.
Gives us the opportunity to begin a new life.

Baptism Identifies Us With Christ

Do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** were **baptized into his death**?

We were **buried therefore with him by baptism** into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For **if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.**

Romans 6:3-5 (RSV)

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

As we delve further into this study, we will learn also that water baptism identifies us with Christ's death and burial, and is an element in our receiving forgiveness of sins

Regardless of what you may have heard, water baptism is an important issue!

When you read this passage, does it sound to you like baptism is just a public testimony of your faith?

No, reading this gives us the idea that baptism is an essential part of our salvation.

It says here that IF we have been united with him in a death like his, THEN we will be united with him in a resurrection like his.

It says that when we are baptized into Christ Jesus, we are buried with him into his death.

Jesus Christ, The Way

When we are baptized:

We are baptized into Jesus Christ
We are baptized into his death

If you have heard much about the gospel, you know that Jesus Christ died on the cross to free us from the power and penalty of sin. **It is at our baptism where we become personally identified with his sacrificial death.**

No longer is it just a general fact that Jesus died to save sinners, but now it becomes "**Jesus died for me.**"

When he hung on the cross and took the punishment for sin, **now it has become my sins** for which he paid the price.

I have been baptized into his death.

At my baptism, my guilt and record of evil deeds were transported back in time to the cross of Calvary, and **my old way of life died there when Christ died.**

Jesus And Baptism

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit**, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)

**Part 2 – Water Baptism:
Identity With Christ**

Baptism into Jesus Christ enters us personally into a death like his!

He died for our sins and our baptism is a death to our old sinful life, so our baptism leads to a walk in newness of life!

Notes:

name (singular)

**Father, Son,
Holy Spirit
are titles -
not the name**

Jesus Christ, The Way

This passage is Matthew's record of what is known as the "Great Commission". Notice here that Jesus directed his disciples to go and make more disciples. Once converted, those new disciples were to be baptized in a NAME.

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

The **NAME** to be used was to be:
the **NAME** of the Father
the **NAME** of the Son
the **NAME** of the Holy Spirit

Jesus' disciples knew the NAME to which he was referring, and if you have any question as to what NAME they were to use, just read the rest of the New Testament and follow their practice. Then you will know for sure.

I think you can figure it out for yourself though.

You know the NAME of the Son is "JESUS".

Did you know that Jesus came in his Father's NAME?

I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. John 5:43 (KJV)

Did you know Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come in his NAME?

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things ... John 14:26 (KJV)

The name of **JESUS** is to be used in baptism:
The name of the Father is **JESUS**
The name of the Son is **JESUS**
The name of the Holy Spirit is **JESUS**

Have you ever noticed that some things just seem naturally right to us simply because we have repeatedly heard them?

The phrase "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is an example of this.

Of course there is nothing wrong with the phrase itself – it came from Jesus, but we have heard it repeated so many times in church or in movies that it just seems like the right thing to say in certain situations.

We have heard it so much that it has become difficult to even think about what it is really teaching. It just rolls off the tongue in its rhythmic fashion ... and our minds race ahead and finish the thought even before it is completely spoken.

This phrase is so familiar that it is not even necessary to hear a word ... all someone has to do is touch their forehead and then each of their shoulders ... and the words echo through our minds ... "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"

To some it may be new to hear of the Father's name being JESUS or that the Holy Spirit's name is JESUS.

Yet we use the terms "God in my heart", "the Holy Spirit in my life", "Christ in me" all as synonymous phrases. Why? Because we realize instinctively and from what we know of the Scriptures, that there is only one God. That one God is a Spirit who comes into the life of those who are born again. **That one God has one name in His role as Savior of mankind: JESUS!**

It is unfortunate, but true, that somewhere along the line, people began to repeat this famous command instead of simply obeying it.

When a minister says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," he has repeated what Jesus said to do, but he has not obeyed Jesus, because he never used the NAME.

When a minister says, "I baptize you in the name of JESUS," he has followed Jesus' instructions because he has called upon the saving NAME.

Calling On The Lord's Name

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 2:21 (KJV)

This verse promises **salvation** to anyone who **calls on the name** of the Lord. It should be understood that statements like this do no make the passages on faith, baptism and repentance obsolete. **All scriptures work in harmony with each other and complement one another.** Think of each passage as looking at only one facet of this gem we call salvation. Realize that the next passage we consider may look at it from a slightly different angle.

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Of the times you have heard the phrase "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," how often has it occurred to you that Jesus was commanding his followers to baptize in a particular NAME?

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

Since it takes the complete Bible to give a well-rounded understanding of God's plan, **it is extremely important that you eventually have a good understanding of the entire Bible, not just a few portions of it.**

We do see here that:

The name of the Lord is important to know, and is somehow important to our salvation

We are instructed to call on that name!

Since Jesus told his followers to baptize in the NAME, **baptism is one of the most important places where we should call on the name of the Lord!**

**The name of the LORD is a strong tower;
The righteous runs into it and is safe.**

Proverbs 18:10 (NAS)

No Other Name

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ** of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Why would calling on the name of the Lord be important?

When we call on the name of Jesus ...

... we are expressing our faith that he is our Savior.

... we are acknowledging that he is God's "way" of salvation.

... we are identifying who it is that is helping us.

... we are proclaiming the gospel.

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Acts 4:8-12 (NKJV)

During one of the early days of the church, Peter and John had been headed to the temple for prayer, when at the gate they noticed a crippled man. Invoking the name "Jesus of Nazareth," Peter had commanded the man to rise up and walk, and miraculously, God healed him!

The religious authorities did not like this and they called Peter and John in for questioning.

They asked:

By what **power** have you done this?
By what **name** have you done this?

Peter, inspired by the Spirit of God, used this occasion to not only answer these questions, but to preach **salvation through the name of Jesus Christ.**

Pointedly, he told them:

There is salvation in no one except Jesus Christ
There is **no other name** under heaven
through which we can be saved

The miracle of healing demonstrated that there is a very real and tangible power associated with the name of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus was still here in the flesh, he once asked his critics if it were easier to forgive sins or to heal? He asked this on an occasion when he was about to heal someone, so they could not deny his power to forgive sins.

Today, the name of Jesus carries that same power!

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

The name of Jesus is the one name that is above all others. Literally, the name means "Jehovah-salvation" and is simply stating that God is our Savior.

In essence, when we call on the name of Jesus, we are giving God the credit for our salvation and we are acknowledging that this salvation was procured through the one who is known as Jesus Christ.

There is no other name under heaven, and no other person than Jesus Christ who can save us.

Notes:

Washing Away Sins

**Part 2 – Water Baptism:
Identity With Christ**

And now, why delay? Get up and be **baptized**, and have your **sins washed away, calling on the name of the Lord.** Acts 22:16 (NLT)

This is part of the story of Saul of Tarsus, a man who had been a severe persecutor of the Christians. He was also a man whom God had chosen to become the prime missionary to the Gentiles and writer of much of the New Testament.

The testimony of his conversion to Christ unfolds another important concept about baptism.

Ananias encouraged Saul (later known as Paul) by questioning why he had been waiting. It was time for him to get up and be baptized!

The purpose of his baptism was ...
to wash away his sins!

And this was to happen as a result of ...
calling on the name of the Lord.

While he was here personally, Jesus had many times demonstrated his desire and ability to heal and forgive sins. **In the book of Acts, we see Jesus continuing his work through his followers.**

Jesus was still doing the same things: healing, forgiving, cleansing, setting the captives free, only now it was being done **through his followers as they called upon his name!**

What is his name?

Saul (Paul) knew because at his conversion, when he was knocked from his horse by a light shining from heaven, he had asked, **"Who are you?"**

And the answer from heaven was,

"I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting."

The phrase "sins washed away" with reference to Saul or Paul's baptism is a graphic way of describing the forgiveness of sins.

As you will see later, repentance and baptism are for the forgiveness or remission of sins.

The actual Greek word means "sending away". So the "washing away" of sins means the sending away or forgiveness of sins.

If and when you turn to God for your salvation, you will need to be baptized to send your sins away.

Make sure the minister calls on the name of Jesus because there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.

Also, make sure that you are immersed in water, not just sprinkled. Sprinkling is used in many churches – and called baptism – but the Greek word for baptism always means to dip, plunge or immerse.

Washed, Sanctified, Justified

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NKJV)

God's word defines for us what God says sin is, but the world around us does not always agree. No matter ... God is right!

The important thing here is that we understand how God is in the saving and changing business.

It doesn't matter what we once were;
what matters is
that we come to Jesus Christ for salvation.
He can wash, sanctify and justify us!

What do all these terms mean?

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

This is a pretty explicit list of sins. Many people today do not want some of these things to be called sins. But God said that people who practice these things are unrighteous, and they will not go to heaven when they die.

That is, they won't go to heaven unless they ...

... repent, turn around and change their practices.

... are washed, sanctified and justified through baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus.

... and are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Maybe you have not done all these unrighteous things, but being human, you are a sinner until you come to Jesus.

So, if you want to go to heaven someday, make sure that you turn to Jesus in faith and repentance. Then get baptized in the name of Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit!

Jesus Christ, The Way

Fornication

A general term meaning any kind of sexual act that does not involve a man and woman who are husband and wife.

Idolatry

Worship of anything other than the one true God.

Adultery

Unfaithfulness to one's spouse through sexual involvement with another.

Homosexuality

Having sexual relations with someone of the same sex.

Sodomy

The Greek term for this word implies effeminacy with implications of male prostitution and/or use of boys for a man's sexual purposes.

Covetousness

Greed

Reviling

Excessive and unwarranted criticism. Railing. Abusiveness.

Extortion

Swindling. Rapacious, ravenous thievery.

The apostle Paul openly admits that the Christians of Corinth, Greece had once led lives that could be described with these kinds of words.

But they no longer lived that way. A change had taken place.

Now he described them in these terms:

Washed

Cleansed, purified from their sins and freed from guilt.

Sanctified

Consecrated to God, made holy and set apart for God's use.

Justified

Declared to be righteous, as if they had never sinned.

What a contrast! Every person who is born again has the ability to have a testimony like this. What was it, though, that really made the difference in these people's lives?

**Part 2 – Water Baptism:
Identity With Christ**

Notes:

The name of the Lord Jesus
The Spirit of God

Part 2 – Water Baptism:
Identity With Christ

Notes:

To simplify, these people had come to the point that they put their trust in Jesus Christ as God's provided "way" of salvation. **Through repentance and baptism, they turned from their sins and had them washed away.** They accepted that Jesus sacrifice of himself as their substitute cleansed them and made them right in God's sight. **They were filled with the Spirit of God and empowered to live new lives that were holy and set apart for the purpose of glorifying God.**

In short, Jesus changed them from selfish and greedy people into people with a new and higher purpose, a new and higher destiny.

Philip And The Name

Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: **only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.** Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:14-17 (ASV)

During the early persecution of the church in Jerusalem, many of the Christians fled to safer places. The Bible tells us that they went everywhere proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. Philip went to Samaria and began preaching in that area.

Are you beginning to see some patterns to the teachings and practices of the early church? Let me try to identify them for you. It is identical to what we saw in the last section:

The Samaritans heard Philip's preaching and they

...turned to God (faith and repentance),

...were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,

... and here we see the apostles praying for them to receive the Holy Spirit.

Paul And The Name

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?"

They said, "Into John's baptism."

And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."

On hearing this, **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.** Acts 19:1-5 (RSV)

How you are baptized is important! **It is important enough to be re-baptized if you find that you have never been baptized in the name of Jesus.** That is at least one lesson of this portion of church history.

The setting here was about 20 years after the Lord Jesus ascended back to heaven. The scene takes place, not in Israel, but on one of Paul's missionary journeys in what is now Turkey. The people Paul questioned were followers of John the Baptist's teachings, but they had not yet been exposed to the full gospel of Jesus Christ.

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Along the same theme that we have been discussing, the apostle Paul encountered some followers of John the Baptist's teachings.

Since John preached repentance very strongly, we can assume that these believers had repented and turned to God.

Then we notice that Paul re-baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus.

If you go to your Bible and read the rest of chapter 19, you will see that Paul laid his hands on them and prayed for them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

Upon discovering that this group had not yet received the Holy Spirit, **Paul questioned their baptism.** Finding that they had been baptized as John baptized, he proceeded to explain that Christ was the fulfillment of John's ministry, and **it was time to take further steps.**

As you can see, it was also Paul's practice to baptize using the name of Jesus.

What about you?

Could it be that you have followed what you have known up to this point, but are now beginning to think of some further progress?

There is nothing wrong with being re-baptized. As you have read, John's disciples had to do it.

If you were just sprinkled or only had Matthew 28:19 repeated over you, why not follow the example of these sincere people?

Growing in Christ means walking in new light as it comes to us.

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Notes:

Peter And The Name

**Part 2 – Water Baptism:
Identity With Christ**

Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who had heard the message.

The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles, too. And there could be no doubt about it, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter asked,
"Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" So he gave orders for them to be **baptized in the name of Jesus Christ ...**

Acts 10:44-48 (NLT)

The events related here took place about eight years after the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was first given to the disciples. Until this time, it appears that the church was strictly a Jewish church. This tenth chapter of Acts explains to whom, by whom and how the gospel was first brought to a group of devout Gentiles (non-Jewish people).

This was an act of God in several ways:

An angel urged Cornelius to send for Peter.
God gave Peter a vision to make him willing to go.
God filled Cornelius and his household with the Holy Spirit.

Since God had marvelously proven His wish to include Gentiles in the church, Peter immediately began to cooperate, instructing these people to be baptized.

Continuing further with our theme, we now look at the apostle Peter when he brought the gospel to the Gentile Cornelius' household.

First, the earlier part of Acts, chapter 10, explains that Cornelius was a very devout man who feared God and prayed to Him always. He and his household had definitely repented and turned to God even before Peter arrived.

We also see at the end of the passage here that Peter gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

This was in response to the fact that God had already filled these people with His Holy Spirit during Peter's preaching.

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

In the apostle Peter's preaching here, it is clear that he is speaking of Jesus Christ. The last verse says:

...everyone who believes in him
receives forgiveness of sins
through his name.

The name of Jesus carries the authority of Jesus life and blood to bring forgiveness of sins to our lives. **Invoking the name of Jesus at baptism is calling on God to forgive sins based on what Jesus did for us.** The Greek word for forgiveness here means literally "sending away". Remission or forgiveness of sins means **sending those sins away!**

It was commanded the Christ child be named
"Jesus"
for it was explained,
"he shall save his people from their sins."

God commanded Joseph and Mary to name their son "Jesus" because the name means "**Jehovah-savior**", and Jesus became our Savior.

The reason we call on the name of Jesus,
and the reason we baptize in the name of Jesus
is because Jesus is our Savior.
He is the "Way"
We receive forgiveness of sin
through his name!

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

You are probably seeing by now that baptism in the early church was administered in the name of Jesus Christ.

It does matter that the name of Jesus is called upon when we are baptized because everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through his name!

As has been mentioned before, and will be shown again, baptism is for the forgiveness or sending away of our sins.

Is it the water that brings forgiveness?

No,
it is our faith in Jesus as we call on his name!

Notes:

Forgiveness And Baptism

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' " John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a **baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.**

And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Mark 1:2-5 (NRS)

Now we learn more about forgiveness of sins. We learn that baptism is associated with this important part of our salvation. We have already learned that we receive forgiveness of sins through the name of Jesus, and now we see that baptism and repentance play a part as well.

... baptism of repentance
for the forgiveness of sins.

A close study of John the Baptizer's ministry will reveal that, even though he understood baptism's role in the forgiveness (sending away) of our sins, he had no revelation of speaking the name of Jesus over the people he baptized. This was because John's ministry was largely prior to and a preparation for the ministry of Christ. It was not until Jesus died on the cross and rose again that his name carried the authority and power of his righteousness and blood.

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Notes:

John the Baptist's ministry, because it was intended to prepare the way for Christ's ministry, does give us glimpses of the truths we have been studying.

John preached repentance in no uncertain terms. He baptized for the remission or forgiveness of sins (though the people would need to be re-baptized later in the name of Jesus).

He also prophesied that Jesus, when he came, would baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

Shouldn't churches everywhere remain consistent with this theme?

Jesus Christ, The Way

After Jesus' resurrection,
his disciples began baptizing using the
name of Jesus exclusively.

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Notes:

As we have already seen, the apostle Paul even re-baptized John's followers in the name of Jesus after Christ died and rose again.

To summarize, we are taught to:

- ... believe on him through his name
- ... receive forgiveness through his name
- ... receive forgiveness through baptism
- ... receive salvation by calling on his name.

It appears that God purposed that we should come to a faith in His son, Jesus Christ, as His provided "way" of salvation ...that we should call on the name of Jesus in recognition of who he is, as we accept forgiveness of sins. Baptism seems to be an integral part of this also, because we receive forgiveness of sins through baptism.

When we call on the name of Jesus as we baptize,
and as the new believer submits
to baptism in the name of Jesus,
we are all acknowledging our belief that Jesus is the "way"
we receive salvation and forgiveness of sins.

Notes:

Forgiveness And The Blood

Part 2 – Water Baptism:
Identity With Christ

Notes:

For after Moses had given the people all of God's laws, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's laws and all the people ... Then he said, "This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you." And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the sacred tent and on everything used for worship. In fact, we can say that according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified by sprinkling with blood. **Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.** Hebrews 9:19-22 (NLT)

Bringing Several
Concepts Together:

It was Christ's sacrificial shedding of his blood that satisfied God's justice against sin, allowing Him to extend mercy and forgiveness to all who come to Jesus.

The principle of sacrificial shedding of blood was established in the Old Testament to foreshadow what Christ would do and to push Old Testament sinner's transgressions forward to the cross of Jesus.

Under the law of Moses, the blood of calves and goats was used to ceremonially purify things. **These sacrifices were not really effectual in removing sin as a problem** in the lives of Israel, but they were symbolic of the one true sacrifice that would eventually be God's "way" of answering that need.

Jesus told us that he came to fulfill the law, and one of the ways he did that was to become the ultimate sacrifice for sin. The death, burial and resurrection of Christ is God's "way" of salvation. All the animal sacrifices prior to Calvary's cross merely pushed people's sins forward to the time when Christ would really pay the penalty for them. All Christians since Calvary look back to the time when Christ died once for all.

Old Testament sins were brought forward to Christ...
All sins since Christ are pushed back to him ...
He became the sacrifice for all who believe in him!

Jesus Christ, The Way

Just think how much more the **blood of Christ** will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. Hebrews 9:14 (NLT)

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Bringing Several Concepts Together:

Baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ applies Christ's blood to a believer's life and sends his or her sins back to the cross of Jesus.

In this way, Christ died once for all. He became God's "Way" for everyone who wants to be saved.

We see that forgiveness of sins
... comes through the **name of Jesus**
... comes through **water baptism**
... is based on the **shedding of Christ's blood.**

Water baptism is the occasion where all these factors come together. We now see from the scriptures that the name of Jesus is called upon in baptism because it is Jesus' blood that cleanses, purges and purifies us.

Without the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ,
... there would be no forgiveness of our sins
... baptism would be useless
... the NAME ineffective.

Notes:

When we are baptized in the name of Jesus,
we are confessing our belief
that Christ's sacrifice pays for our sins,
and that we are **applying Christ's blood to our own lives.**

Since the sacrifice and blood of Christ is God's basis for being able to extend mercy to sinners, there has to be a way to bring that blood to bear upon the life of the believer. God has ordained that water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is the method with which the believer is to be cleansed and washed from his or her sins.

It seems that baptism is the focal point
where Christ's blood is personally administered to us.

Notes:

Obedience To Jesus Name Baptism

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified."

Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Peter said to them, **"Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

"For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." Acts 2:36-39 (NAS)

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' disciples, recorded in Acts chapter 2, marked the birth of Christ's church. The Holy Spirit empowered these believers to speak in tongues they did not naturally know. The Spirit must have also caused them to worship in an unusual and perhaps noisy way, because it drew the attention of a crowd of onlookers.

Peter began to preach to these spectators, explaining that the coming of the Spirit had been prophesied, and proclaiming that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ. This was the same Jesus that they had helped crucify just days before. His preaching was effective because we read that many of these people were "pierced to the heart" by what they were hearing.

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Here again we see the apostolic theme. This occasion is on the Day of Pentecost, just after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon 120 of Jesus' followers in an upper room in Jerusalem.

This was the first day of the New Testament church. Peter, to whom Christ had given the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," told the crowd what they needed to do. It was consistent with the theme we have identified:

Repent

Be baptized
in the name of Jesus Christ

And God will fill you with
the Holy Spirit

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

As a result, they asked the all-important question,
"... what shall we do?"

Peter was ready with his answer,

Repent.

Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Here we see very plainly the answer of the apostles to a guilty, sinful life: **Repentance and baptism using the only name under heaven that can save.** And why can it save? Because it is the name of the only Savior, whose blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Invoking the name of Jesus in baptism,
personally washes us of our sins
in his cleansing blood.

Do All In Jesus' Name

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all
in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to
God and the Father by him. Colossians 3:17 (KJV)

Water baptism is an act that involves both **word** and **deed**.
It should be performed in the name of Jesus!

If Philip were here and you had not yet been baptized,
he would, no doubt, baptize you as he did the people of Samaria,
IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS

If the apostle Paul were here and you had been baptized some other
way, he would re-baptize you as he did John the Baptizer's disciples,
IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

Notes:

Most people already have
some sort of religious
background before they
learn the truths that are
being shared here.
Perhaps you do too.

Will that background
cause you to say:

“I have a church of my own
and they don’t believe
this?”

“I was already baptized
and I don’t want to do it
over again?”

Or are you able to see a
truth in God’s word, believe
it, act upon it and then let
God help you work through
the details of your life?

Jesus Christ, The Way

If the apostle Peter were here and you could ask him what to do, I am sure he would remind you of what he said in Jerusalem:

**REPENT, AND EACH OF YOU BE BAPTIZED
IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS**

If Ananias were here and found you praying, he would say, as he did to Saul of Tarsus,
**AND NOW, WHY DELAY? GET UP AND BE BAPTIZED,
AND HAVE YOUR SINS WASHED AWAY,
CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD**

**Whatever you do, if you are a Christian,
do it sincerely
and do it in the name of the Lord Jesus**

More On Baptism

I hope that you can see by now that **there is little need for confusion on this subject**. The Biblical record fits together into a coherent system of thought and is quite understandable.

Our biggest problems come from traditions we have received from our background or people who want to dismiss the subject as irrelevant. **When we go straight to the Bible and begin thinking about what we are reading, it really becomes fairly simple.**

**It really becomes a matter of
faith and obedience!**

There are many other Biblical references to baptism that you may want to investigate. Rather than discuss each one, I am giving you a short addendum that you can refer to at your leisure:

Part 2 – Water Baptism: Identity With Christ

I hope you will be able to make the will of God foremost in your decision-making and a priority in your actions.

There comes a point where it is just time to do what you know you should do!

Our church stands ready to help you in any way it can. In my view, it is critically important that you be obedient to baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you live near our us in the metro Detroit area, we would be very happy to baptize you in Jesus name.

If you are not in our area, we could connect you with a minister in your area most likely. Just follow the links or call the number at the end of this section for more information.

Holy Spirit Introduction

If your **belief** in Jesus Christ, has led you to be **baptized** in his NAME, you have died and been buried with Christ, but that is not the end! Romans 6 tells us that **we now can rise to walk in newness of life.**

It is time to explore
the baptism of the Holy Spirit!

Jesus told his disciples that he had come to bring them an **abundant life**. Isn't that what we all want? People have a variety of ideas as to what an abundant life would be. Some would measure it with money, others with fame or power, but Jesus wasn't talking about these things. He was talking about **life in the Kingdom of God!**

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17 (KJV)

There is such a wealth of discussion in the New Testament about the Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost), that it is necessary to **limit the scope** of our discussion. We will purposely exclude most of the passages that deal with the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, and many other references that are both interesting and important, but do not bear directly on our subject of **receiving the gift or baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

Jesus came,
not just to die and rise again, but
to baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Paul, the apostle, summarized what the kingdom of God is. He said that it is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit!

Receiving the Holy Spirit and walking in the Spirit will lead to a life that grows in Christlikeness, holiness and righteousness.

As a result of this new life of righteousness, there comes a new-found peace with God, a sense that things are right between you and God.

The cumulative effect of this righteousness and peace is an overall joy that transcends all the sorrows and enhances all the good things in life.

Ultimately, the kingdom of God is all about a genuine and ongoing experience with God Himself as we are filled with and led by His Spirit.

If you have acted upon the the first two parts of this study, sin has been dealt with. Now you can step into the kingdom of God!

The Holy Spirit And Fire

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Matthew 3:11 (NKJV)

Just prior to the ministry of Jesus, one who became known as "John the Baptist" ("John the Baptizer") was called by God to prepare the people for the coming of Christ.

His ministry was very remarkable. He preached along the banks of the Jordan River, baptizing those who believed him in the river. Jesus even came to him for water baptism.

John's ministry was that of the forerunner of Christ, so it was temporary and short-lived. John expected that Christ's ministry would eventually supercede his own, **so his whole thrust was to point his followers to that one who would come after himself.**

John said,

I indeed baptize you with water ... but ...
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit

The word baptize in the original Greek means to immerse, dip or plunge. As John baptized people, putting them down into the water, he was illustrating and explaining what Jesus was going to do, in turn, for his followers, **immersing them in his Spirit.**

Indeed, if one were to focus entirely upon John the Baptists' preaching, it would be easy to think that the main thing Jesus came to do was to give people the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Many people have responded to the gospel as best they knew by going forward to the altar at the end of a service. They prayed. They accepted the Lord as their personal Savior and asked God to help them live for Him. Perhaps they experienced a great sense of relief when they made this step and even joined the church. They may have gone on to work in the church and been very active ...

STILL

... Deep inside, there remained a nagging sense that there must be more, a sense that they were not fully satisfied in their experience with God.

Have you at times felt like this?

May I suggest that this longing for more is God calling you to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus Christ, The Way

As you will see, **Jesus himself placed great importance on receiving the Holy Spirit.** This experience was to become the fire and source of enthusiasm for the church after Jesus returned to heaven.

The Holy Spirit is, of course, simply God. He is also known as the Spirit of Christ. **So, when we use the term "Holy Spirit", we mean God.**

However ...

When we speak of
receiving the Holy Spirit,
we are referring to the experience of
God filling a believer with His presence.

Born Of The Spirit

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**

John 3:3-5 (NKJV)

A very influential but honest religious official came to Jesus by night to find out more about him. Jesus surprised the man with an incomprehensible statement:

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

The terms Jesus used – being "born again" and being "born of the Spirit" are significant. Entering the kingdom of God is dramatic and life-changing. It is so profound that it can only be described as being born all over again!

Think how significantly a child's life changes at birth.

The old existence in mother's womb was needed at the time, but was very limiting. Continued growth could not occur.

So the child was born ... for the first time he/she breathed.

Now the potential for growth to maturity was possible.

In a spiritual sense, the birth of the Spirit is very comparable. Before this new birth, God nurtures us along, leads us to faith and helps us grow to a point.

Then there is a critical juncture. Further growth in God is impossible without the new birth.

Unless one is **born again**
he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Because this idea was totally new to Nicodemus, Jesus gave him more explanation.

He told him that:

Unless one is **born**
of water and of the Spirit,
he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

The goal right now is to help you understand **what it means to be born "of the Spirit"**. Remember, John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit. Now Jesus teaches Nicodemus that without a birth of the Spirit, we cannot enter the kingdom of God.

So ... this must be very important!

Later on, you will be given some helpful direction on how to receive The Holy Spirit. You will be given steps to preparing your heart for this great new birth. Actually, this entire study is an excellent first step in that preparation, so with faith in God, let's follow Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus a little further ...

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

Just as a child will die
if it remains
in its mother's womb
too long,
people who have started
their spiritual journey
but stop short of "new birth"
will also die
without entering
the kingdom of God.

Receiving the Holy Spirit
is the "birth of the Spirit",
and just as a baby breathes
for the first time at birth,
you will really breathe
spiritually
for the first time
when you are filled
with the Holy Spirit!

There is a lot of confusion
in both Christians
and non-Christians
as to what the new birth is.
There have been studies
that indicate there is no
significant difference found
in the practices and attitudes
of those who claim
to be "born again"
and those who do not claim
this experience.
Does this mean
that the "new birth"
really does not do that much
for a person?
Or that perhaps many
people think they are born
again and are not?

How Do I Know?

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

Do not marvel that I said to you, '**You must be born again.**' The wind blows where it wishes, and **you hear the sound of it**, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. **So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.**"

John 3:7-8 (NKJV)

Jesus said,

You must be born again!

He gives us no choice in this matter, if we want to be a part of the kingdom of God. Jesus is showing us the way to the kingdom clearly and plainly. The word he used is "must". Remember, God has the controls, not us. He makes the rules, not us.

What he says is a must, is a must!

So ... there is no question about it, we have to be born again.

But what is being "born again"?

It is important that we know how to identify this essential. **If we are not sure what the signs of being born of the Spirit are, then how do we know if we have or have not experienced what Jesus said we must have.**

**If being "born of the Spirit" is a must,
then we must know when we have experienced it!**

Various Christian traditions suggest that the "new birth" happens at different times in a new Christian's experience.

So when is a person "born again"?

Is it at the point of faith or at baptism or at first communion, etc.?

Our answer is this – the "birth of the Spirit" happens when a person receives the baptism of the Spirit just like they did in Acts chapters 2,8,10 and 19.

People can have many experiences in the Lord before their "new birth", but these are "in-the-womb" experiences and should not be confused with the "birth of the Spirit".

Jesus Christ, The Way

Jesus gave Nicodemus a hint:

The wind blows ... and you hear the sound of it ...
so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Jesus compared the wind and the sound it makes to everyone who is born of the Spirit. The implication seems clear: When a person receives the Holy Spirit, a characteristic sound accompanies the event. It is more than a silent change in the heart ...

"... you hear the sound of it ..."

There is a sound that is characteristic of someone being filled with the Spirit of God, just as there is a sound that is characteristic of the wind whistling through the trees.

Rivers Of Living Water

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' "

But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 7:37-39 (NAS)

Jesus spoke these words on a special Jewish feast day. Crowds were in Jerusalem for the occasion, and by this time in his ministry, Jesus was a great controversy.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes:

One of the reasons there is confusion about what being "born of the Spirit" is – is because many Christians at some point just begin assuming that they have the Spirit. They have never experienced anything like what the Bible describes the Holy Spirit infilling to be, but they have had "in-the-womb" experiences of faith, repentance, and answered prayer that they can point to – so they begin to assume ...

Let me ask you: Have you ever had an experience like the one Jesus describes here in this section?

Jesus Christ, The Way

Some argued that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, the Christ. Others thought he was nothing more than a deceiver. The religious officials tried to have him arrested, but when the soldiers returned without arresting him, their answer was:

No one has ever spoken like this man speaks.

One of the remarkable concepts that Jesus put forth was that he was able to quench the thirst of the people. He taught that:

If we believe in him, then
out of our innermost being
will flow rivers of living water!

You can see why he was such a controversy. Ideas like this one were outrageous unless Jesus really was the Son of God. What could Jesus have meant by making such a statement?

Well, he obviously was not talking about literal water and physical thirst. **He was referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit!** What he was saying was:

If you believe in me,
you will receive the Holy Spirit.

God's Spirit has always dealt with men and we see many instances of people in the Old Testament being moved by the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's will.

However, the New Testament concept of being filled with the Spirit, being born of the Spirit and being baptized in the Spirit is something new. It is a new level of intimacy with God that was not possible until Jesus died and rose again.

Even while Jesus was with his disciples preaching and healing, his disciples did not have the Holy Spirit in the sense that we see after the Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts chapter 2.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was not intended to come to believers until after Jesus finally ascended to heaven.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Do you still long for rivers of living water to gush out of your being?

If you have not yet received the gift of the Holy Spirit, that is not to say that you haven't had some very important and genuine experiences with God.

Coming to a faith in Christ is a genuine and essential step.

Feeling God's forgiveness is a real experience with God.

But these events do not imply that you have yet received the Holy Spirit.

These "in-the-womb" experiences are very essential in getting us "full-term" and ready to be "born".

So build on what you already have!

Notes:

If you believe in Jesus as the Son of God and as your Savior, you can be assured that God wants to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes:

Jesus' declaration above emphasizes this important point. Don't miss it! This is a very important part of Christ's mission. **Just as John came to baptize with water, Jesus came to baptize with the Holy Spirit.**

Receiving the Holy Spirit is intended to be **the normal result of believing in Jesus**. Receiving the Holy Spirit is **the cool, refreshing drink that all thirsty souls long for**.

You will never be as satisfied as you could be until you receive His Spirit.

As a matter of fact, you "must" be born of the Spirit!

Our Comforter

And I will pray the Father, and **he shall give you another Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever; **Even the Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

**I will not leave you comfortless:
I will come to you.**

When you do receive the Holy Spirit, Who is actually taking up residence in your life?

Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Comforter (some translations use "Helper"). So the Comforter or Helper will be in your life.

Then Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." So the Comforter is really the Spirit of Jesus coming into your life.

Jesus Christ, The Way

Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

John 14:16-20 (KJV)

The Holy Spirit is not for everyone!

Jesus, in this discourse, is preparing the disciples for the day when he would physically be gone from them.

Read carefully: He would be **gone physically**, but he would **come to them in a different form**. Instead of just being **WITH** them, as they were accustomed, there was coming a time when He would be **IN** them, spiritually. He was preparing them for that special New Testament, post-ascension, church-age, newness-of-life existence called **being "filled with the Spirit"**.

He refers to the Spirit as:
The Comforter and The Spirit of Truth.

But the Holy Spirit is not for everyone:

The "world" cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus refers to the "world" here, he means those who do not believe in him - those who reject the gospel.

However, those who choose to become Christ's followers, those who will know the Lord, are promised this special indwelling of God's presence.

Jesus said that he would not leave his disciples comfortless. He would come to them. (He was referring to Himself as He said these things, **Jesus was letting them know that this Spirit of Truth was really His own Spirit**)

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

God is Spirit and He is holy. So one of the titles of God is the Holy Spirit. When you receive the Holy Spirit, it will be God who comes to live within you.

I am not trying to confuse you, but just want you to understand that there are a lot of ways to describe Who you are getting when you are filled with the Holy Spirit – but all these mean the same thing:

God is putting some of His Spirit into your life, and you are going to experience God in a dramatically new dimension!

Notes:

I will not leave you comfortless.
I will come to you.

Having the Holy Spirit allows the Christian to have a **perspective** and **fellowship** with the Lord that the "world" is unable to comprehend.

Our Teacher

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26 (KJV)

The Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) is our Comforter. This means that once you are baptized with the Spirit, you have a built-in source of comfort at all times. Remember, the Holy Spirit is God's presence, and **when you are "born of the Spirit", God abides in you continually.**

Part of the comfort comes from the fact that the Holy Spirit is an internal Teacher.

... He shall teach you all things ...

Since the writers of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit, you will actually have the Author of the Bible living inside of you. God puts His Spirit in you, as an internal guide and instructor.

The **voice of God** is rarely audible, but **comes to us as impressions from the Spirit** within. You will have God's nature planted inside of you to help you know how to live.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes:

The fact that the Holy Spirit will teach us implies that there is a level of understanding for spiritual things that is possible for those who are Spirit-filled – that is not possible for those without Him.

God teaches us as He lives within us.

... and bring all things to your remembrance ...

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ

Our wonderful **Comforter** (some versions use the word **Helper** instead of Comforter) will often quicken God's words to your mind and keep you focused on His will. Often, just the right words will be given to you as you witness or give an answer to others about your faith.

It is important to mention here that **receiving the Holy Spirit**, though a powerful aid to serving the Lord, **does not make you a robot!** You still have the ability to disobey God, ignore the prompting of His Spirit and sin. **Sometimes, even after being filled with the Spirit, people choose to disappoint the Lord.**

Serving the Lord will always be based upon your continued response to His love.

Notes:

Our Guide

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, **He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. John 16:12-14 (NKJV)

The twelve disciples had been with Jesus throughout his entire ministry. They had seen him heal, raise the dead, and walk on water. They had heard his amazing teachings on many occasions, and had been given detailed explanations on those teachings.

The way the Holy Spirit will lead and teach you as a Spirit-filled Christian is by gently guiding your thoughts.

Impressions from the Spirit will give you encouragement or caution as you live your life and make decisions.

The Spirit of God will guide you toward a better understanding of the truth as you go along, so He is called the Spirit of Truth.

Jesus Christ, The Way

However, they were not ready for some of the things that Jesus had to say to them. As a matter of fact, the Lord said that there were many things He wanted to share with them, but He couldn't.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Why? Why was the Lord unable to reveal these things to them?

- 1) They were not yet ready for the next level.
- 2) They could not handle what he had to say.
- 3) They were not yet equipped to understand.

What was it that Jesus' most faithful followers still needed?

... when He, the Spirit of truth, has come,
He will guide you into all truth ...

Knowledge of Jesus is important. The need for an acquaintance with his teachings and an understanding of his philosophy cannot be over-emphasized. But there are some things that cannot be obtained by simple observation and study. There are vital aspects of the kingdom of God that cannot be comprehended unless they are internalized.

Until the Spirit of truth has come into your life,
there is
much you will never experience or understand
about the Lord.

It takes the Holy Spirit within to gently guide you into all truth. In this way, God will continue to develop you, as you can handle it, throughout the rest of your life.

Notes:

The Divine Breath

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again,
"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."

And when he had said this, **he breathed on them**, and said to them, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.**" John 20:20-22 (RSV)

Notes:

Jesus appeared to his followers several times after his resurrection. Each time, he took those special moments to teach them something or remind them of the things he had already taught them.

This time, he said,
"**As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.**"

In other words, his disciples were to carry on his work and ministry. Jesus was sending them! That was not all, however. He next did something that was very strange ...

He breathed on them.

As he did this, he commanded them to receive the Holy Spirit. It was not here that the Holy Spirit was imparted to them. That was to happen a little later. But the way Jesus did this was significant. He breathed on them.

It is interesting that in the Greek language, the words for wind, spirit and breath are one and the same.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are "born of the Spirit" and for the first time, we can really breathe spiritually.

Just as God breathed the breath of life into Adam, making him a living soul, God now breathes on us, fills us with His Spirit, and we become born-again, Spirit-filled, empowered Christians.

Adam entered into the physical world when God breathed into him, and we enter into the kingdom of God when He breathes the Holy Spirit into us.

Jesus was enacting a physical representation of what the Holy Spirit would be when they did receive Him.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes: [Lined area for taking notes]

Remember John chapter three when Jesus said that everyone who is "born of the Spirit" is like the wind that blows and you can hear its sound? Now the disciples feel and hear Jesus breath as he breathes on them and makes an association to the Spirit that is coming.

This wind of the Spirit is the Divine Breath; God breathing His Divine nature into His children. Breath cannot be seen, but it can be felt and heard.

As the Lord transforms our lives today, we get the same call and the same preparation.

He calls us to go into our world and share the "good news" with everyone we can.

He prepares us by baptizing us with the Holy Spirit so we are empowered to be witnesses for Him.

Holy Spirit Power

And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for **the promise of the Father**, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days **you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**" Acts 1:4-5 (RSV)

Jesus Christ, The Way

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. Acts 1:8-9 (RSV)

Jesus commanded them to wait for the promise of the Father.

Jesus spoke these things after his resurrection and just before finally ascending to heaven. These were critical, last-minute instructions!

This was to be an important new phase in the lives of his disciples. Jesus explained himself further by getting really specific about what the promise of the Father was to be:

... before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

He also told them that when the Holy Spirit came upon them:

**They would receive power!
They would become witnesses!**

All of this, according to Jesus, was to begin in **Jerusalem**, then spread to the region around Jerusalem known as **Judea**. From there the message and power of the Spirit were to be witnessed in a neighboring area known as **Samaria**. Eventually, the Holy Spirit was to inspire the spreading of the gospel even to **the end of the earth!**

Today, the message of Jesus Christ is preached in many corners of the globe. The Holy Spirit continues to come into the lives of those who want Him, continues to make witnesses out of them, and will continue to do so until Jesus comes again!

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes:

Do you notice here that Jesus commanded his followers to wait for the promise of the Father (the Holy Spirit).

This means that they did not yet have the Holy Spirit.

They had experienced many good things with Jesus, and we are told that they left for Jerusalem with great joy after Jesus ascended to heaven.

But they did not yet have the Holy Spirit; they were headed to Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit.

Now think about your life. Perhaps you have already had many good experiences with the Lord, and maybe that includes some times of great joy.

That does not necessarily mean, however, that you have yet received the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is still saying to us:

Wait for the promise of the Father.
You shall receive power.
You shall be witnesses.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ

Notes:

They Spoke With Tongues

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own

language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?" Acts 2:1-8 (NKJV)

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass **in the last days**, says God, **That I will pour out of My Spirit** on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:14-18 (NKJV)

John the Baptist prophesied that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. **Jesus** told Nicodemus that one must be born of the Spirit to enter the kingdom. **He** also told his disciples about the coming of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth. **He** breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. Finally, **He** commanded them to wait for the promise of the Father. Even **Isaiah** and **Joel**, Old Testament prophets who lived hundreds of years before Christ, foretold the day when God's Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh.

On the Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts chapter 2, all of this finally began to happen!

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Tongues – languages.
We notice that tongues accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit.

Some people believe that the purpose of the tongues was so the foreign Jews who were there for the Feast of Pentecost would understand.

In other words, the tongues were for the purpose of communication.

The passage, however, does not support that interpretation, and when we place this passage beside others, it becomes very clear that the tongues were a sign that they had received the Holy Spirit.

The tongues caused only speculation from the crowd.

For an explanation, Peter stood up and preached to the crowd by himself in one language that at least most of them understood.

We know they understood because 3000 of them responded and were baptized.

Jesus Christ, The Way

One hundred twenty of Jesus' followers were gathered in a large room in Jerusalem, praying and waiting, when suddenly it happened. It sounded like a strong wind, filling the room.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.
The Spirit caused them to begin
speaking their praises in new languages.

Notes:

Think about it ... **These Galileans began to speak languages that they had never learned** as the Holy Spirit gave them inspiration.

These were languages recognized and spoken by the foreign Jews who were visiting Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost, a religious feast day. Peter had to explain to a gathering and mystified crowd that **these people were not drunk**, as some of them had guessed, but **this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy**.

It had finally happened!
Now it had become possible for anyone
to be filled with God's Spirit!

Joel had predicted that in the last days the pouring out of the Spirit would be **for "all flesh"**. It was not just for the Jews ... but is **for anyone who wants the Lord!**

The Evidence Of Receiving

Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who had heard the message.

Jesus Christ, The Way

The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that **the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles, too.**

And there could be **no doubt about it, for they heard them speaking in tongues** and praising God.

Then Peter asked, "Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have **received the Holy Spirit just as we did?**"

Acts 10:44-47 (NLT)

The Holy Spirit fell upon all who had heard the message.

A few years after the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit, **God was at work on the apostle Peter, preparing him to take the message of Jesus to a Gentile (non-Jewish) household.**

This was a new thing, an unacceptable thing to the Jewish system of ideas. They thought that salvation was for the Jews only, but Jesus had said that his followers were to be witnesses "...to the end of the earth." **That was going to include all people, not just the Jews.**

Peter finally followed God's direction, went to Cornelius' house and began to preach salvation through the name of Jesus. **These were devout and hungry people and they were anxiously ready to receive these truths.** We know this because Peter was unable to finish his preaching as they spontaneously began to reach upward in praise and worship. Not only that, but ...

They began speaking in tongues!
This was undeniable evidence
that they had received the Holy Spirit!

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes:

Isn't this a very interesting passage? It couldn't be much more clear that it is.

The Jewish believers that were there with the apostle Peter, though amazed, could not question that these Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit.

The proof was in the fact that they were speaking in tongues.

So I ask you, how are we to know when someone receives the Holy Spirit? Should it not be when we hear them speaking with tongues?

Jesus Christ, The Way

**And when Paul had laid his hands upon them,
the Holy Spirit came on them; and they
spoke with tongues and prophesied.**

Acts 19:1-6 (RSV)

When the apostle Paul went to Ephesus with the gospel of Jesus Christ, he found some disciples already there. Naturally, he began to question them about their faith and about how much of the truth they actually knew.

**He asked them
if they had yet received the Holy Spirit.**

They were followers of John the Baptist's teachings, but they evidently had not yet heard that the Holy Spirit had been given. **So Paul explained that Jesus was the one John had been awaiting. He re-baptized them in the name of Jesus, then laid his hands on them and ...**

**The Holy Spirit came on them.
They spoke with tongues and prophesied.**

Notice that here again we see people who received the Holy Spirit and they spoke in tongues.

This is the pattern we find in the book of Acts. From these passages, it begins to be obvious that this is to be expected!

**Everyone born of the Spirit is like the wind, and
... you hear the sound of it ...
... the sound of speaking in tongues.**

**Perhaps you are already a believer in Jesus Christ.
I need to ask you like Paul did ...
Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

The question the apostle Paul asked these people, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?", reveals something that is pertinent to our discussion.

It tells us that it is possible to be a believer and still not yet have the Holy Spirit.

This is why we should not assume that we have the Holy Spirit just because we have become a believer.

These people were willing to be taught God's word more fully. Eventually, Paul prayed for them and the Holy Spirit came on them.

Please notice, these people also spoke in tongues upon receiving the Holy Spirit!

Since having the Holy Spirit is such an essential matter, **God has not left us in a position where we have to assume or guess about it. He gives us an unmistakable sign**, so we will know for sure when we receive the Spirit.

He takes control of the most unruly member of our body, the tongue!

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

Notes:

Something Spectacular Happened

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, **prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.**

For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.**

And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!"

Acts 8:14-20 (NKJV)

If you would like to **receive the Holy Spirit**, you will need to **prepare your heart**. This passage reveals some of the important considerations.

1. These people received the word of God. This is equivalent to what Jesus had said, "**He who believes in me ... From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.**" So believing in Jesus Christ and the word of God is an important condition of the heart.

2. The apostles prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Willingness to seek God and be prayed for is important.

Note: Many people today believe that a person automatically receives the Holy Spirit whenever they come to a faith in Jesus as Savior or possibly at their first communion. It does **not** seem that the apostles made such an assumption.

Paul, when he found the believers in Ephesus asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit. **Does that mean that a person can believe and still not have the Holy Spirit? It would seem so.**

Here in Samaria, Peter and John specifically came because they had heard that the Samaritans had received the word of God and been baptized. **Did Peter and John assume that they had the Holy Spirit? Quite the opposite ... they knew the Holy Spirit had not fallen on them yet!**

3. The apostles laid their hands on them and prayed for them. The Bible tells us that the ministry used the "laying on of hands" during New Testament times for imparting the Holy Spirit, healing and spiritual gifts. So, a willingness to receive the Holy Spirit through the ministry of "laying on of hands" can be an important attitude.

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

If speaking with tongues was not what Simon observed when these people received the Holy Spirit, what did happen?

There really are no viable alternatives to suggest.

Did you know that the apostle Paul spoke in tongues and indicated that he did so a lot? He taught in 1 Corinthians 14 that when people pray in tongues, they are praying in the Spirit. He spent most of that chapter giving special instruction on the working of the Spirit in public services.

Evidently, "tongues-speaking" was so prevalent in the Corinthian church that it was getting in the way of understandable teaching that needed to happen. So Paul addressed this.

This passage does **not mention** that the people spoke in **tongues** when receiving the Holy Spirit here.

However, **that does not mean that it didn't happen!**

Something **spectacular** did happen!

There are at least two good reasons for assuming that they did speak in tongues when receiving the Holy Spirit here:

1. **All the other passages** where we are given the actual record of the occasion where people received the Holy Spirit mentions them speaking in tongues.
2. **Something spectacular did happen** on this occasion, though we are not told what it was. We know this because Simon, a sorcerer in the area, after witnessing people receiving the Holy Spirit when the apostles laid their hands on them, offered money to be able to do the same thing. He must have observed some unusual or dramatic result to have been motivated to make such an offer. It was probably tongues-speaking.

The last paragraph of 1 Corinthians 12, where it implies that not everyone speaks with tongues is in a context of discussion on the spiritual gifts.

I believe that it refers only to the gift of speaking an anointed message (in tongues) to the church. **(Use #3)**

It does not mean that some people get the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues. **(Use #1)**

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Observing what happened in the book of Acts and the teaching in 1 Corinthians, we see **three uses of tongues:**

First, tongues-speaking accompanies receiving the Holy Spirit. The purpose being as a sign that the Holy Spirit has come.

Second, praying in tongues is a part of personal devotion or praise. The purpose is personal edification and praying in the Spirit.

Third, there is a gift of tongues. The purpose is to speak an anointed message to the church and this gift needs to work in conjunction with the gift of interpretation, so the message can be understood and bring edification to others.

Ways To Describe Receiving The Holy Spirit

And as I began to speak, **the Holy Ghost fell on them**, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; **but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost**.

Forasmuch then as God gave them **the like gift** as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Acts 11:15-18 (KJV)

The experience of having God's Spirit within was so fundamental and influential in the lives of the early Christians that several phrases developed to describe it. Each one reflects a little different aspect of this life-changing phenomenon.

The Holy Spirit fell on them ...

... focusing on the surprise and suddenness with which the Spirit may sometimes come, and as God is often viewed as being in the heavens, it pictures the Spirit falling on the people from above.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit ...

... emphasizing that a person is immersed (covered, surrounded) with God's presence when receiving the Holy Spirit.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Though there is a difference in the use of tongues, **there is no difference between the “gift of the Holy Spirit” and the “baptism of the Holy Spirit”** as some have suggested.

The passage here equates “the Holy Ghost falling”, “the gift”, and “the baptism” of the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit).

In Acts 11, here, the “gift” referred to is the general gift of the Holy Spirit (Use #1). The people spoke in tongues (Acts 10), and it was a sign that they had received the Holy Spirit.

In Corinthians, Paul’s use of the word “gift” is referring to the specialized “gift” of speaking an anointed message in tongues to the church, in contradistinction to the many other “gifts” that are appointed by God to already Spirit-filled believers.

Jesus Christ, The Way

The gift of the Holy Spirit ...

... making the point that we do not earn God's presence, rather it is a gift from God. It is God's grace to us.

Born of the Spirit ...

... emphasizing how completely new and different our lives become as compared to the old life of sin.

Filled with the Spirit ...

... denoting the completeness with which the Spirit makes a temple of our whole being.

The promise of the Father ...

... helping us realize that if we want Him, He wants us, and promises to come to dwell within us as we make Him welcome.

Rivers of living water ...

... describing how the Holy Spirit satisfies our spiritual thirst ... not just a little drink, but rivers!

The Spirit of adoption ...

... revealing that we receive the same Spirit that was in God's Son, and when the Lord comes in, He adopts us as His sons and daughters.

Endued with power from on high ...

... signifying the ability we receive through the Spirit to live for God and be witnesses for Him.

**Jesus came to bring us abundant life.
Filling us with the Spirit is how He does it!**

Spirit-filled people receive Gifts of the Spirit!

Some speak prophetic messages, some are given a gift of wisdom, knowledge or faith (this is beyond the general wisdom, knowledge or faith normally experienced by Spirit-filled people). Some are especially used of God in miracles or healings. Some give messages in tongues or interpret those messages. Some are especially gifted in discerning spirits. (1 Corinthians 12)

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

When someone receives the Holy Spirit, we could describe it as the Holy Spirit falling on them, baptizing them, or filling them. We could say they have received the promise of the Father or that they have been endued with power from on high or that they have received the Spirit of adoption or that rivers of living water are springing up from within them.

All these descriptions refer to the general infilling of the Holy Spirit, and people speak with tongues when they experience this, as a sign that the Holy Spirit has come.

Once people have received the Spirit, then the Lord gives one or more gifts of the Spirit to them for ministry purposes.

God Living His Life In You

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them are not Christians at all.) Romans 8:9 (NLT)

The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you.

Romans 8:11 (NLT)

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into his family – calling him "Father, dear Father." For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children. Romans 8:14-16 (NLT)

The Holy Spirit wishes to dwell within you. It is God's plan that you allow Him in your life on an ongoing basis. In so doing, He can bring the control in your life that will overcome the sinful nature.

Once you have been filled with the Spirit, you will have been "endued with power from on high."

Notes:

There is a whole lot more to receiving the Holy Spirit than just speaking with tongues!

Because so many people resist the idea that speaking with tongues is the evidence God gives that the the Holy Spirit has come, we end up spending a disproportionate amount of discussion supporting that principle.

Our focus should really be on the purpose and effects of having God's presence within us.

The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit

Jesus Christ, The Way

This power is God exerting His desire to live a holy and righteous life through you!

This power never overrides your will or right to choose, but the Bible teaches us in many places to **allow** the Holy Spirit to lead us. We are told to **not quench the Spirit**.

When Christians have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them and leading them, we say that they are "walking in the Spirit". There is power in "walking in the Spirit", because **God is able to live a holy life within you, whereas you would never be able to do that on your own.**

If you are led by the Spirit of God, then you are a child of God!

Receiving the Holy Spirit is the point where God adopts you as one of His children. **The Holy Spirit confirms to your human spirit that, yes, you are truly a child of God now.**

Something will happen on the inside, and you will know your relationship with God has come to a new intimate level.

Something will happen on the outside, too, The Spirit of adoption who will come to live within you will cause you to cry out, "**Father, dear Father.**" **Speaking in tongues is that first cry to our heavenly Father. Then you learn to know Him and address Him as your Father daily.**

Something will happen in the future. The Holy Spirit is the power that will someday resurrect you!

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Galatians 5 gives a list of the fruit of the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit has control in your life, these are the characteristics that you will develop:

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Having the Holy Spirit means having God inside of you. Once He is there, He begins attempting to express Himself, and as you follow the Spirit, His characteristics grow within you.

The fruit of the Spirit is simply God living His life in you and expressing Himself through you!

Notes:

God Wants You To Have His Holy Spirit

And I tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"** Luke 11:9-13 (RSV)

Earlier, it was mentioned that a person's heart must be prepared to receive the Holy Spirit. **A hard, unrepentant heart will resist the very nature of God's Spirit.**

Repentance, obedience and faith are important attitudes.

There are three other principles that can be important also ...

Asking for the Holy Spirit - **Ask** as a child who knows your Father loves you and wants to give you good things.

Seeking for the Holy Spirit - **Seek** with the assurance that you are on the right path, and that your heavenly Father has led you to this point.

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

Remember when Jesus told the disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father? Acts 1:14 tells us that they met continually for prayer.

So if you want the Holy Spirit, plan on going to God in prayer, wait on the Lord, repent of any sin in your life, ask for the Holy Spirit and get others who have the Holy Spirit to pray with you.

God definitely wants to baptize you with the Holy Spirit, but first you have to empty yourself and give Him room!

Notes:

And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Acts 2:37-40 (NRS)

We saw this set of verses before when we were discussing water baptism, but now we are focusing on the promise of the Holy Spirit. These people knew they were in trouble with God, and they wanted to correct that, so they asked the preacher what they should do. His answer was:

Repent
Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ

If you will respond to God with obedience in these areas, Peter promised them,

You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Unfortunately, some people argue that the gift of the Holy Spirit with tongues like we see in this chapter was only for the early church. They deny that it is for the church today. But what did Peter have to say about others receiving this.

The promise of the Holy Spirit is for ...
... **you**
... **your children**
... **all who are far away**
... **everyone whom the Lord calls**

The baptism or gift of the Holy Spirit is just as much for you today as it was for the crowd to whom Peter preached.

Is God calling you to serve Him?
The promise is for as many as He calls!

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

If you are
unfortunate enough
to be under the influence
of those who deny
that miracles and spiritual
gifts are for us today,
let me be blunt.
You need
to remove yourself
from that influence
as much as possible.

Just as Israel needed
to obey God
at Kadesh-Barnea
and go
into their promised land
(Numbers 13),
you need to step forward
in faith
and believe God
for the promise
of the Father!

If God has called you
to serve Him,
then He intends
to empower you
with the Holy Spirit!

Notes:

In one sense, we cannot save ourselves ... we need the only Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In another sense, we can save ourselves ... by acting on the faith God has given us and responding in obedience to the gospel.

The crowd on that day responded immediately and 3000 were baptized.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes:

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

The Right Attitude

... "**If anyone is thirsty**, let him come to Me and drink. "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, `From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' " But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; John 7:37-38 (NAS)

Thirsty For God Jesus said that if you are thirsty ... you come to him and drink! **How does that thirst develop?**

For some, life has dealt them enough **trouble and disappointment** that they are thirsty for something to bring peace and harmony within. Others who have faith and an **understanding of the scriptures** may recognize that knowing about Jesus is not enough; they now thirst for the intimate indwelling of his Spirit!

"**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**
Matthew 5:6 (NAS)

Hungry For God Hunger and thirst are **driving forces that move us** to get the need filled. When very hungry or very thirsty, we are moved to the point of desperation! **The mission of getting food or water becomes the only thing that is important.** To fail in that mission is to die!

Possibly, your greatest need to ready your life for the Holy Spirit is simply to make your relationship with the Lord the highest priority of your life!

There is a way to put God first in your life and then properly balance everyone and everything else beneath Him.

Jesus Christ, The Way

Please Note: Here is where I take issue with the teaching of many churches. **So many stress that people are saved by faith alone** and that water and Spirit baptism are not essential to salvation.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

What does that teaching do? **It says something about faith that is not true. It implies that faith can exist alone**, but the apostle James said,

... faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. James 2:17 (NKJV)

In effect, the teaching that we are saved by faith alone dampens and stifles the hunger and thirst for the Holy Spirit baptism that would naturally develop as a result of faith in Jesus Christ.

When people are told that since they have faith, they automatically have the Spirit, **they lose motivation to ask, seek and knock for His Spirit, they think it would be a denial of their faith to ask for the Holy Spirit.**

The end result is that good people who have come to love the Lord and who believe in the work of Jesus Christ, must struggle along without the Comforter Jesus promised, just assuming they have Him all along.

Notes:

To people like this, I bring a wonderful message:
God has more for you!

In Acts 2, Peter did **not** tell his listeners to **just believe** in Jesus. He told them to Repent, and be baptized. Then God would fill them with the Holy Spirit. Saving faith moves us to **act**. Jesus told us to **ask**. He said the Father would give the Holy Spirit to those who **ask** Him.

God has never quibbled about what He wants. **His first and most important commandment is: that we love Him with all of our heart ... soul ... mind ... and strength.**

Notes:

If you want the gift of the Holy Spirit,
you must **hunger** and **thirst** for Him.

How To Receive The Holy Spirit

Here I will give you a few tips on how to actually begin praying for the gift of the Holy Spirit in your life. **Please do not get "mechanical" about following these guidelines.**

Receiving the Holy Spirit
is about a closer relationship with the Lord,
and you must not ever get side-tracked
from that goal.

You will know you have received the Holy Spirit when you begin speaking in other tongues, **but you should not really focus on speaking in tongues, and you should not quit praying when you begin speaking in tongues.** You are just then getting to the place in prayer where the Comforter can begin His work in you.

Begin Here

- 1. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God and your Savior.** There needs to be a basic understanding and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2. Repent of your sins.** Be open with the Lord, He knows it all anyway. This is a time when you get honest with yourself and with God. It is a time to confess to Him the things that you realize have not been right in your life. It is not a time to blame others, but rather a time of self-examination in the light of what you know about God and His ways. If you have not yet been water baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, you should be willing and determined to take that step at this point.
- 3. Recognize that God genuinely forgives you.** You have a promise from the Lord that if you sincerely turn from your sins and give your life to God, that He will forgive you and begin leading you the right way. This is where guilt begins to lift off your shoulders. It is a wonderful realization and new beginning.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

The tips
you find in this section
are just guidelines
to help you,
but this is really
heart business ...
heart-to-heart,
you and God!

If I were you,
I would find times
to pray alone at home,
and I would welcome times
to pray
with the encouragement
and help of others
at church.

Just keep
reaching and seeking
until you can easily yield
your whole heart
to the Lord.

Remember ...
if you have been obedient
in repentance and baptism,
God promised
to give you
His Spirit!

Notes:

It Is Time To Be Grateful

4. **Worship and praise the Lord.** Steps 1-3 remove the barriers that have existed between you and God. Now you are welcome to come before the throne of grace freely and with the expectation that God loves you and is on your side. Let everything about your prayer communicate openness and love for the one who has forgiven you and made salvation available to you.

Talk to Him and listen to Him.
Be aware of your need of Him.
Ask Him for the Holy Spirit.
Trust that He is leading you in prayer.
Thank Him for His mercy and forgiveness.

Let your body communicate your prayer, as well.
This is loving God with all of your strength.

Verbalize your worship.
At times, lift your hands and arms to Him in praise.
Get in a comfortable position and change positions when needed.
Expect to give God some time.

Remember, you are developing a relationship with God. You are showing Him that He is now your Lord. You are feeling for His Spirit and learning about Him.

5. **If others are praying with you and for you, relax and accept those prayers.** It is Biblical and not uncommon for others to lay their hands on your head or shoulder as they pray for you. This is not meant to be anything personal, but it is all right to let those praying for you know what is comfortable for you and what is not. If the people praying for you know what they are doing, they will want you to be comfortable, not intimidated, with their assistance.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes:

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

6. Respond to the Holy Spirit. This is the hardest part to describe for you because it will be something between you and the Lord. As you pray, at some point the Holy Spirit will come to you. You will sense His presence in a new and stronger way. Respond to him with continued praise, but realize that the time will come when you need to just let go and let Him do the praying through you. The Holy Spirit will give you the utterance, and you will speak a language you do not understand. When this happens, you will have entered a new realm of praise, you will be able to speak fluently as the Holy Spirit inspires you.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

Notes:

Your communication with the Lord will now be spirit to Spirit.
His communication with you will now be Spirit to spirit.

Notes:

Why Tongues?

For we all stumble in many things. **If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.** Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, **they are turned by a very small rudder** wherever the pilot desires.

Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But **no man can tame the tongue**. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly **poison**. James 3:2-8 (NKJV)

Why Would God Choose Speaking In Tongues As A Sign Of Receiving The Holy Spirit?

First of all, James chapter three has a discussion about the tongue. Here are the major points:

- 1. The tongue cannot be tamed by man.**
Is an unruly evil and full of deadly poison.
- 2. The tongue is set on fire by hell,**
a world of iniquity that defiles the whole body.
- 3. Just like bits are put in horses mouths to control them, and just like large ships are turned with a small rudder, so a man can be kept under control if his tongue is controlled.**

Perhaps God uses "speaking in tongues" when the Holy Spirit is given to indicate the He (God) is now in control.

Part 3 – The Holy Spirit: Living In Christ

The Holy Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh since that day in Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2).

All anyone has to do, you included, is prepare the heart and receive Him.

Focus on:
Preparing your heart.
Searching your heart.
Examining your heart.
Correcting your attitudes.

If you do these things, the receiving part should flow naturally for you!

Notes:

Jesus Christ, The Way

The tongue that no man can tame, God can tame as the Holy Spirit "gives the utterance". If God can tame the tongue, then He has a good chance of taming the whole man.

Since it takes the supernatural power of God to give someone the ability to "speak in tongues", **this gives us objective and undeniable evidence that we have received the Holy Spirit.**

"Speaking in tongues" is the sound that is heard as we are "born of the Spirit".

It seems that God causes this to happen so that we will know and others will know. God gives us this sign and we do not have to guess. We know because we hear the "sound".

**Part 3 – The Holy Spirit:
Living In Christ**

God bless you!

See you
in church
or in heaven,
whichever comes first!

The Holy Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh.
All you have to do is ...
... **prepare your heart**
... **and receive Him.**

The **END** of this course ... the **BEGINNING** of a new life!

Finding A Good Church

(Addendum)

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25 (KJV)

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(Addendum)

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Notes:
