



Embracing Truth: A Solid Foundation

Christians must develop a "Love for the Truth." It is the Rock that will withstand the forces of hell and deception. If we desire our own philosophies and selfish ambitions to cloud our minds we have constructed a trap for our own demise.

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Th. 2:8-10)

· Christianity is the Word of God set free to reproduce the image of Christ in believers. **Religion** is man's attempt to control God, thereby imprisoning the very Word that has the power to set men free.

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." I Peter 1:24-25

Just A Thought:

The "glory of man".... all our philosophies, ideologies, beliefs or lack of belief, no matter how noble, are destined to fail. We must develop the desire to know truth as defined by the Lord himself and choose freely to embrace it.

*"... **Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it:**" Psalm 127:1*

The Truth shall make you free.

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

Understanding the Salvation Process.

Salvation is a **PROCESS**. **Faith** in Christ starts the process in motion! Any person who suffers from the pain of sin can experience *immediate help when they start believing in Christ*. This is not to say that they have experienced full salvation. Faith must rise in one's heart before any other act of grace can be experienced. **Faith truly is essential**. Consider the following scriptures:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. . . . 3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. . . . 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Heb 11:1,3 & 6

· People who begin in faith enter into the provincial realm of God's promises. As long as they continue, they will enjoy total spiritual healing and salvation.

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

Faith brings healing to a number of sin's injuries.

Faith fills the vacuum created by doubt.

Faith counteracts the negative influences of fear.

Faith reverses one's sense of worthlessness and unimportance. Faith helps build back self-esteem.

Faith dispels the clouds of depression.

Faith connects the heart and soul with God.

Faith pleases God. However faith is considered, it is wholesome, positive and good.

Repentance: The road to the presence of God.

· The scripture teaches us that John the Baptist was given the ministry of preparation. John's burden was to reach the people with the message of repentance. Repentance prepares the heart to receive the Gospel! Notice the following scripture:

*"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight " (**Mat 3:1-3**).*

· To understand the importance of repentance we need to understand our need for it. We all have sinned, we fall short of perfection. Each of us no matter how "good" we are, were all born in the flesh, and have caused people to be disappointed, or angry with us. But more importantly our "sinful" nature wars against God. So we must look at sin and its horrible effects to fully appreciate the gift of repentance.

Understanding Sin: Separation from God

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23**). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (**Romans 3:23**).**

· **SIN:** The transgression of God's law. Actions by which humans rebel against God, miss His purpose for their life, and surrender to the power of evil rather than to God. The Bible gives no formal definition for sin. It describes sin as an attitude that personifies sin as rebellion against God. **Rebellion** was at the root of the problem for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3) and has been at the root of humanity's plight ever since.

· **Human sin is universal**--we all sin. All persons without exception are under sin's dominion (Rom. 3:9-23). Since Adam and Eve rebelled against the clear command of God, sin has infected humanity like a dread malignancy. Adam and Eve introduced sin into human history by their rebellious actions. The Bible affirms that every person who has lived since has followed their example. Whatever else one may say about sin's origin, this much is surely affirmed throughout the Bible.

The Bible Views Sin from Various Perspectives: One concept of sin in the Old Testament is that of **transgression of the law**. God established the law as a standard of righteousness; any violation of this standard is defined as sin. Deuteronomy 6:24-25 is a statement of this principle from the perspective that a person who keeps the law is righteous. The implication is that the person who does not keep the law is not righteous, that is, sinful. Another concept of sin in the Old Testament is **breach of the covenant**. God made a covenant with the nation Israel; they were bound by this covenant as a people (Ex. 19; 24; Josh. 24). Each year on the Day of Atonement, the nation went through a covenant renewal. When the high priest consecrated the people by sprinkling them with the blood of the atoning sacrifice, they renewed their vows to the Lord to be a covenant-keeping people. Any breach of this covenant was viewed as sin. (Deut. 29:19-21.) The Old Testament also pictures sin as a **violation of the righteous nature of God**. As the righteous and holy God, He sets forth as a criterion for His people a righteousness like His own. (Lev. 11:45.)

Any deviation from God's own righteousness is viewed as sin.

· Notice these 3 Old Testament words dealing with the concept of sin. **Chata:** Means "to miss the mark." This word could be used to describe a person shooting a bow and arrow and missing the target with the arrow. When it is used to describe sin, it means that the person has missed the mark that God has established for the person's life. Chata describes the fallen state we were all born into. As humans we simply "miss the mark" of godliness and sinlessness. Notice though the path that sin will lead us to. The Hebrew language is so descriptive concerning the development of sin and its effects.

Aven:

Describes the crooked or perverse spirit associated with sin. Sinful persons have perverted their spirits and become crooked rather than straight. This word shows us the deepening effect of sin. The fallen nature if we pursue its wants and desires will begin to pervert our spirit . . . widening the gap between us and God. This shows the effects of a life committed to the practice of sin.

Ra:

Describes the violence associated with sin. It also has the connotation of the breaking out of evil. This is the end result of sin. Violent acts, evil pockets of anarchy and rebellion. This level of sin is the fruit of a life totally given to the perverse spirit in man. Society can and does follow these patterns of sin. Sad to say but we live in a society that has reached this deepest level of sin. Our youth who should be tender and innocent are the murderers and scourge of society. We devour videos that worship violence and lewd acts. We are guilty as a nation of drinking and lusting after the demons of our own demise, and shake our frail human fist in defiance in the face of a loving God.

The New Testament Perspective of Sin The New Testament picture is much like that of the Old Testament. Several of the words used for sin in the New Testament have almost the same meaning as some of the Hebrew words used in the Old Testament. The most notable advancement in the New Testament view of sin is the fact that sin is defined against the backdrop of Jesus as the *standard for righteousness*. His life exemplifies perfection. *The exalted purity of His life creates the norm for judging what is sinful*. In the New Testament, sin also is viewed as *alack of fellowship with God*. The ideal life is one of fellowship with God. *Anything which disturbs or distorts this fellowship is sin*. **The New Testament view of sin.** Jesus taught quite forcefully that sin is a condition of the heart. He traced sin directly to *inner motives* stating that the sinful thought leading to the overt act is the real sin. The *outward deed is actually the fruit of sin*. Anger in the heart is the same as murder (Matt. 5:21-22). The impure look is tantamount to adultery (Matt. 5:27-28). The real defilement in a person stems from the inner person (heart) which is sinful (Matt. 15:18-20). Sin, therefore, is understood as involving the essential being of a person, that is, the essential essence of human nature.

Sin's Consequences:

· The Bible looks upon sin in any form as the most serious of humanity's problems. Though sinful acts may be directed against another person, **ultimately every sin is against God**, the Creator of all things. Perfect in righteousness, God cannot tolerate that which violates His righteous character. *Therefore, sin creates a barrier between God and persons*.

The Awful Consequences of Sin:

· That person who constantly and consistently follows a sinful course will become so enmeshed in sin that for all practical purposes he or she is *enslaved to sin*. Another of the awful consequences of sin is *spiritual depravity* in society in general as well as in the lives of individuals. Sin also produces *spiritual blindness*. Spiritual truths simply are not visible to that person who has been blinded by sin. *Moral ineptitude* is another devastating consequence of sin. The more people practice sin, the more inept they become as far as moral and spiritual values are concerned. Eventually, sin blurs the distinction between right and wrong. *Guilt* is certainly a consequence of sin. No person can blame another person for a sin problem. Each person must accept responsibility for sin and face the guilt associated with it. Sin causes *pain*.

· Sin compels people to seek relief from its horrible consequences. Ironically the very thing that is the core of their discomfort is the thing they use to find some measure of relief. From a spiritual standpoint, people must not seek relief from the pain of sin from any source other than Christ. Anyone who tries an eclectic approach and attempts to take the best of all worlds faces certain failure. We must not mix the blood of Calvary together with the wisdom of the world. Only a total renunciation of all this world's feeble efforts to find an eternal cure, however, will satisfy Christ. To put it plainly, we must confess that nothing else has worked or will work to take away sin or the effects of sin.

Alcohol *has not worked.*

Drugs *have not worked.*

Wild living *has not worked.*

Materialism *has not worked.*

Education *has not worked.*

Philosophies and ideas *have not worked.*

Friends *have not worked.*

Religion *has not worked.*

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

· Not only do attempts to find a cure from sin in sources other than Christ fail; they impede the true cure from moving forward in one's life. Physically, as long as the body is simply fighting infection, healing cannot progress. When the infectious agent is driven out, however, repair and regeneration can take place. Spiritually, **deep and genuine repentance** cuts out the infectious agent of sin. Christ did not come to save us in our sin. He came to save us from our sin. ***The deeper the repentance, the deeper the cure.***

Death: The wages of sin.

· One of the terrible by-products of sin is **death**. Continual, consistent sin will bring spiritual death to that person who has not come under the lordship of Christ through repentance and faith. (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14)

Grace: Finding Favor with God.

· We often define grace as the unmerited favor of God. Let us open that neatly wrapped definition and get a closer look at the word and work of grace. Grace is from the Greek word "**charis**" which means to rejoice, that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, for a kindness granted or desired. Grace is a favor done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver. God's grace affects man's sinfulness and not only forgives the repentant sinner, but brings joy and thankfulness to him.

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).

". . . the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom 2:4).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:8-10).

Conviction: The Work of the Spirit.

· To feel conviction is to become aware of sinfulness or guilt. When the Lord shows us our sin, He does so with compassion and mercy. Godly conviction is always accompanied with the hope of His divine grace and forgiveness; condemnation on the other hand is void of that hope and only deepens the effect of sin. God uses conviction to motivate us to repent of our sins, ushering us boldly into His presence and deepening our relationship with the Lord.

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor 7:10).

To Paraphrase: That is to say that "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."

The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:7-8).

Repentance: turning from sin to God.

· Repentance is not merely regret and remorse for wrongs committed, but a change of mind and heart. True biblical repentance involves a reorientation of the sinner from self-service and self-gratification to serving God, the desire to please the Lord and walk in harmony with His Word. Unfortunately, we usually cast repentance in a negative light. It does represent the bloody sacrifices at the **BRAZEN ALTAR**, Christ's death on the cross, humiliation, self-denial and a

harsh change from a sinful life to holiness. Many people balk at the act of repentance seeing only the loss and discomfort associated with it. We cannot deny that repentance means death to the flesh. Far more important, however, repentance has several very positive effects. These positive results should inspire courage and confidence in us to follow through with repentance.

Repentance aligns a person with the true gospel.

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

Repentance paves the way for the Holy Ghost baptism.

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

Repentance is a gift of 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 11:18).

Repentance indicates God's love and good intentions. ". . . the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom 2:4).

Repentance leads to reconciliation with God.

· Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (2 Cor 7:10) The first steps toward the cure of a disease or the healing of an injury involves pain. Dead tissue must be cut away, toxins must be drained from a wound, infections must be attacked by strong antidotes, broken bones must be reset, tourniquets must be applied, and shock therapy must be administered to restart vital signs. Whatever it takes to bring a diseased or injured person back to safe medical grounds must be done, often without regard to the pain that the procedure inflicts. Repentance truly symbolizes the crucifixion of Christ; it is good to remember that it is only a symbol. Christ absorbed the full impact of the cross, the penalty for our sins, so that we could be spared from eternal death. Without that supreme act of love, we would have to bear our own penalty. How much better it is to repent than to be crucified!

Repentance heals because it stops the infection of sin in one's heart.

Repentance heals because it releases a person from the hold of sin.

Repentance heals because it alerts one to the root of spiritual pain.

Repentance heals because it establishes a connection with God himself.

Repentance heals because it changes a person's perspective of himself/herself.

Repentance heals because it removes the oppressive weight of guilt and other emotional baggage that one has carried around for years.

Repentance heals because it sets God free to operate in one's life. Nothing other than complete repentance can bring about such deep and profound positive changes.

Repentance is a vital part of our worship and walk with the Lord. We express our belief in God through our humility and our willingness to seek Him and please Him. "Not my will Lord, but thine be done". Repentance keeps the "door" open to the "throne room of grace".

The Keys to the Kingdom.

"And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mat 16:18&19)

What is baptism? Who is it for?

o **BAPTISM:** From Greek BAPTIZO (bap tid zo) meaning to make fully wet. Baptism conveys a cleansing experience. Baptism was practiced long before Christ or even John the Baptist. Since baptism is a Greek word, we don't readily recognize it in the Old Testament. Usually, when we see references to "washings," they mean the same thing we understand as baptism in the New Testament. Old covenant believers viewed baptism as signifying spiritual change. Whenever repentance swept across the people, baptism meant a revived relationship towards God. Washings also were the means for ceremonial purification. New Testament believers should enter into baptism with strong overtones of cleansing and absolution. Corruption and impurity in the soul flee as a person is plunged beneath the baptismal waters. Afterwards, the baptized believer should glow from the experience. Baptism is intended to be a powerful healing agent for the soul.

· **John's Baptism** John the Baptist immersed repentant sinners: those who had a change of mind and heart (John 1:6,11). John's baptism--was a baptism that signified repentance. Read Acts 19:1-6.

· **Jesus' Baptism** John also baptized Jesus, who never sinned (Matt. 3:13-17; John 1:13-16). Jesus said that His own baptism was to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:15). Thus Jesus acknowledged that the standard of life John demanded was correct for himself and for His followers. In this way He was able to identify with sinful mankind and to be a model for others to follow. In this way Jesus affirmed John and his message. The coming of the Spirit and the voice from heaven showed that Jesus represented another point in God's revelation of Himself and formed the connection between baptism and Christ's act of redemption.

· **Christian Baptism** To be baptized is to clothe oneself with Christ (Gal. 3:27). Baptism refers to the suffering and death of Christ (Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50). Christian baptism is, in a sense, a sharing of this death. Baptism shows that a person has died to the old way of life and has been raised to a new kind of life--eternal life in Christ (Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:11). The resurrection from the water points to the Christian's resurrection. Baptism testifies that "ye are washed ... ye are sanctified ... ye are justified in **the name of the Lord Jesus**, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).

· **Apostolic authority.** This simply means that the message that the apostles preached and taught is binding today. It is binding because all the authority of heaven stands behind the words of the apostles. Jesus told Peter that ". . . whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; . ." (Matt. 16:18). Paul's strong words in Galatians 1:8 pronounces a curse on any who would dare change the gospel or alter the foundation laid by the apostles. One of those foundational truths that the apostles taught and practiced was baptism in the Name of Jesus. The apostles understood the power of that name and what was accomplished through it. The following are only a few examples.

· **The Name of Jesus.** A careful reading of the New Testament reveals that the name of Jesus Christ was used exclusively in Christian baptism. Notice closely the following scriptures:

"Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus)" (Acts 8:15-16).

"And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:3-5).

The name of Jesus confers salvation.

· The use of the name of Jesus is highly significant, especially in terms of the healing of the soul. God always manifested His power on earth through the use of His name.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The name of Jesus puts devils to flight.

"And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour" (Acts 16:18).

Jesus Name holds power over physical ailments.

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and anklebones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:6-8).

· Baptism places within our grasp the use of the name of Jesus. The very name, which wielded so much power in the early church, belongs to baptized believers. The healing effects of such power are immeasurable.

Baptism is for the remission of sins. According to the scripture, baptism is intrinsic to the remission of sins. Consider these Scriptures.

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

"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

· Baptism directly addresses sin in every aspect. First, it applies healing virtue to damaged emotions. Second, it erases the standing record of sin against the believer. Third, it absolves the soul of guilt. Fourth, it provides an eternal asylum from sin's destructive nature. Fifth, it breaks the connection between the sinner and the past.

Paul's Commentary on Baptism. A Look at Romans 6:1-10

*"What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. **How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?** 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death?** 4 Therefore, we are **buried with him by baptism** into death: that like **as Christ was raised up from the dead** by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life.** 5 For **if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.** 6 Knowing this, that our **old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now **if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.** 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Rom 6:1-10).*

Notice these 7 things Paul lists in this Scripture:

We have **died to sin**. We **should not "live" in sin**. We are baptized **into Jesus Christ**, into **His death**. We are **"buried"** with Christ **through baptism** into His burial. Christ was **raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father. If we have been **buried in his death** (baptism), we will **partake of His resurrection**. If we have been crucified and buried with him, **we shall live with Him**. Paul understood that baptism was more than ceremonial. Paul realized through divine revelation that baptism was absolutely necessary if we were to take part in the resurrection of the Lord. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."**

The Great Commission: Matthew 28:19

· *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" (Matthew 28:19). (*Notice this is singular "name" not "names")*

· *". . . Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name** among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:46-48).*

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

· *"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he **commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord**. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days" (Acts 10:47-48).*

· *"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" (Col 3:17).*

After the Apostles Died, Truth Was Compromised

· Regrettably, in the years after the Apostles' death, *Christianity began to be viewed by the Roman state as a political movement*. In the year 325 AD, Emperor Constantine called together the council of Nicea. The division in the Roman Empire was widening and *Constantine saw the way to bridge this gap was through a unified religion*. It was at this *political* gathering that the name of Jesus was rejected, the Trinitarian dogma was created and the *mode of baptism was to be changed to the man-made formula of father, son and holy ghost*.

· *"Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 **Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.** 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition"* (Mark 7:5-9).

· Paul, in writing to the Galatian Church, warned that damnation and cursing would be on any who would preach another gospel than what the first church preached. This plan was bought with the precious blood of Jesus. Who are we to justify, teach or condone any form of baptism that was established through the political ambitions and sinful nature of man? Notice the strong words of Paul in Galatians 1:8-9. ***"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed"*** (Gal 1:8-9).

"The Spirit of Resurrection"

"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal 4:7).

What is the Holy Ghost?

· According to I Corinthians 15:1-4, the gospel consists of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we align these elements with the message of Acts 2:38, we discover that repentance answers to death, baptism answers to burial, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit answers to the resurrection. Since the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead embodies the ultimate victory over death, then the entrance of the Spirit of God in the believer's life activates the true dynamic principle of spiritual life. Power, life, light, revelation, spiritual motivation and many other attributes proceed from the Spirit of God as He indwells the believer. The gift of the Holy Ghost reverses every negative movement and consequence that characterizes sin. For weakness, He gives strength; for darkness, He gives light; for death, He gives life; and for sorrow, He gives joy.

1. The Holy Spirit generates power for spiritual healing.

*"But ye shall receive **power**, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8). The world has created and developed many sciences and therapies to help people. Often, health care professionals in physical or psychological fields can pinpoint disorders with great accuracy. They can trace the problems back to their beginnings, identify contributing factors along the way and project new courses of action to solve them. Unfortunately, it is at this point of implementation and sustained treatment that these programs falter. They cannot make anything happen. They have power to analyze, but no power to energize. They can offer suggestions and support, but the real results are left to the willpower of the individual. Because of this, the gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred upon believers by God to empower them to do spiritual feats. He takes up where religion and reformation fail. He supplies the power to actually implement the changes that must take place in a person's life, plus He gives them power to perform the will of God throughout their lives.

2. The Holy Spirit produces life.

Without God's Spirit in a person's heart, spiritual death has the upper hand. The Apostle Paul reasons this out in his epistle to the Romans. ***"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"*** (Romans 8:5-7). Unregenerate man is contaminated with sin. Death, then, is present in the soul. Eventually, the entire person will suffer

decline and death. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). When a person receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he/she is endowed with eternal life. Jesus told the woman at the well, *"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"* (John 4:14). Eternal life does not begin when the last natural breath is drawn. It begins the moment the Spirit of God enters, by faith, into a believer's heart. The Spirit becomes a spring of living water that springs into eternal life.

3. The Holy Spirit connects one to the body of Christ.

The scriptures clearly teach that the work of the Holy Spirit is to join a person to the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit gives birth to our relationship with the Heavenly Father. *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together"* (Romans 8:15-17). Also, the Holy Ghost baptism establishes common ground for the body of Christ and puts the divine features of Christ into us. *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free and have been all made to drink into one Spirit"* (I Corinthians 12:13).

4. The Holy Spirit reveals truth to the believer.

When the Holy Spirit fills our hearts, He also floods our minds and our consciences with light and truth. He provides this gift to us because, in our humanity, we are subject to error. *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come"* (John 16:13). Sometimes our mistakes result from ignorance. Sometimes they stem from willful disobedience. In other words, our flesh may rebel against the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In this regard, the Spirit provokes not only our awareness of the problem, He also provokes our conscience to do the right thing. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God"* (Romans 8:14).

5. The Holy Spirit defends us against the enemy.

One of the marvels of the Holy Spirit is His role as our advocate. In this aspect, He takes over our defense against Satan the same as a defense attorney takes over the defense of a client against a prosecutor. Indeed, Satan is called the accuser of the brethren, the devil, the tempter, the deceiver, the father of all lies, the Serpent and the Dragon. We need the Holy Ghost to continually fire back answers to the endless attacks the devil launches against us. *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; 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"* (John 14:16-18). Our counselor never rests His case. He never tires of our defense. He never gets stumped or outflanked by the enemy. He provides a flawless defense forever. *"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"* (Hebrews 7:25-26).

6. The Holy Spirit refreshes our spirituality.

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:4-7).

B. The Promise.

"And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

C. Why tongues?

· It was prophesied... *"For with stammering lips and another tongue will I speak to this people"* (Isaiah 28:11). Also,

Peter recalled the words of the Prophet Joel that it will come to pass in the last days that God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. . .

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:14-18).

D. Tongues are Biblical:

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

E. The Earnest of our Inheritance.

earnest² (ûrnîst) *noun*. 1. Money paid in advance as part payment to bind a contract or bargain. 2. A token of something to come; a promise or an assurance.

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the Earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Eph 1:13-14)

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18).

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29).

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"

(1 Cor 2:9-10). "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:3-5).

Illustration of God's Love A man on the east coast a few years back was the father of a 2-year-old boy. This man was a bridge operator whose job every day involved operating the levers that raised and lowered the bridge. If a ship needed passage, he would raise the lever that would in turn raise the bridge and allow the ship to pass through. When a train would pass, it was his job to lower the lever that would lower the bridge so the train could pass over safely. One day the man brought his young son with him, and as the day wore on the man became involved in his job. He heard a whistle, which meant a train was coming and the bridge needed to be lowered. To his horror as he glanced through the window towards the bridge, he saw his son playing under the bridge and knew that if he pulled the lever down, it would no doubt kill his son. With a moment's hesitation the father of that child, knowing that the train was a passenger train and the lives of many people hung in the balance, quickly pulled the lever and in the process killed his child. The man was near enough to the bridge that he could see the people in the cars of the train. In one car a party seemed to be in progress...people laughing, drinking...and through bitter tears he spoke these words as he watched those people pass "These people have no idea the price that was paid for their lives."

"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).

· Let us always remember the sacrifice that was made for our salvation and the price that was paid for our

inheritance.

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