

Lighthouse
Church

FOUNDATIONS

of Faith

- THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH -
the first principles we need to grow

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INTRODUCTION

The components of this foundation series comes from Hebrews chapter six. The six foundation stones or elementary principles are underlined in the Scripture.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. [Hebrews 6:1-3 NKJV]

These elementary foundation stones are necessary to be laid in our life before we can move on to maturity. We will look at each foundation one by one in this course and the aim is for us to be able to “go on” to other matters in our faith.

Before we look at these 6 foundations, we must realise that all everything we build in our Christian lives can only be built upon an even more basic foundation; the ultimate foundation of:

- Jesus himself - “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation [with] gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on [it] endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” [1Corinthians 3:11-15 NKJV]
- His word (the Bible) - “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: “and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do

them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." [Mat 7:24-27 NKJV]

Jesus Himself

Whenever an early Church was established, the first thing that the Apostle preached was Jesus' death on the cross, and this is the ultimate first foundation.

"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?" [Gal 3:1 NKJV]

"but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness," [1Co 1:23 NKJV]

"For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." [1Co 2:2 NKJV]

"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," [1Co 15:1-3 NKJV]

The 6 foundations that we build are in response to hearing about the amazing free gift of Jesus' death on the cross for us. Imagine hearing for the first time that your sins, which separate you from God, have been covered and paid for by Jesus' death on the cross. His death would have been portrayed to you in vivid detail, and it would be explained that it was to pay for your sins and the penalty of those sins, so that you can be fully restored to God. You are not saved by doing good works, but simply by His death on your behalf on the cross. His substitutionary gift of life by dying for us on the cross is the main foundation upon which everything

else stands, and all of these foundations are a response to His death for us.

God's word

""Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:" [Matthew 7:24 NKJV]

Everything we need to know about all of these foundations is found in God's word, and His word is enough for us to find salvation and everything else we need. In fact, the Bible says we can be "thoroughly equipped" as Christians simply from His word (see below). Be careful to build upon His word alone, as any and every other foundation results in a building that will collapse in the midst of storms and trials. But His word is reliable, faithful and true. Everything must come from his word and be tested by His word - and if we build upon that foundation, we can be sure our foundation will be secure and no storm can ever shake us.

"and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." [2Ti 3:15-17 NKJV]

1. REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

Introduction

The first foundation stone is “Repentance From Dead Works”.

“Dead works” are the many things we spend our lives doing before we know Jesus, and these things are worthless because they cannot produce God’s life, joy, peace or eternal peace in us, and they result in death - eternal separation from God. Pretty much everything we have done before we met Jesus is a “dead work”, usually prompted by our own sinful desires or misguided motivations. These dead works can include “sins” (things done which God says are against His will) OR “good works” done with wrong motivations. They are all “dead works” because they don’t have any of the life of God in them. The Bible says that anything we do that does not stem from real, vibrant faith in Jesus is a sin - “... for whatever is not from faith is sin.” [Rom 14:23 NKJV] - so even good works can be dead works if they come from self effort, wrong motives, or a belief that we can “earn” our salvation or forgiveness in any way.

So what does it mean to “repent” of these things?

Repentance Defined

The Greek word used in the scriptures is “*metanoia*” and means “*to change one’s mind*”. It starts with one’s mind (thoughts and beliefs). I must first learn and understand something about myself, about the world around me, and about God, and this leads me to change - uproot and

rebuild - my thoughts and beliefs. The first component is mental, and we gain this new information from God's word alone.

Repentance also has an *emotional* component - it is not only a mental exercise. The Scriptures make it plain that there are two types of sorrow: one that is Godly and leads to repentance and another that is worldly sorrow and leads to death. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians when he believed they had sinned, and when they responded in repentance, he congratulated them as follows:

"Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." [2Co 7:9-10 NKJV]

We have both an Old Testament and a New Testament example of sorrow that doesn't produce true repentance. The Old Testament example is Esau and the story is told in Genesis chapters 25 through 27. This is interpreted for us in the book of Hebrews.

"lest there [be] any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears." [Heb 12:16-17 NKJV]

Esau sold his birthright and was unable to repent, that is, change his mind, even though he had great regret and remorse about his actions.

The New Testament example is Judas, who betrayed Jesus.

"Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself." [Mat 27:3-5 NKJV]

The King James version of the Bible says that Judas “repented himself” but, the Greek word is “*metamelein*” and means “remorse or anguish”. This was sorrow but not repentance. Sorrow over consequences, or because one has been caught, is not true repentance, even though true repentance has an emotional component.

A story of true repentance is found in **2 Samuel 12**, and speaks of King David’s repentance after he had killed Bathsheba’s husband and committed adultery with her. He had become “hard hearted” (not able to hear God’s prompting or his own conscience) and it took an unusual message from God to get him to the place of repentance. God sent Nathan the prophet with a story about a rich man who stole a poor man’s only lamb whom the poor man loved.

Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. "The rich [man] had exceedingly many flocks and herds. "But the poor [man] had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. "And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." [2Sa 12:1-4 NKJV]

The story seems to have broken through David’s hard heart (as God’s word is able to do), and it opened him up to see things from God’s perspective, instead of his own twisted perspective which excused his sin. David had been stubbornly closed to God’s perspective on his sin for several months, but one word from God broke through and David was brought to repentance:

"So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! "And he shall

restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 'I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! 'Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife [to be] your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. ... [2Sa 12:5-9 NKJV]

So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." (Psalm 51 fits in here - which details David's prayer of repentance to God -

A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. "Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight--That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit." [Psalm 51:1-12 NKJV]

Listen to Nathan the prophet's reply after David repents,...

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. "However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also [who is] born to you shall

surely die." Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill.

How does David respond to this?

David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. So the elders of his house arose [and went] to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!" When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. Then his servants said to him, "What [is] this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child [while he was] alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food." And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell [whether] the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 'But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.'" Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him," [2Sa 12:5-9, 13-24 NKJV]

We can see that

- There was a mental (rational) component to David's repentance, but it was linked to an emotional response (Nathan's story about the stolen lamb seemed to get through David's hard heart and showed him how God saw his sin)
- The emotional element of David's repentance was not the main aspect - when the child had died he picked himself up and got on

with things. His WILL (the decisive part of his personality) was more fully in control. Repentance is an act of the will.

- His repentance was expressed with WORDS - Psalm 51 is a beautiful example of expressing one's repentance. Our repentance MUST include words - "Take words with you, And return to the LORD. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity; Receive us graciously, For we will offer the sacrifices of our lips." [Hosea 14:2 NKJV]. The words we use must show that we fully understand how and why our sin is wrong, and show that we understand how this must have made the other person (and God) feel.
- There was a PRACTICAL aspect to his repentance - he fasted and mourned. His actions showed what was happening in his heart, and repentance must always include an associated change in actions which includes restitution and repayment for wrong done and a change to ensure it does not happen again. "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance," [Matthew 3:8 NKJV], "but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance." [Acts 26:20 NKJV]

Do you remember the Corinthian Christians that we referenced above? Paul wrote to them and they repented with a "godly sorrow that led to repentance". Listen to the actions, emotions, words and decisions that accompanied their repentance:

"For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter." [2 Corinthians 7:11 NKJV]

Repentance is essential

When Jesus preached, He said "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel!" (Mark 1:14-15 NKJV)

This pattern is followed throughout the New Testament: Luke 24:46-47--repentance and the remission of sins; Acts 2:38--repentance, baptism and remission of sins; Acts 20:21--Paul preached repentance and faith. If we want to achieve New Testament results with our Christian lives then we need to follow this same pattern that includes true repentance.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." [Acts 17:30-31 NKJV]

God commands repentance - have you repented of your "dead works"? The "death" experience of dying to our old works is necessary for the new life of Jesus to be brought about in us, and if we are struggling to enjoy all of God's good things in our lives, it could be that we have not fully repented of the old things.

In the book of Hosea, God is wanting to bless His people but He wants them to repent first. He uses the picture of their hearts being hard soil that cannot be ploughed up, and He commands them to plough up their hearts:

"Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you." [Hosea 10:12 NKJV]

Make a list of all of your “dead works” and repent one by one before the Lord. Ask Him to give you His perspective on how these have hurt Him, hurt others and hurt you. Intentionally break up the hard soil of your heart and say sorry to Him and to other people if necessary, making restitution wherever possible. The results will be amazing.

Once you have confessed and repented, you need to trust that He has forgiven you, as He promises in His word: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." [1 John 1:9 NKJV]

Trust Him and take His promise of forgiveness as being stronger than any remaining feelings of guilt you may have. Be like King David and get up and move on in assurance and faith.

"let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."
[Hebrews 10:22 NKJV]

"how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" [Hebrews 9:9, 14 NKJV]

"And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." [1 John 3:19-22 NKJV]

Discussion questions

1. What surprised you in this foundation lesson?
2. What is still unclear to you from this lesson?

3. How do you need to act or think differently because of this lesson?
4. What specific things will you change this week?

2. FAITH TOWARD GOD

The second foundation is “Faith toward God”. What is faith and why is it important?

Faith is essential to our Christian lives

Consider these statements to understand how important and precious faith is to God:

"...your faith, (is) much more precious than gold that perishes" [1 Peter 1:7 NKJV]

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." [Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV]

"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."" [Romans 1:17 NKJV]

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." [2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV]

"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]

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith." [1 John 5:4 NKJV]

"... for whatever is not from faith is sin." [Rom 14:23 NKJV]

Martin Luther said, *“God our Father has made all things depend on faith so that whoever has faith will have everything, and whoever does not have faith will have nothing”*

Faith is opposite to natural sight (and all of our other 5 senses)

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." [Hebrews 11:1 NKJV]

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." [2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV]

"while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." [2 Corinthians 4:18 NKJV]

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." [Hebrews 11:27 NKJV]

An example of this can be seen with Peter walking on the water. When Jesus said "come", he started walking on water by faith. It was only when he started to rely on his five senses more than what Jesus had said that his faith departed...

"So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"" [Matthew 14:29-31 NKJV]

Each person has a measure of faith as a gift from God ... which can be increased

"... God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." [Romans 12:3 NKJV]

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other," [2 Thessalonians 1:3]

Faith is refined and tested in order to remove its impurities

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ," [1 Peter 1:6-7 NKJV]

Faith always results in works / actions

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. ... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." [James 2:17, 19-24, 26 NKJV]

The "works" of faith include the words we speak

"And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak," [2 Corinthians 4:13 NKJV]

"But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." [Romans 10:8-10 NKJV]

The “works” of faith can also be described as “love”

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love." [Galatians 5:6 NKJV]

"remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father," [1 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV]

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other," [2 Thessalonians 1:3 NKJV]

"Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith," [1 Timothy 1:5 NKJV]

Faith is born from hearing God’s words

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." [Romans 10:17 NKJV]

Summary Lifecycle of Faith

Based on all of this, we can say that faith is BORN when a person sees something of God and the invisible spirit realm by reading the Bible.

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
[Romans 10:17 NKJV]

It grows as a person focuses on this spiritual reality over and above their physical senses.

"And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform." [Romans 4:19-21 NKJV]

It leads to them speaking words of faith, and doing works or actions that are in accordance with what they have seen through God's word. This is often seen by others as "love" (for God and/or toward other people)

"And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak," [2 Corinthians 4:13 NKJV]

If a person does not obey or act upon what faith is saying to them, their faith can die.

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." [James 2:26 NKJV]

Testing will come that makes it difficult to focus on this invisible, spiritual reality - our five senses and hardships will make it a test. This is so that our faith can be refined and "unbelief" can be taken away. When we persevere through these trials our faith is strengthened.

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by

fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ," [1 Peter 1:6-7 NKJV]

The result of all of this is that our faith grows stronger, it causes us to “overcome the world” and to be pleasing to God.

“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,” [2 Thessalonians 1:3]

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith." [1 John 5:4 NKJV]

Two examples of this lifecycle

The Israelites and the promised land

The Israelites were promised by God that they could enter the promised land (**Numbers 13 - 14**) but they trusted their senses more than God's words and so they did not enter but instead wandered in the wilderness for forty years:

"For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it." [Hebrews 4:2 NKJV]

Abraham

"(Abraham), contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had

promised He was also able to perform. And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." [Romans 4:18-22 NKJV]

Conclusion

"Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." [Mark 9:23 NKJV]

Discussion questions

1. How well did you do in making the specific changes / actions from the last lesson?
2. What surprised you in this foundation lesson?
3. What is still unclear to you from this lesson?
4. How do you need to act or think differently because of this lesson?
5. What specific things will you change this week?

3. THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

Introduction

The third foundational stone is “the doctrine of baptisms”. The Greek word for “*baptisms*” is plural, implying that there is more than one baptism.

Definition of Baptism

The verb phrase “*to baptize*” is transliterated into English from the Greek. When something is transliterated the original word is used with the English version of the letters which make up the word. The Greek word is “*baptizo*” which becomes our word “*baptize*”. When a word is transliterated, it is not defined, just put into English.

Why was this word transliterated? In the early years of the 17th century, King James of Britain, authorized an English translation of the Bible (this is the Authorized King James version which we have today). While King James held political power as an absolute monarch yet, in matters of religion, he was answerable to the Bishops of the established Church of England. King James made it known to the translators that he did not want anything introduced into the Bible translation that would cause unnecessary offense to the Bishops or which would be too obviously contrary to the practices of the established Church. Therefore, two words were transliterated without definition: bishop and baptize. Baptize came directly from the Greek to English; bishop came from the Greek to Latin to English without a real translation. Had the Greek word for bishop been translated correctly everywhere by its meaning of “overseer”, the result could have been considered a challenge to the established hierarchical order of government in the Church of England

The root of “*baptizo*” is “*bapto*”. The root of “*bapto*” is used three times in the Greek text and is always translated by the English verb “*to dip*”:

Luke 16:24--“...*dip the tip of the finger in water...*”

John 13:26--“...*a piece of bread when I have dipped it.*”

Rev. 19:13--“...*a robe dipped in blood.*”

A compound version of “*bapto*” is “*Embapto*” which is used three times in the Greek text:

Matthew 26:23--“...*He that dips his hand with me in the dish...*”

Mark 14:20--“...*It is one of the twelve, that dips with me in the dish.*”

John 13:26--“... *I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it... when he had dipped the sop...*”

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible defines “*bapto*” as “*to cover wholly with fluid,*” hence “*to dip*” and in secular Greek, the word is used for the action of dipping a cloth into dye in order to dye the cloth, or the sinking of a ship where the water completely engulfs, overwhelms and fills the ship as it sinks.

Types Of Baptism

There are 3 types of baptism mentioned in the New Testament. Each of those mentioned have different meanings, but in Bible times these three were all supposed to happen simultaneously so that they are all supposed to be aspects of the same baptism. In reality, however, in modern and in Bible times, these three baptisms can sometimes happen at different times.

1. Christian Baptism (baptism into the Name of Jesus)

Matthew 28:19 “...*baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*”

Act 2:38 “*be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...*”

Act 19:5 “*they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*”

2. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:5 “...you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Jesus told His disciples to wait until they received power, until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit before being witnesses.

3. Baptism into the Body

1 Corinthians 12:13 “**For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,...**”

It is the Holy Spirit who immerses us into the body; who places us according to the will of the Lord.

Conditions For Christian Baptism

It is not by chance that the Doctrine of Baptisms is third in our foundation study list. First comes repentance from dead works, then faith (belief) toward God and then baptism. Baptism must be built on repenting and believing. Baptism without repenting and believing is a worthless act. It accomplishes nothing and has no significance unless we have repented from our own dead works and turned our faith toward God. This would eliminate infant baptism as a part of our traditions since the infant would not have been able to repent and believe.

The Philippian jailer gives us the pattern:

“And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.” [Acts 16:30-33 NKJV]

The Word gives us four conditions for Christian baptism:

1. Repentance

"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." [Acts 2:37-38 NKJV]

2. Belief

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." [Mark 16:16 NKJV]

3. A good conscience

"There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," [1 Peter 3:21 NKJV]

4. Become a disciple

"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 28:19-20 NKJV]

Significance Of Christian Baptism

Many in our churches today seem to think that baptism is simply a ritual that can be performed whenever one gets around to doing it. However, that is not the way that the Scriptures present it.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the

body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin." [Romans 6:1-7 NKJV]

The purpose of baptism is a declaration of death, burial, and resurrection in order that we might not live to sin but instead live to righteousness.

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

[Romans 6:11-14 NKJV]

There are three successive stages to the ordinance of baptism:

1. We died with Jesus on the Cross.
2. We are buried with Him.
3. We are raised with Him in His resurrection.

This produces an inner transformation within the believer: 1) death to sin, 2) new life to righteousness in God.

"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." [Galatians 3:27-28 NKJV]

We have an example in the Old Testament when the children of Israel followed Moses through the Red Sea. The New Testament calls this a baptism.

"Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea," [1 Corinthians 10:1-2 NKJV]

As a result of this event, the Israelites could flee Egypt and pursue God's future for them and the soldiers that had enslaved them before were

killed as the waters of the Red Sea engulfed them. Friend, you must go through the waters of baptism so that the forces of evil that enslaved you before are stopped from enslaving you in the future.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

As shown in **Acts 2:38**, receiving the Holy Spirit comes after believing and being baptized. This is what happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost. This was important enough that Jesus told his followers to wait until they received the Holy Spirit before doing anything.

"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."" [Acts 1:4-5 NKJV]

Jesus said wait for the promise of the Father and equated this with being baptized with the Holy Spirit. What, exactly, is the promise of the Father? The Holy Spirit was promised by God in **Joel 2**, many centuries earlier: **"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days."** [Joel 2:28-29 NKJV]

After His death and resurrection, Jesus told His followers **"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."** [Acts 1:8 NKJV]

To do the work that we need to do requires the power of the Holy Spirit. Effective witnessing to the Truth can only be done through the power of the Holy Ghost. If it was necessary for the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit before going forth, how much more do we need to receive the Holy

Spirit before we can go forth and witness of Jesus and do the works that He has called us to do in His name?

Examples of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, there were certain manifestations of the event. Let's see if there is a consistent occurrence each time the Baptism in the Holy Spirit occurs.

1. The Day of Pentecost (**Acts Chapter 2:1-4**):
 1. a rushing mighty wind
 2. tongues of fire over the heads
 3. speaking with tongues
2. Samaria (**Acts Chapter 8:14-19**):
 1. The sign is not named but it was visible because Simon offered money to Peter and John for the ability to lay hands on people so that they would receive the Holy Spirit.
3. The House of Cornelius (**Acts Chapter 10:44-47**):
 1. speaking with tongues
 2. magnifying God
4. Certain disciples at Ephesus (**Acts Chapter 19:1-6**):
 1. speaking with tongues
 2. prophesy

The only commonality of these examples is "speaking with tongues". The only example which doesn't name "tongues" is Samaria. However, Simon saw something different than what he had seen before with Phillip. He had seen miracles, healing, deliverance, and great joy. Since he saw something happen different than he had seen before, it seems logical to assume (based on the other incidences given) that he saw them speak with tongues.

We can conclude that "speaking with tongues" is a consistent evidence of having been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Baptized Into the Body of Christ

The third baptism is when we are baptized into Jesus' body.

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many." [1 Corinthians 12:13-14 NKJV]

This aspect of baptism is not often discussed and its significance is not always recognized. But as we begin to understand the meaning of baptism as being immersed and engulfed, this aspect takes on greater significance. Consider the following table that shows how these work together:

BAPTISM	ONE WHO DOES THE BAPTISING	ELEMENT BAPTISED INTO	THE RESULTS
Into Jesus	A servant of the Lord	Water	Immersed in the water, raised new
Into the Holy Spirit	Jesus	Holy Spirit	Immersed in the Holy Spirit - filled with His power
Into His body	Holy Spirit	Church / Body of believers	Immersed in the people of the Body and part of a new family

The Church is called a "body of believers". It is not just a club one attends, or a service or event one watches. We are "added" (not just saved) into a local family of believers, and our gifts and talents and contributions become a part of what makes that local body a healthy

expression of Jesus in that place. It really is a deep and meaningful thing.

"And the Lord ADDED to the church daily those who were being SAVED." [Acts 2:47 NKJV]

Discussion questions

1. How well did you do in making the specific changes / actions from the last lesson?
2. What surprised you in this foundation lesson?
3. What is still unclear to you from this lesson?
4. How do you need to act or think differently because of this lesson?
5. What specific things will you change this week?

4. LAYING ON OF HANDS

Introduction

We continue examining the foundational stones as listed in Hebrews 6:1-3 with “laying on of hands”. We need to understand and apply this “elementary principle” in a biblical manner.

The laying on of hands was practiced in the Bible for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Ministering healing
2. The infilling of the Holy Spirit
3. Imparting of Spiritual Gifts
4. To commission ministers
5. To ordain Elders and Deacons

Old Testament Usage

In the Old Testament it was an accepted practice to lay on hands for blessing or special anointing at the direction of the Lord.

"Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn." [Genesis 48:14 NKJV]

NOTE: *It was accepted practice that the right hand was for the greater blessing which normally went to the firstborn.*

"And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; "set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. "And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient." [Numbers 27:18-20 NKJV]

We can see the results or outcome of Moses laying hands on Joshua in Deuteronomy:

"Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses." [Deuteronomy 34:9 NKJV]

New Testament Usage

Laying On Of Hands For Healing

There are 5 supernatural signs appointed by Jesus that would accompany the preaching of the Gospel and those that have faith in His authority.

""And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."" [Mark 16:17-18 NKJV]

The last of these is the laying on of hands for the sick to recover. This "sign" is for all of those who believe - we should all be doing it

The Lord has made provision for the healing of those who cannot effect healing for themselves too.

"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." [James 5:14-15 NKJV]

Note that every believer should know who their elders are and the onus is on the person to approach the elders and ask for prayer when they are sick, not the other way around.

The Elders pray over the sick (with faith) and anoint him with oil, and 3 things happen:

1. the sick shall be saved (healed);

2. the Lord shall raise him up; and
3. sins committed shall be forgiven.

Laying On Of Hand To Impart The Holy Spirit

There are 5 cases of receiving the Holy Spirit given in the scriptures:

1. Acts 2: 1-4 Day of Pentecost
2. Acts 8: 14-20 Samaritan new converts
3. Acts 9: 17 Saul (Paul)
4. Acts 10: 44-46 Cornelius' house
5. Acts 19: 1-6 Disciples at Ephesus

The Holy Spirit was ministered with the laying on of hands in 3 of these 5 instances. That is more than 50% of the time. The two occasions when the Holy Spirit came without the laying on of hands was the day of Pentecost and the house of Cornelius. We should expect a similar ratio today as those revealed by the scriptures when we pray for people to receive the Holy Spirit.

Laying On Of Hands To Impart Spiritual Gifts

The laying on of hands is frequently used to impart spiritual gifts to others. The clearest example of this is with Timothy.

"Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership." [1 Timothy 4:14 NKJV]

"Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands." [2 Timothy 1:6 NKJV]

Timothy received a gift that was given prophetically and confirmed and imparted by the laying on of hands of the elders and by Paul.

Laying On Of Hands To Commission Ministers

The clearest example of this occurs in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas were sent out.

"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away." [Acts 13:1-3 NKJV]

The Holy Spirit had called Paul and Barnabas for a special work and had, apparently, spoken to them individually prior to this meeting. The Holy Spirit now spoke publicly (probably through one of the prophets). The other leaders fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them to publicly confirm the Holy Spirit's call to the work. Then, Paul and Barnabas were sent forth to accomplish the work assigned by the Holy Spirit. After this sending forth, Paul and Barnabas are both called apostles and the result of their ministry was extraordinary (as the rest of the book of Acts attests).

Laying On Of Hands To Commission Elders And Deacons

The scriptures only give us two offices in the local church: elders and deacons.

The commissioning of elders could be placed under the previous purpose of the laying on of hands—commissioning ministers; however, I wanted to keep the church offices together.

While the scriptures don't specifically use the phrase "laying on of hands" in connection with elders, it is a logical assumption.

"So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed." [Acts 14:23 NKJV]

As Paul and Barnabas made their trip, they left groups of believers (disciples) behind as they moved on to the next town. As they made their return journey, they visited the groups of disciples and ordained (appointed) elders in each of the towns where they had left the groups of believers.

We can see two principles in these verses:

1. elders were appointed by the apostles; and
2. when appointed as elders, there was prayer and fasting to commend them to the Lord (this was probably accompanied by the laying on of hands).

The appointment of elders was so important that when Paul couldn't do it in Crete, he left Titus to specifically set things in order and appoint elders in each city ([Titus 1:5](#)).

The only possible example we have in the scriptures of the appointment of deacons is in Acts 6 (although the word "deacon" is not used there).

"Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; "but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them." [Acts 6:1-6 NKJV]

These ministers were specifically selected to resolve the issue of unequal distribution of help to the different groups of widows, but they went on to be great preachers and leaders as can be seen in Acts chapter 7 and 8. (The word “deacon” comes from a word that means “server or minister”) They were selected by the group of believers and then confirmed and appointed by the laying on of hands of the elders.

Warning About Laying On Of Hands

The scriptures give us a warning about hastily laying hands on people.

"Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure." [1 Timothy 5:22 NKJV]

There are 3 warnings in this verse and I believe the second two are a result of the first.

1. don't lay hands hastily on people;
2. don't be a partaker of other's sins; and
3. keep yourself pure.

Laying on of hands is not just a religious ceremony. It has real spiritual effect. For this reason we pray and seek the Lord's guidance, blessing and protection whenever we lay hands on anyone, and refuse to do so in some instances.

Conclusion

The laying on of hands was so common and so important in the early Church that it was one of the foundational teachings. Have we really understood it in that way and are we using it as we should?

Discussion questions

1. How well did you do in making the specific changes / actions from the last lesson?
2. What surprised you in this foundation lesson?
3. What is still unclear to you from this lesson?
4. How do you need to act or think differently because of this lesson?
5. What specific things will you change this week?

5. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Introduction

Eternity is not endless time, although that is the way that we often tend to think of it. Eternity is the nature and mode of God's own being—the uncreated realm in which God Himself exists.

Time was created by God as part of the creation of the Heavens and earth as mentioned in the first verse of Genesis. We refer to it today as the space-time continuum. Since time is part of creation and was created by God then God, Himself, exists outside of time unlike us.

While we live our lives by the clock, there comes a point in our life that the clock stops ticking. At death we step out of time and into eternity.

When our life ends, time stops for us. When this happens two things are awaiting us on the other side of time:

1. resurrection of the dead, and
2. eternal judgment.

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever." [Daniel 12:2-3 NKJV]

It is essential that we live everyday with eternity in mind - and this means being fully aware of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

The Necessity of Resurrection

Our faith hinges on the fact that there is a resurrection of the dead because Jesus was raised from the dead.

"Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then

our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!" [1 Corinthians 15:12-17 NKJV]

So, we see that if there is no resurrection then our faith is worthless. The first born from the dead is Jesus and upon that fact our faith rests and we have the assurance that we too will be raised from the dead.

However, there is one class of exceptions to the resurrection of the dead and that is, naturally, those who never die.

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." [1 Corinthians 15:51-53 NKJV]

True Christians which are alive when Christ returns will not die but will be changed. They will skip the death process but will still receive their immortal bodies. As we can see from these scriptures, the resurrection of the dead (which means resurrection of the body) occurs at the time of Christ's return and before the judgment seat.

The Order of Resurrection

In First Corinthians Paul gives us the order of resurrection; that is, the sequence of events that occur as it relates to the raising of the dead.

"For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign

till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death." [1 Corinthians 15:21-26 NKJV]

Regardless of any particular belief that you might hold about the timing of various events or doctrines such as the “rapture”, the order of resurrection will always be the same and it is a three step process.

Christ the first fruits, They that are Christ's at His coming, Then comes the end.

This occurs when the Kingdom is delivered to the Father. The timeline for this is after the 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth.

"But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

[Revelation 20:5-6 NKJV]

After everything is completed at the end of the 1000 years, then the rest of the dead are raised for the Great White Throne judgment.

There is much disagreement among believers about the details of these phases of the Lord's return; Will all of these be a single event? Or, will there be definite time intervals between some of them? We believe it is OK to have different opinions on many of these details.

Resurrection Body

When we are resurrected our spirits and souls are re-united with our bodies. It is the same body we had when we died only changed. God keeps track of all of our elemental components so that they can be assembled again at the right time.

When Jesus appeared to His disciples, He had the same body that was crucified as evidenced by the wounds on the hands and feet, but it was

now a “spiritual body” that could walk through walls! They at first thought that He was a spirit but He quickly set them straight on that.

""Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."" [Luke 24:39 NKJV]

"But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain--perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." [1 Corinthians 15:35-44 NKJV]

When our natural body is sown into the ground like seed, it is raised as a spiritual body. Notice in the Scriptures above that there are varying degrees of glory in the resurrection. Just as there is a different brightness to the sun, the moon, and the stars, there will be a different brightness to the ones who are resurrected.

Abilities that we can expect of our resurrected bodies (our example is Jesus):

1. appear and disappear at will
2. enter closed rooms
3. pass between heaven and earth.

The First Resurrection

The designation of the “first resurrection” comes from chapter 20 of the book of Revelation:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." [Revelation 20:4-6 NKJV]

The fact that the Scriptures call this event the “first resurrection” implies that this is the first occasion of resurrection beyond the first fruits (*Christ the first fruits—1 Corinthians 15:23*). The Corinthians' Scripture also indicates that in the order of things the next resurrection event is “those that are Christ's at His coming”, which tells us that the “first resurrection” as indicated above occurs at Christ's coming.

This is in keeping with what Paul said:

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." [1 Corinthians 15:51-53 NKJV]

Paul indicates in these verses that the time that the dead will be raised (the first resurrection) will be at the last trumpet. He gives further details in his letter to the Thessalonians.

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the

clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord." [1
Thessalonians 4:16-17 NKJV]

These verses clearly link the trumpet of God, the resurrection of the dead (the first resurrection) with being caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. Based on the Scriptures from Revelation that are listed above, the being "caught up" which is occurring at the raising of the dead is at the time of the establishment of the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth.

The Sounds Associated with Jesus' Return

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord." [1
Thessalonians 4:16-17 NKJV]

There are 3 sounds associated with the Lord's return:

1. the shout of the Lord--only the Lord has the power to call the dead out of their graves;
2. the voice of the Archangel--possibly Gabriel (herald);
3. the trumpet of God--all through the bible, the trumpet call signaled the gathering together of God's people.

The return of the Lord will be a noisy event. Jesus said His return would be like this:

""For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be." [Matthew 24:27 NKJV]

The Last Resurrection—The Second Death

After the first resurrection we have the 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth. During this time the Devil has been locked up in the bottomless pit (abyss). After the 1000 years are completed the Devil is released from the abyss and goes forth to deceive the nations again. He succeeds and gathers them together and surrounds the camp of the saints and the beloved city. God destroys them with fire from heaven and throws the Devil into the lake of fire. [*this is detailed in Revelation chapter 20*]. After all of this the Great White Throne judgment occurs.

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." [Revelation 20:11-15 NKJV]

All of the dead who were not previously raised now stand before the throne of God and books are opened and another book is opened which is the Book of Life. From these books the dead are judged. There are several things that are thrown into the Lake of Fire:

1. death
2. Hades or Hell (notice that Hell is not the final destination of the wicked)
3. everyone whose name is not written in the book of life.

For everyone not written in the book of life, being thrown into the lake of fire is called the second death. After these things are completed, we have a new heaven and a new earth. Our current heaven and earth pass

away. Our future abode is on the new earth not heaven as is often taught. This is detailed in chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation.

Discussion questions

1. How well did you do in making the specific changes / actions from the last lesson?
2. What surprised you in this foundation lesson?
3. What is still unclear to you from this lesson?
4. How do you need to act or think differently because of this lesson?
5. What specific things will you change this week?

6. ETERNAL JUDGMENT

Every human being will one day be judged by God

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever." [Daniel 12:2-3 NKJV]

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." [2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV]

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."" [Acts 17:30-31 NKJV]

"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." [Romans 14:10 NKJV]

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." [Hebrews 9:27-28 NKJV]

God, the Father, as Judge

Throughout the entire Bible it is plainly stated that, by sovereign, eternal right, the office of "Judge" belongs to God Himself.

""Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"" [Genesis 18:25 NKJV]

"So that men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth."" [Psalm 58:11 NKJV]

"(For the LORD is our Judge, The LORD is our Lawgiver, The LORD is our King; He will save us);" [Isaiah 33:22 NKJV]

However, even though God is judge, His nature is to be long-suffering.

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." [2 Peter 3:9 NKJV]

""For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." [John 3:17 NKJV]

The reluctance of God to administer judgment finds expression also in the way in which God's judgment will ultimately be carried out, as we will see below.

Jesus, the Son, as Judge

God, the Father is Judge; however, He has delegated judgment to the Son.

""For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." [John 5:22-23 NKJV]

""For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, "and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." [John 5:26-27 NKJV]

The office of Judge is transferred from the Father to the Son because Christ is also the Son of man as well as the Son of God; that is, he partakes of the human as well as the divine nature, and, therefore, in His

judgments He is able to make allowance from His own experience, for all the infirmities and temptations of human flesh.

Jesus said His words would be the standard by which men are judged: ""And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." [John 12:47-48 NKJV]

No-one can stand up under God's perfect Judgment without Jesus

"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law ... in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." [Romans 2:1-12, 16 NKJV]

The penalty for any sin is death (Genesis 2:17 ; Rom 1:32) and since “all have sinned” (Rom 3:23), no-one can stand in the judgment apart from a miraculous salvation provided by Jesus.

What Jesus achieved in His death for us

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." [Romans 5:8-9 NKJV]

""For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." [John 3:16-18 NKJV]

""He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."" [John 3:36 NKJV]

""Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." [John 5:24 NKJV]

""And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." ... "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life." [John 6:40, 47 NKJV]

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," [Romans 5:1 NKJV]

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." [Romans 8:1 NKJV]

The different Seats of Judgment

The New Testament reveals 2 main, successive scenes upon which eternal judgment will be carried out. Each of these is marked by the type of seat that the Judge sits upon to execute judgment:

1. the judgment seat of Christ
2. the great white throne.

Different groups of people are judged at each seat of judgment.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." [2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV]

The language and context make it clear that this scripture is addressed to Christians. It may seem surprising that Christians are going to be judged at all. Popular thought seems to say that the Judgment Day is for the unbelievers. However, look at the scriptures.

"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" [1 Peter 4:17-18 NKJV]

Judgment must begin at "the household of God", "with us" which obviously means Christians. Therefore, contrary to popular thought in Christian circles, the first judgment will be that of the true believers.

"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God." [Romans 14:10-12 NKJV]

Paul's use of "brother" and "we will all" shows that he is speaking of Christians. Each will give an account of himself.

2 Corinthians 5:10 tells us that the Christian is judged for "his deeds in the body"; that is, the acts and the behavior of each Christian during his life here on earth. These acts will fall into one of two categories—"good" or "bad". There is no third category of neutral. Every act of a Christian has definite value of some kind—either positive or negative, good or bad. Every act that is not performed in faith and obedience, for the glory of God, is unacceptable to God, and therefore, "bad". It is upon this simple basis that each Christian must expect to be judged.

It is clear that the judgment of Christians is not a judgment of condemnation.

""He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." [John 3:18 NKJV]

""Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life." [John 5:24 NKJV]

Therefore, the believer does not face judgment where the outcome will be final condemnation. The believer will not be judged for sins. Sins were wiped out when the person received Jesus as Savior and confessed him as Lord.

""I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins." [Isaiah 43:25 NKJV]

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." [1 John 1:9 NKJV]

Christians are not judged for condemnation; that is, for salvation or deliverance from Hell; but, instead, are judged for reward in the Kingdom of God. They are not judged in respect of righteousness for the Christian's righteousness is not his own but Christ's (*1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21*), but Christians are judged in respect to the service to God and the deeds done in the body.

Christian judgment is for reward:

"Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." [1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NKJV]

This is not a judgment of every man's soul but of every man's work. Quality is of more importance to God than quantity.

The Great White Throne Judgment Seat

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." [Revelation 20:11-15 NKJV]

This is the final judgment. The believers in the atoning work of Christ have undergone their own judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Therefore, this judgment is for all of those whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of Life. The criteria is whether or not the person's name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. It stands to reason that those in this judgment are rebellious sinners, and unbelievers and will be cast into the lake of everlasting fire.

Conclusion

We do not live in dread of judgment because Jesus has set us free from the punishment by taking it on Himself on the cross. We are motivated by this, however, to try to "persuade men ..." [2 Corinthians 5:11 NKJV] and to "discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." [1 Corinthians 9:27 NKJV]

Discussion questions

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