

Foundational Principles of Christianity

- Introduction -

Knowing what to teach a new Christian and when he should learn it has always been challenging for the church and the subject of much debate. However, by using the Scripture itself we can see that two elements of a Christian's education rise above all the others. The first and foremost of the two are the commands that Jesus instructed His disciples to obey. They are so important that Jesus made them a mandatory part of the Church's mission, which is to make disciples. *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.**”* (Matthew 28:19-20)¹

The second element of a new Christian's education arises from the book of Hebrews in the New Testament portion of our Bibles. Most Christian scholars believe that the author of this book was the Apostle Paul. From his writing we can see that he considered the six elementary principles listed in Hebrews 6:1-2 as milk for babies and necessary for a Christian's understanding of his faith. *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the **elementary principles of the oracles of God**, and you have come to need **milk** and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of **milk** is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Therefore leaving the **elementary teaching** about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of **repentance from dead works** and of **faith toward God**, of **instruction about washings (baptisms or immersions)** and **laying on of hands**, and the **resurrection of the dead** and **eternal judgment.**”* (Hebrews 5:12-6:2)

These elementary principles directly relate to an individual's salvation and should be taught to newer Christians soon after their conversion experience. They are recorded in chronological order of their occurrence in a Christian's life.

- Salvation – God's Three Part Deliverance Process -

Man is a three part being consisting of a spirit, soul, and body. God's provision for man's salvation is also in three parts. Reference to this is found in 1st Thessalonians 5:23. *“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The three parts of God's plan of salvation are called: justification, sanctification, and glorification.

The background of this three-part deliverance process arises from the Garden of Eden story in the book of Genesis. The serpent, which is called Satan, beguiled Eve into disobeying God by

¹ The commands of Jesus can be found in the three-book teaching series entitled, **“A Journey With Jesus”** by Michael Gibson.

casting doubt about **1)** what God said, **2)** the consequences of her disobedience and **3)** God's love for her. *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 1) "Indeed, **has God said**, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said to the woman, 2) "**You surely shall not die!** 3) "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:1-5)*

The tactics used by Satan to beguile Eve are the same ones he uses today. His attacks are meant to destroy a person in each of his three parts:

- 1) The spirit, by causing people to doubt God's Word, thereby creating lack of **faith** or belief,
- 2) The soul, by presenting a lie, thereby creating a false **hope**, and
- 3) The body, by causing people to think God is against them because of the circumstances, thereby creating lack of **love**.

Eve was tempted in all three parts. *"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate." (Genesis 3:6)*

- 1) The temptation to the spirit was that it would "make one wise." This is called the pride of life.
- 2) The temptation to the soul was that it was a "delight to the eyes." This is called the lust of the eyes, which are windows to the soul.
- 3) The temptation to the body was that it was "good for food." This is called the lust of the flesh.

Jesus faced these same temptations during His forty-day fast in the wilderness. He overcame Satan's temptations by having faith in God's word; hope in His promises, and by continuing to love the Father despite the circumstances.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command. Disobedience of God is sin. Sin causes separation from God and requires judgment and punishment. This penchant for disobeying God has been passed on to the entire human race through reproduction of the species. Since man's failure affected all three parts, God's plan of salvation includes restoring him in each of these parts.

- Justification - Salvation of the Spirit -

Justification is the act of being made righteous before God. In other words, **justification** refers to how God declares a person acceptable. Scripture declares that a man is justified by having faith in God's son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The first two elementary principles, as they are presented in the book of Hebrews, deal with that subject. They are repentance from dead works and faith towards God. Repentance is a change in what a person believes with a resulting change in the person's behavior. The pivotal issue is pride. In one case, a person tries to earn his justification from God through human effort. When it is achieved he is filled with pride and has something to boast about. In the other case, a person simply takes God at His word to be justified. When a person is justified through faith he is humble and has something to be thankful for.

- Sanctification - Salvation of the Soul -

Sanctification is the act of being purified and made holy. In other words, **sanctification** refers to how a Christian is set apart for use by God. Scripture clearly indicates that God expects everything used in His service, whether people or things to be clean and dedicated to Him. The Old Testament shows us this process involves washing the person or thing and then anointing it (rubbing or smearing it) with oil. The third and fourth elementary principles deal with that subject. They are instructions about washings and the laying on of hands.

For a believer, the first and primary washing occurs at water baptism. It is an outward sign that a person has been “born again” and represents cleansing the vessel. Subsequent washings are needed when a person sins (doesn’t do what is right), thus defiling the outside of the vessel. According to the 1st John 1:9, these washings occur when a person **confesses** his sins. Jesus forgives him and cleanses him from all unrighteousness.

The laying on of hands deals with transferring empowerment from God to an individual. Many times it is accompanied by anointing with oil. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit; hence the one on whom hands are laid should be expecting to receive something from God to be used for His service or glory. The impartation of the Holy Spirit to new Christians for service was accomplished through the laying on of hands. One reference to this can be found in Acts 8:17-18. Many times during the laying on of hands there are accompanying supernatural manifestations of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues or prophesying. These outward signs are supernatural evidence that God is in residence within the individual. Other occasions for the laying on of hands are for healing the sick, empowerment for service, and impartations of spiritual gifts.

- Glorification - Salvation of the Body -

Glorification is the act of being covered with honor or heaped upon with praise. In other words, **glorification** refers to how God arrays a person in splendor. The last two elementary principles deal with this subject. They are instructions concerning the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

The grave is not the final resting place for man; he will be raised from the dead. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead was the proof. At the resurrection each person will be judged by God, whether to live eternally with Him or suffer a second death in the lake of fire. Jesus declared, *“I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.” (John 11:25-26)*

God will clothe each believer with a new body in the likeness of Christ’s and reward everyone for the deeds that were accomplished in the flesh. For the Christian the deeds accomplished on earth (based on faith, hope, and love which correspond to gold, silver, and precious jewels) will add weight to the glory accorded him.

- REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS -

Repentance is one the elementary teachings about Christ as we can see from the book of Hebrews chapter six verse one. *“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.”* The basic meaning of the word repent is “to **change** one’s mind”. It is not an emotion, such as feeling regret or being sorry, however these feelings may accompany it. And it certainly is not a religious ritual or ordinance such as “doing penance.”

The New Testament Greek word “metanoeo” means, “to **think** differently.” And the Old Testament Hebrew word for repent is “shuwb” which means, “to **turn**.” By putting these two definitions together, we form a complete picture of repentance. Repentance is an **inner** change of mind, resulting in an **outward** turning back, or turning around, to face and to move in a completely **new** direction.

An example of this comes from the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. In verse 18, we see the prodigal son change his mind. *I will get up and go to my father.* In verse 20, we see he immediately carried out his decision. *And he got up and came to his father.* First came the inward decision, then, the outward act of carrying out that decision.

The passage of Scripture in Hebrews² also gives a fuller explanation of what God’s idea of repentance is. People are to repent from “**dead works**”, and then they are to exhibit faith in God. The term “dead works” can be understood in two ways. In one aspect it refers to turning away from genuinely evil behavior. A second aspect refers to turning away from doing things that people think will produce eternal life. For example: trusting in one’s own abilities, knowledge or their own righteousness to earn his way into the kingdom of God. Another example would be: by adhering to the Jewish laws as a means of gaining entrance into the kingdom of God. These self-trusting actions are opposed to having faith in God.

The same passage in Hebrews also establishes the fact that repentance must precede having faith in God. This fact is also evidenced in several other passages throughout the Bible. For instance, John, the Baptist preached repentance before Jesus was revealed as the Messiah. (Mark 1:3-4) Jesus preached that the Kingdom of God had arrived and that entrance into it required repentance before belief in the gospel. (Mark 1:14-15) At a later time Jesus declared that repentance came before remission of sins. (Luke 24:46-47) Then on the day of Pentecost, Peter declared that repentance came before remission of sins and before receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:37-38) And the apostle Paul said that repentance was a result of God’s kindness. (Romans 2:4)

² Hebrews 6:1

- FAITH TOWARD GOD -

Not only are people to turn away from their “dead works”, they are also to turn towards God and exhibit **faith** in Him. Having faith in God is much more than giving mental assent to the fact that He exists. Many people on the face of the earth believe that God exists. As far as that goes, so do Satan and all his devils. True Biblical faith requires some effort to understand and exercise.

The word “faith” actually has a Scriptural definition. It is found in Hebrews 11:1. *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* From the definition we see that the faith and hope are two different words. Hope deals with **future** expectation. It is based on a person’s personal desires for the future. It requires no action.

Faith deals with **confidence**. It is based on a person’s personal conviction that he possesses what he had hoped for. It requires action. James 2:17 says, *Even so faith, if it has no **works**, is dead, being by itself.*

Faith must have an object. In other words, you have to trust in something in order to have faith. For example, you have to believe that a chair will support your weight before you sit down or you probably won’t do it. Jesus said, *“Have faith in God!”*³ So true Biblical faith must then have as its object, God, Himself.

Some might say, since God is unseen how can we exhibit faith in Him? That’s a good question! The apostle Paul gives us the first part of the answer in his second letter to the Corinthians.⁴ He says, *“For we walk by **faith** [confidence in things not seen], not by **sight** [things seen].”* So what is it that is not seen that we are to have confidence in? Paul’s reply comes from his letter to the Romans. *So faith comes from **hearing**, and hearing by the **word** of Christ.*⁵

From the beginning God has chosen to reveal Himself to men in two specific ways: Through that which is seen, His creation and that which is unseen, His word and more specifically Jesus Christ, His Son, the Living Word of God. Men know that God exists through what they see but knowing Him requires that they hear what He has to say. From the Bible we learn that the ancients gained approval from God and did mighty works because they heard His voice and obeyed His words.

It is very important for every disciple of Jesus to have a basic understanding of other issues involving his faith in God.

First, since having faith involves hearing God’s word it is important to understand that God speaks to people in three different ways:

1. Through the Scriptures, which are the written words of God.
2. Through utterances of angels or other people, which may come in the form of messages, testimonies, preaching, teaching, tongues and prophecies, and

³ Mark 11:22

⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:7

⁵ Romans 10:17

3. Through His Spirit, which usually is a still small voice emanating from inside the individual.

Second, Biblical faith brings God's word to pass in the earth and it has three parts:

1. Believing the word of God.
2. Confession of that belief.
3. Acting upon that belief.

Some examples of the Biblical pattern of faith are as follows:

- Noah heard the Word of God and believed it. (*"Make for yourself an ark."*)
- Noah spoke. (He told His family because they helped him build the ark.)
- Noah did what he was told to do. (Noah entered the ark he built.)

- Abraham heard the Word of God and believed it. (*"Move to the land, which I will show you."*)
- Abraham spoke. (He told his family because they moved with him.)
- Abraham did what he was told to do. (Abraham physically moved.)

- As a disciple, you heard the Word of God concerning Jesus and your salvation and you believed it. (*For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness.*)
- You spoke, confessing that Jesus is Lord. (*With the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*)⁶
- You got baptized. (*He who has believed and been baptized shall be saved.*)⁷

REMEMBER ... God does not reward faith until it is complete. (*Who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*)⁸

Third, according to the Scriptures a person's faith in God can be hindered in several ways and usually results in not receiving His reward.

- Doubt – which is unbelief.
*"Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not **doubt in his heart**, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, **believe that you have received them**, and they will be granted you."*⁹
- Fear – which is idolatry. Fear is the result of placing something above God. Many times it involves the issue of our pride ... for example: how will I look, what will people think, what if I fail, etc. As some have said, "three hundred and sixty-five times throughout the Scriptures God tells His people to *Fear not*." That's enough to remind us every day of the year. Remember, "*There is **no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear**, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*"¹⁰

⁶ Romans 10:10

⁷ Mark 16:16

⁸ Hebrews 6:12

⁹ Mark 11:23

¹⁰ 1 John 4:18

- Wrong motives – which is the desire of the flesh. “You ask and do not receive, because you ask with **wrong motives**, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a **friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**”¹¹

Fourth, not everyone has faith¹² it is a **gift** from God.¹³ And God gives each Christian a measure of faith¹⁴ but in different proportions.¹⁵ According to 2 Corinthians 10:15 a Christian’s faith can grow or be increased. His faith is built by praying in the Spirit¹⁶ and grows strong by not wavering in unbelief, giving glory to God and being fully assured that what God promised, He is able to perform.¹⁷

Fifth, a person can **apostatize** from his faith or abandon what he once believed. In his first letter to Timothy the apostle Paul points to several instances in which Christians abandoned what they once believed. Some shipwreck their faith¹⁸ by not keeping faith and not keeping a good conscience. Others fall away from their faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.¹⁹ Believers who have resources but don’t provide for their own are guilty of denying the faith.²⁰ Others wander away from the faith by longing for money.²¹ And still others by listening to and professing opposing arguments [against the faith] based on so-called “knowledge”.²² One form of this “knowledge” is known as Gnosticism and is based on having a private or secret knowledge of spiritual truths essential for salvation.

Take a few minutes and consider the following observations about the subject of faith.

1. A little faith can accomplish great things. (Luke 17:6)
2. Faith rests on the power of God, not the wisdom of men. (1 Corinthians 2:4)
3. Faith requires belief and speaking. (2 Corinthians 4:13)
4. Receiving the Holy Spirit and working miracles comes by hearing with faith. (Galatians 3:5)
5. Faith is a defense against Satan’s weapons. (Ephesians 6:16)
6. The promises of God are inherited through faith and patience. (Hebrews 6:12)
7. Faith is necessary to please God. Those who come to Him must believe He is God and believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)
8. Faith must be tested to produce endurance. (James 1:2)
9. Faith does not doubt. (James 1:6)
10. Faith must be contended for earnestly against ungodly people in the Church. (Jude 1:3-4)

¹¹ James 4:3-4

¹² 2 Thessalonians 3:2

¹³ Ephesians 2:8

¹⁴ Romans 12:3

¹⁵ Romans 12:6

¹⁶ Jude 1:20

¹⁷ Romans 4:20-21

¹⁸ 1 Timothy 1:19

¹⁹ 1 Timothy 4:1-3

²⁰ 1 Timothy 5:8

²¹ 1 Timothy 6:10-11

²² 1 Timothy 6:20-21

Having been justified by repentance from dead works and exhibiting faith towards God a Christian is set apart for service to God through a process of sanctification. The word sanctification means, “to make clean or holy.” It is a two-step process involving washings (baptisms or immersions) and dedications (laying on of hands)

- INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT WASHINGS (baptisms or immersions) -

Of the six elementary principles listed in Hebrews 6:1-2, perhaps no other has had so much controversy surrounding it as the instruction about washings. What it means, how it is applied, who applies it and what its effects are, have been the subject of much debate. It is not my aim to quarrel with any particular church’s doctrine concerning it but rather to give the student a broader understanding of the subject. I’ll try to do this by using the Bible coupled with a 1st century Christian mindset developed from its Hebrew roots.

- Definitions -

Some of the confusion surrounding instructions about washings arise from the way the English translators of our Bible handled one Greek word, “baptisma”. Throughout the New Testament this same word is translated in one of three ways: baptism, washing or immersion. Instead of translating the Greek word “baptisma”, which means to immerse, the original translators created the word, “**baptism**” through transliteration. In other words, the translators made up the word “baptism”, which sounds like the Greek word “baptisma”, instead of actually translating its meaning into its English equivalent, which is “**immersion**”. When an object is immersed into another substance ... it simply means that the object has been totally overwhelmed or covered by the substance that it has been placed into.

- Cleansing and Purification²³ -

The basic idea behind baptism, washing or immersion in water is cleansing or to make one’s self, pure. Christian water baptism prepares a person to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Since God is holy and without sin He cannot dwell in an unclean place, therefore His people have to prepare themselves to receive His **presence**.

The process involved in receiving the indwelling presence of God is best described by the Apostle Peter in Acts 2:38. Listen to what he said. *“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

1. Repent. It is the first foundational principle of Christianity and is more fully described as “repentance from dead works.” It includes confession of all of one’s sins so that the person can be forgiven of them all.
2. The next step in the process is to believe the gospel (good news) and corresponds to what Jesus said, *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*(Mark 1:15) Although Peter does not specifically state this step in verse 38, it can certainly be implied that it occurred since Peter had just finished preaching the

²³ Discussion of water baptism in connection with purification can be found in John 3:25 and 2 Peter 1:5-9.

gospel²⁴ to the assembled people. Their reply to his preaching is evidenced by a faith response: *Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)* This is the second foundational principle of Christianity and is expressed as "having faith towards God."

3. The third step is to be immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
4. The final step in the process comes when the Holy Spirit takes up residence within the believer. This will be discussed in more depth under the fourth foundational principle of Christianity ... laying on of hands.

Israelites at the time of Jesus practiced water-based ritual washing for removal of any ritual impurity, sometimes requiring just washing of the hands or feet, and at other times requiring full immersion. The Jewish oral law required the use of "**living water**"²⁵ for any ritual full immersion and for that they used a natural river, stream, spring, or a special bath, called a Mikvah, which was directly connected to one of them.

- Pouring and Sprinkling²⁶ -

Some church denominations pour water over those who come for baptism and other denominations sprinkle water on them. The idea of pouring water over a candidate for baptism probably arose in arid regions where the water supply was limited. Churches in these areas may have felt that pouring water on a person would cover them and that the pouring action satisfied the requirement for using "living" or running water. Those who sprinkle water on their candidates for baptism can use Ezekiel 36:25-27 as their justification for this method. *"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."*

- Jesus' Baptism -

We can learn much about baptism by carefully observing the events surrounding John the Baptist and his subsequent baptism of Jesus Christ. This is the account from Matthew's gospel 3:1-7

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'" Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea, and all the

²⁴ Acts 2:14-36.

²⁵ The term "living water" simply means "running water"... in other words, water that is not stagnant.

²⁶ Although these methods of baptism are used, the writers of the New Testament did not use either the Greek word "cheo" which means to pour, or the Greek word "rhantizo," which means to sprinkle. Instead they chose the word "baptisma" or some form thereof, which means to immerse.

district around the Jordan; and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. "And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him. And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

From the Scriptures we know that Jesus was not in need of John's baptism of repentance because he had not sinned; yet He did it anyway. Jesus said, "For in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." In other words, "John, you and I will show the pattern or way of righteousness that God has established."

According to the pattern, the preaching that accompanied baptism included **three** aspects.

1. A message of repentance was preached. "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**"
2. The gospel or good news of how God would protect them from His wrath to come was preached. "**Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?**"
3. A message concerning the one who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire was preached. "**He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**"

Those who believed the messages (repentance from dead works and faith toward God) were baptized. Three things occurred at or in conjunction with a person's baptism.

1. They were immersed in water. **They were being baptized (baptizo – immersed) by him.**
2. They were immersed in living (running) water. **They were being baptized by him in the Jordan River.**
3. They confessed their sins in conjunction with their baptism. **They were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins**

Those who were baptized could **expect** three things to occur.

1. Forgiveness of sins. **Preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.** (Luke 3:3)
2. Preservation from God's wrath. "**Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?**"
3. Another baptism (immersion). "**He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**" The purpose of being immersed in the Holy Spirit and fire is to impart those things that are

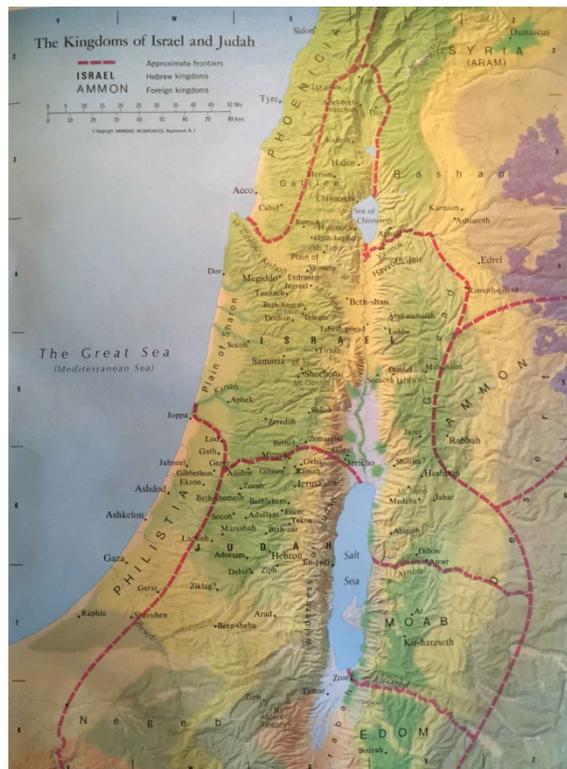
good, useful and eternal: e.g. faith, hope and love [which corresponds to gold, silver and precious jewels] and to destroy those things which are evil, worthless and temporary: e.g. unbelief, despair and vanity [which corresponds to wood, hay and stubble]. (Reference - 1 Corinthians 3:11-13)

Jesus alluded to two baptisms or immersions when he spoke with Nicodemus, one of the leaders of Israel. He said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*" (John 3:5-7) Then, after He was raised from the dead, Jesus told his disciples to expect another baptism. He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, *"Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."* (Acts 1:4-5) The **duality** of baptism became evident on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus' resurrection from the dead. From that time on those who believed the gospel were immersed in water by other **Christians** and immersed in the Holy Spirit sent by **Jesus** from heaven.

- Note -

The next section ... The Story of Elijah and Elisha – A Picture of Baptism may be passed over if the disciple has already covered it in Stage 1.

The Story of Elijah and Elisha - A Picture of Baptism



- Background -

The relationship of Elijah, a spiritual father to Elisha, a spiritual son ... serves as a picture of the relationship of Jesus to believers.

Elijah ministered as a prophet of God to the Israelites from 883 BC to 868 BC. He was from Tishbe in the Gilead. At the beginning of his ministry Ahab and Jezebel ruled the northern kingdom of Israel consisting of ten tribes: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun and Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh). Jehoshaphat ruled over the southern kingdom of Judah, consisting of two tribes: Judah and Benjamin. In 879 BC, Elijah challenged 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to a showdown on Mount Carmel. Sometime after this he recruited Elisha as his servant at Abel-meholah.

- Elijah Calls Elisha to Follow Him -

So Elijah departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him. (1Ki 19:19)

From the text we see that Elisha was just an ordinary man ... he was a farmer.

The word **mantle** in Hebrew is the word “addereth” and means something ample (large or wide) and is used to describe the following: garment or robe or **glory**. You might think of it like "Joseph's coat of many colors." When Elijah placed his mantle upon Elisha he was in fact calling him to be a prophet and adopting him as his son. In other words he was giving him his glory.

Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you.” And Elijah said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” So Elisha returned from following him, and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave it to the people and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and ministered to him. (1Kings 19:20-21)

Elisha’s request and Elijah’s initial response have a familiar ring to them. Listen to Jesus as He interacts with those he wants to follow Him. *And Jesus said to another, “Follow Me.” But he said, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” But Jesus said to him, “Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.” Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.” But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:59-62)*

Upon hearing Elijah’s response to his excuse, Elisha slaughtered his oxen, made a fire with his equipment, cooked the oxen and fed the men. In doing so Elisha showed he was willing to give up all that he had been ... to do what Elijah wanted him to do.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 ...what is your commitment level to follow the Lord Jesus Christ? Be honest with yourself ... no one will be looking at your answers ... only God and He already knows. _____

- What Did Elijah Look Like? -

They said to King Ahaziah, A man came up to meet us and said to us, "Go, return to the king who sent you and say to him, Thus says the LORD, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but shall surely die.' "King Ahaziah said to them, "What kind of man was he who came up to meet you and spoke these words to you?" They answered him, "He was a hairy man with a leather girdle bound about his loins." And King Ahaziah said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite." (2 Kings 1:6-8)

Interestingly, some 900 years later we meet another biblical character who has the same appearance as Elijah ... John the Baptist. *He had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. (Matthew 3:4)* John, the Baptist was clothed the same way as Elijah. He had the glory of Elijah and was clothed with it before he began his ministry.

Jesus also was clothed with glory. The Scriptures say that the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove at His baptism. Jesus received His new mantle (His Father's glory - the Holy Spirit) before He began His ministry as well. *And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all. (Luke 4:14-15)*

In 868 BC, Elijah was taken up to God in a flaming whirlwind and Elisha took his place.

- The Faithfulness of Elisha - (2 Kings 2:1-22) -

And it came about when the LORD was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; be still." Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be still." Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." And he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. (2 Kings 2:1-7)

This part of the story shows us something of the character of Elisha. Twice it was prophesied that God was going to take Elijah from being his master. And three times Elijah told him to stay behind. But Elisha refused. He was **dedicated** to Elijah and **persistent** in regards to his call to serve him, even to the very end.

2. How persistent are you in sticking with the things God has called you to do? _____

- Elijah Parts the Waters of the Jordan River -

Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. (2 Kings 2:8)

Elijah and Elisha had walked from Bethel via Jericho to the Jordan River. This was a full day's journey of some twenty-five miles and they would have arrived at their destination late in the afternoon or early evening. When they arrived at the Jordan River, Elijah struck the waters with his mantle. The waters parted and the two of them walked across the river to the eastern side.

The parting of the waters is a picture of **baptism**. It indicates that a person has gone through the waters but has not perished and has separated himself from where he had previously been. The Israelites did not die when they passed through the parted waters of the Red Sea and they were separated from their enemies, the Egyptians and their former way of life. The Apostle Paul puts it this way, *"For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud (the Shekinah) and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud (the Shekinah) and in the sea."* (1 Corinthians 10:1-2)

However, God was not pleased with most of the Israelites who had come out of Egypt and they died in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land. So before the younger Israelites who had been born in the wilderness could enter the Promised Land, they had to be baptized as well. This time the Israelites went through the parted waters of the Jordan River led by Yahushua (Joshua or Jesus) and the priests.

Oh, by the way ... this was the same place where Elijah and Elisha would cross some 550 years after the Israelites arrived at the Promised Land and where Jesus would be baptized by John the Baptist 900 years after that.

REMEMBER: Because Moses had sinned he was not permitted to lead God's people into the Promised Land. So before Moses died God appointed Yahushua (Joshua or Jesus) to lead the people into Promised Land. (Numbers 27:12-23) This serves as a sign ... that by following Moses no one can enter the Promised Land. Access to the Promised Land is only gained by following Yahushua (Joshua or Jesus).

At the time of John the Baptist, the Jewish people were well aware of the story of Elijah. In fact, the last recorded words ever written in the Old Testament portion of Scripture refers to him and the Jewish people were waiting for his arrival. *"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. He will restore the hearts*

of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.” (Malachi 4:5-6)

The Jews also knew several other things about Elijah: what he looked like, the area that he had last been seen in, that he had gone through the parted waters and that he had not died, but simply went to be with God. So when John the Baptist appeared dressed the same way as Elijah, in the same area and was baptizing people (parting the waters ... separating them from their former lives.) they naturally asked if he was Elijah, the prophet. *They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” (John 1:21)* However, Jesus said of him, *“If you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matthew 11:14-15)*

- A Prophet's Reward -

When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.” And Elisha said, “Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” He said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.” (2 Kings 2:9-10)

Elijah invited Elisha to ask him for something before he departed. It was his way of blessing or rewarding Elisha for having **received** him as a prophet. When anyone receives a godly person, they in turn receive a blessing or reward. Jesus said, *“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.” (Matthew 10:40-41)*

Elijah conditioned granting Elisha’s request based on whether Elisha saw him depart or not. Jesus does not condition our requests based on our sight but on our having received him as Lord and God. After His resurrection from the dead Jesus told Thomas, *“Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.” (John 20:29)*

Jesus invites us, His disciples to ask Him for a reward also. *“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” (Luke 11:9)* Jesus also said, *“For **everyone** who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. (Luke 11:10)*

In the larger context of the passage of Scripture in which these words of Jesus are found, we see that He is encouraging His disciples to **ask** for more of the Holy Spirit (Christ's glory - the glory of God - the Shekinah) just as Elisha had done. *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” (Luke 11:13)* And later, Jesus would go on to say, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater (double?) works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. (John 14:12)*

3. What have you been asking the Lord for? _____

- Elijah and the Chariot of Fire -

As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. (2 Kings 2:11)

Since it was nearing evening when this event occurred it must have been an awesome sight. Fire everywhere! A chariot and horses bathed in fire and a fiery whirlwind that takes them all to heaven! Wow ... what an unforgettable experience.

From the description we know that what Elisha saw was the **Shekinah** ... or “the glory of God.” When the Shekinah appears it indicates the presence of God. To the Israelites who left Egypt it appeared as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. *The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. (Exodus 13:21-22)*

Although there are several appearances of the Shekinah (e.g. Mt. Sinai, Solomon’s Temple and Mt. of Transfiguration) I want to specifically focus on one other significant appearance. Just as the Shekinah separated Elijah from Elisha, it also separated Jesus from His disciples when He ascended into heaven. *And after Jesus had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (Acts 1:9)*

- Elisha Receives the Mantle ... the Glory of Elijah -

Elisha saw it and cried out, “My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan.

When Elisha saw Elijah ascend into heaven he knew that he would receive a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. That portion or anointing came in the form Elijah’s mantle (his glory), which had fallen from him when he ascended into heaven. Now he had something better to wear so he tore his old clothes in two, picked up Elijah’s mantle (glory) and put it on.

4. After Elijah ascended into heaven, what was the first thing Elisha did? Tore his own clothes in two

5. Where did Elisha’s new mantle (glory) come from? Heaven

6. What did Elisha have to do to get his new mantle (glory)? He had to receive it by picking it up and putting it on.

7. What would have happened if he had not picked up the mantle? Nothing

- Elisha Uses the Mantle ... Which Is Now His Glory -

He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over. (2 Kings 2:12-15)

8. What did Elisha do with his new mantle (glory)? He parted the waters of the Jordan River

9. What would have happened to Elisha if he had just worn the mantle (glory) as clothing and not used it for another purpose? Nothing

After Elisha put on the mantle he walked back to the Jordan River and struck the waters, as he called upon God. The waters parted and he walked back through them to the other side. In doing so he provided us with a complete picture of baptism. Elisha went through the waters the first time with Elijah as an ungifted ordinary man. But when he came back through by himself he was supernaturally equipped to do the work of the ministry.

- Our Mantle ... The Holy Spirit -

As Christians this teaches us about the dual nature of our own baptism. When we get baptized we are separating ourselves from our old life and looking forward to the new life we will partake of ... from an ordinary person to a supernatural one. Elisha entered the water the first time with Elijah but came back out with only Elijah's mantle (his glory). Christians enter the water with Jesus and come back out of it with only Jesus' mantle (His glory) ... the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul put it this way. *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father (The Shekinah - the Holy Spirit), so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)*

"And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."(Luke 24:49)

When a Christian gets baptized he parts the water the first time when he is immersed and he parts the water a second time when he comes forth. What many Christians fail to realize is they are supposed to pick up their mantle (Christ's glory - the Holy Spirit) before they come back up out of the water. They do this by faith, believing they have received what the Lord promised them. And of course they are to put it on just as the Scripture says. *Put on the new self (man), which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (Ephesians 4:24)*

- Are You Still Looking For Jesus? -

Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite Elisha saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet Elisha and bowed themselves to the ground before him. They said to him, "Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men, please let them go and search for your master; perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley." And Elisha said, "You shall not send." But when they urged Elisha until he was ashamed, he said, "Send." They sent therefore fifty men;

and they searched three days but did not find Elijah. They returned to Elisha while he was staying at Jericho; and he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?" (2 Kings 2:15-18)

The sons of the prophets did not know where Elijah had been taken so they wanted to search for him ... but Elisha knew that God had taken him to heaven until the appointed time, therefore it would be futile to look for him.

When Jesus ascended into heaven a similar event took place. *And the disciples were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10-11)* The two angels had to remind the disciples that Jesus would not return until the appointed time.

Upon hearing the angels' words the disciples returned to Jerusalem and waited for their new mantle (Christ's glory - the Holy Spirit) to fall from heaven as the Lord had just commanded them. *Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:4-5)*

Ten days later, on the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) their new mantles (Christ's glory - the Holy Spirit) fell from heaven in a fiery whirlwind. *And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. (Acts 2:2-4)*

The disciples had quit looking for Jesus and went to work using their new mantle ... Christ's glory ... the Holy Spirit ... the glory of God.

Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Behold now, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful." Elisha said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him. He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.'" So the waters have been purified to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke. (2Ki 2:19-22)

10. When did Elisha begin his ministry? After his baptism

The people of Jericho recognized the anointing of Elijah upon Elisha and received him as a prophet. So when they asked Elisha for help with the bad water in their spring, he gave them a prophet's reward. He purified the spring of water and from that time until today, Jericho has had pure water and the land is productive. The spring is called Elisha's Spring and it has become a major tourist attraction.

11. When did you begin your ministry? _____

12. Have you picked up your mantle (Christ's glory - the Holy Spirit)? _____

13. How do people receive you? _____

14. How many witnesses were there to Elisha's baptism? Fifty

15. How many witnesses were there at your baptism? _____

The Apostle Paul said, *"My message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

- A Word of Caution -

In the course of time Elisha obtained a servant named Gehazi. When Elisha healed Naaman, an Aramean, of his leprosy he declined any payment for the miracle. However, Gehazi, who was greedy for money, ran after Naaman and told him a lie. Gehazi said that Elisha had changed his mind and would receive some payment for the miracle. Naaman gladly gave it! When Gehazi returned to Elisha, his treachery was revealed and Elisha put Naaman's leprosy on Gehazi and his descendants after him. This story reminds us of what Jesus said, *"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give."* (Mathew 10:8)

- The Necessity of Baptism -

Baptism is a necessary part of the salvation process. It marks the entry point into the Kingdom of God; ***"unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*** Just as circumcision is the sign of the Mosaic Covenant, baptism serves as the sign of the New Covenant.

After His resurrection from the dead and just prior to His ascension into heaven, Jesus called the disciples together and commissioned them to make more disciples. He also gave them very specific instructions on how they were to do that task, part of which was to **baptize** new believers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And as if to signify the importance of baptism He went so far as to say, *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. "He who has **believed** and has **been baptized** shall **be saved**; but he who has **disbelieved** shall be condemned."* (Mark 16:15-16)

From this statement we can determine that baptism was part of the gospel message and necessary for salvation. The Apostle Peter confirmed this when he declared the gospel to the Israelites on the day of Pentecost. He said, *"Repent, and each of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 2:38)

In his first epistle, Peter went on to say this in regards to baptism: *“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. **And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--** not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.”* (1Peter 3:18-22)

The Apostle Paul also supports the necessity of baptism as part of the salvation process as he puts forth the idea that a person must die before he can be “born again”. Paul said, *“Therefore we have **been buried with Him through baptism into death,** in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”* (Romans 6:4) Paul restates his position in the epistle to the Colossians and also links it to circumcision, the sign of entering into the Covenant of Moses *“And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been **buried with Him in baptism,** in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”* (Colossians 2:11-14)

- Baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ -

Throughout the New Testament new believers were **always** baptized in the **name** of Jesus Christ.

1. This is what the Apostle Peter told the Jews in Jerusalem to do. *Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.* (Acts 2:38)
2. The baptismal account in Samaria. *For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* (Acts 8:16)
3. This is what Ananias told the Apostle Paul to do. *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’* (Acts 22:16)
4. This is what the Apostle Peter told the Gentiles to do. *And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.* (Acts 10:48)
5. This is what the apostle Paul told those who had only been baptized in water for the forgiveness of sins. (John’s baptism) *And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* (Acts 19:5)
6. This is what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians. *Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, “I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” and “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.” Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or **were you baptized in the name of Paul?** I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that **no one would say you were baptized in my name.*** (1 Corinthians 1:12-15)
7. This is what the apostle Paul told the Galatians. *For all of you who were **baptized into Christ** have clothed yourselves with Christ.* (Galatians 3:27)

However, when baptizing people, most churches use Jesus' explanation of what He wants them to do rather than doing what He said. Let me explain. Jesus told the disciples to baptize in the **name** of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are merely titles of the triune God. The name is Yahushua and is equivalent to the Old Testament name Joshua! The name means, "I AM SALVATION. (Yah – I AM and shua –SALVATION)

God's name is Yah –I AM. Exodus 3:14-15 says, *And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" And God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.*

The Hebrew name, Yahushua, was originally incorporated into the English language and it wasn't until about 1630 AD, when the English language changed, that Yahushua became known as Jesus.²⁷

Throughout the book of Acts, the disciples baptized only in the name of Jesus, never the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Why? *"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the **name** which is above every name, so that at the **name** of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11)* It is the name, which we as Christians bring testimony of and glory to. It is Jesus whom the gospel declares, it is Jesus into whom we have been baptized and it is Jesus who sends the Holy Spirit to us.

The baptismal formula, "baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" is used only once in the Bible and that is in Matthew's gospel.²⁸ It came to prominence many years later when it was used to support the doctrine of the trinity.²⁹

- Daily Washings -

When a believer is baptized into the body of Christ he becomes part of a royal priesthood ... the order of Melchizadek. Much like the Levitical priesthood, Christians have daily duties to perform both towards God and the people whom they are called to minister to. And like the Levitical priesthood they have to be both clean and dedicated.

In chapter eight of Leviticus we find that the priests were **initially** washed with water and anointed with oil upon their commencement into the priesthood. This corresponds to a Christian's initial entry into his priesthood through baptism with water and receiving the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the oil.

²⁷ How the name was changed can be traced through the etymology of His name.

²⁸ Matthew 28:19

²⁹ The doctrine of the Trinity describes the relationships among the three members of the Godhead in a manner consistent with the Scriptures. The first known use of the word "trinity" was by Tertullian around the year 200 AD. The framework for the development of the Trinitarian doctrine was put forth at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD and was completed at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD.

Subsequently, the Levitical priests washed at the laver before they began their **daily** service in the Temple. According to 1 John 1:9, when Christians confess their sins, Jesus is faithful and righteous to forgive them and cleanse them from all unrighteousness. This washing should take place before Christians begin any service to God.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

The laying on of hands is the primary means of **transmitting** spiritual blessing or authority to the one upon whom hands are laid. It is most often accompanied by spoken words.

The act of laying hands on another is not unusual; in fact we practice forms of it throughout our lives. For example, we shake one another's hands as a sign of friendship and accompany it with a spoken word in the form of greeting. We pat one another on the back while speaking words of praise. We hold one another's hands and offer words of tenderness. Mothers constantly touch their children while speaking words over them.

The concept that something spiritual can be transmitted through the laying on of hands comes from ancient times. Jacob laid hands on his children and grandchildren while pronouncing prophetic words over their lives. (Genesis 48 and 49) Moses laid his hands on Joshua when he passed on the leadership of Israel. (Numbers 27:22-23 and Deuteronomy 34:9) And the prophet Elisha laid his hands on King Joash and prophesied a victory over Syria. (2 Kings 13:15-17)

Most Christians are not aware that sin was also transmitted through the laying on of hands. In the Old Testament those who sinned confessed their sins while laying their hands on the head of a lamb, thereby transmitting their sins to the lamb. The lamb was then killed in place of those who sinned. This concept remains in effect today. Only it is the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of those who confess them.

The idea that Christians can participate in something evil through the laying on of hands is given as a caution by the Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy. *Do not lay hands upon anyone **too hastily** and thereby **share responsibility for the sins of others**; keep yourself free from sin.* (1 Timothy 5:22)

Paul also cautioned the Christians in Corinth about touching what was unclean as well. *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what **partnership** have righteousness and lawlessness, or what **fellowship** has light with darkness? Or what **harmony** has Christ with Belial, or what has a **believer** in common with an unbeliever? Or what **agreement** has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN**; and I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty.* (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

There are five scriptural reasons for laying hands on another person. They are:

1. To impart the Holy Spirit to disciples.
2. To impart healing.
3. To impart spiritual gifts.
4. To impart a blessing.
5. To set apart disciples for a special office or ministry.

- “Baptized In” or “Impartation Of” The Holy Spirit -

Closely associated with a Christian’s baptism in water and in the name of Jesus is the baptism or immersion in the Holy Spirit. By studying the New Testament we discover that when new Christians received the Holy Spirit, supernatural manifestations accompanied it. Most of these immediate supernatural manifestations involved the way the Christians **spoke** after they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. It seems they spoke in different languages, or began to prophesy (declare what God was saying) or exalted God through their speech.

This corresponds with what Jesus told Nicodemus. *“The **wind** blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* (John 3:8) Then on the day of Pentecost Jesus’ statement came to pass. *And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.* (Acts 2:2-4)

Throughout the book of Acts, Christians who were baptized with the Holy Spirit spoke differently: speaking in tongues, prophesying and exalting God.

1. This is what happened in Jerusalem. *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because **each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language.*** (Acts 2:4-6)
2. This is what happened in Samaria. Though it does not say that new Christians spoke differently, Simon the magician noticed that something powerful had happened to them when they received the Holy Spirit and offered money for the right to bestow the Holy Spirit. *Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."* (Acts 8:14-19)
3. This is what happened to the Apostle Paul. *And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and **be filled with the Holy Spirit.**" And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;* (Acts 9:17-18) According to Paul he was a person who had been persecuting the church before he was filled with the Holy Spirit but afterwards spoke differently. *“Immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”* (Acts 9:20) And though Paul’s conversion account does not specifically say he spoke in tongues at that point in his life we know that he did speak in tongues because Paul said, *“I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all.”* (1 Corinthians 14:18)

4. This is what happened to the Gentiles. *And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the **gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also.** For they were **hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God.*** (Acts 10:45-46)
5. This is what happened to the Corinthians. *And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.* (Acts 18:8) We know the Corinthians **spoke in tongues** as is evidenced by Paul's first letter to them about the subject and spiritual gifts in general. (See 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14)
6. This is what happened to the disciples who had not heard about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. *And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had **laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.*** (Acts 19:5-6)

- The Significance of Speaking in Tongues -

Many Christians today struggle with the whole concept of speaking in tongues therefore ignore the subject altogether. However, to do so disregards what the Lord Jesus Christ said about it. Before His ascension into heaven Jesus gave the church the mission of making more disciples. As part of it He told His disciples to, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.*" **And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.**" (Mark 16:15-18)

He said that speaking in tongues was one of the signs that those who believed the gospel and had been baptized would be able to perform. The Apostle Paul confirmed this as well when he said, *In the Law it is written, "BY MEN OF **STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME,**" says the Lord. **So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.*** (1 Corinthians 14:21-22)

The importance of speaking in tongues as a sign cannot be overlooked. But before we develop the ideas that lie behind it let's see what James, the Lord's brother had to say about the tongue. *Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. **The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.** All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, **but no man can tame the tongue.** It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? **My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*** (James 3:5-12)

After reading this sobering analysis of the tongue we should recognize that James is pointing Christians to the fact that they need to allow God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to tame their tongues.

Words are powerful. The book of Proverbs says that even *death and life are in the power of the tongue*.³⁰ God created the heavens, the earth, plants, animals and man by speaking them into existence. And when God created man He made him in His own image ... with the ability to communicate through language. Did you ever think about that miracle? Adam had no one to learn language from; it was just given to him by God. And Adam could speak to God and hear His voice as well.

At the tower of Babel God said, "*Behold, they are one people, and they all have the **same language**. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there **confuse their language**, so that they will not understand one another's speech.*"(Genesis 11:6-7) When this happened it resulted in seventy different languages being spoken, which in turn caused people of like speech to ban together as a nation with a common language. For example, one nation was formed from a man named, Heber who became the father of the Hebrews. When the people began to speak in languages they had never learned before it demonstrated to the whole world that God had the power to control speech.

The ability of God to control the use of words was evidenced through the prophets as they declared God's word to the people (prophesied) and He confirmed their words by displaying various miracles through them. God attested to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, in the same manner.³¹ And in these last days, by those who follow Christ.

There are two other major events in Biblical history that God demonstrated the use of tongues that most Christians are not aware of because they are not recorded in our Bibles. However, they are recorded in the oral law of the Jewish people and were well known to Jesus in His day. For those of you who have not heard of the oral law, you might think of it as a commentary on the Old Testament Scriptures.

First, when God spoke the Ten Commandments out loud from Mt Sinai He did it in the tongues of the seventy original nations. It's as if He wanted the whole world to know and understand what He wanted them to do. In like manner, God introduced the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ using the miracle of speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost.

Second, once every year on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) the High Priest would go behind the veil that separated the Holy of Holies, where God dwelled, from the rest of the temple and sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat. He was standing in the very presence of God and when he did so he spoke in tongues, a heavenly language as attested to by those who were standing outside. The point being, that when a person stood in the presence of God he could communicate with Him in a language that he had not learned.

³⁰ Proverbs 18:21

³¹ Acts 2:22

The moment Jesus died on the cross the veil in the temple that separated God from the people was torn in two from top to bottom.³² The writer of Hebrews explains the implication of this event for those who follow Christ. *Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to **enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus**, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* (Hebrews 10:19-22) And since we as Christians are now able to draw near to God we can speak to Him in a heavenly language, which we have not learned ... spirit to spirit.

The following passages of Scripture shed some light on why Christians should desire to speak in tongues by the Spirit.

*Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For **if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays**, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I will **pray with the spirit** and I will pray with the mind also; I **will sing with the spirit** and I will sing with the mind also. Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? For you are giving thanks well enough, but **the other person is not edified.*** (I Corinthians 14:13-17)

*And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled with the Spirit**, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and **spiritual songs**, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.* (Ephesians 5:18)

*With all prayer and petition **pray at all times in the Spirit**, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.* (Ephesians 6:18)

*For we are the true circumcision, who **worship in the Spirit** of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.* (Philippians 3:3)

*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and **spiritual songs**, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.* (Colossians 3:16)

- Impartation of Healing -

Healing people of their diseases and infirmities is one of the major signs that Christians perform. It is part of the “good news” of Jesus Christ and was practiced by Jesus, His disciples and the church throughout the book of Acts. And even those in the Church today, who say that spiritual gifts no longer exist,³³ still pray for the sick. Let’s see what the scriptures have to say about the subject.

³² Matthew 27:51

³³ The topic, “Have spiritual gifts in the Church been done away with” is dealt with at some length in my teaching booklet, “**Gifts of the Spirit**”.

Jesus imparted healing by the laying on of hands.

*Jesus stretched out His **hand** and **touched him**, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (Matthew 8:3)*

*When Jesus came into Peter’s home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. He **touched her hand**, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and **He cast out the spirits with a word**, and **healed all who were ill**. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: “**HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES.**” (Matthew 8:14-17)*

*He said, “Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep.” And they began laughing at Him. But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and **took her by the hand**, and the girl got up. (Matthew 9:24-25)*

*As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus *said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They *said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” Then He **touched their eyes, saying, “It shall be done to you according to your faith.**” And their eyes were opened. (Matthew 9:27-30)*

*And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They *said to Him, “Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.” Moved with compassion, Jesus **touched their eyes**; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him. (Matthew 20:30-34)*

*And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, He called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your sickness.” And He **laid His hands on her**; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God. (Luke 13:11-13)*

Jesus commissioned His disciples to heal the sick by the laying on of hands.

*Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and **gave them authority** over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and **to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness**. (Matthew 10:1)*

*They went out and preached that men should repent. And they were casting out many demons and were **anointing with oil many sick people and healing them**. (Mark 6:12-13)*

*“These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; **they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.**” So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and **confirmed the word by the signs that followed.** (Mark 16:17-18)*

The Church imparts healing by the laying on of hands.

*But Peter said, “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!” And **seizing him by the right hand**, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. (Acts 3:6-7)*

*Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were **all being healed.** (Acts 5:16)*

*For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame **were healed.** (Acts 8:7)*

*So Ananias departed and entered the house, and **after laying his hands on him** said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized. (Acts 9:17-18)*

*And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed afflicted with recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him and after he had prayed, **he laid his hands on him and healed him.** (Acts 28:8)*

*Is anyone among you sick? **1) Then he must call for the elders of the church and 2) they are to pray over him, 3) anointing him with oil** (smearing with oil) **4) in the name of the Lord;** and the prayer **5) offered in faith** will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. (James 5:14-16)*

Healing can also be effected through:

1. Touching the clothing of a righteous man (Matthew 14:35-36 and Acts 19:11-12)
2. Faith by hearing the Word of God (John 5:7-9)
3. Prayer. (James 5:15-16)

- Impartation of Spiritual Gifts -

Spiritual gifts are imparted to Christians through the laying on of hands. *Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance **with the laying on of hands** by the presbytery. (1 Timothy 4:14)*

*For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the **laying on of my hands**. (2 Timothy 1:6)*

When the Holy Spirit is given to an individual, he can expect to receive a least one spiritual gift. *For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, **distributing to each one individually just as He wills**. (1 Corinthians 12:8-11)*

- Impartation of Blessing -

Jesus imparted blessing by the laying on of hands. *Then some children were brought to Him so that He might **lay His hands on them and pray**; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." After **laying His hands on them**, He departed from there. (Matthew 19:13)* Many of the basics of how to bless others are discussed at length in a popular book entitled, "The Blessing", by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Thomas Nelson, publisher, 1986.

- Setting Apart Disciples -

Many churches in different denominations set apart disciples for a special office or ministry through the laying on of hands; for example, ordination and licensing of pastors, sending out missionaries and releasing other Christians for specific tasks.

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:1-6)

*While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said**, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and **laid their hands on them**, they sent them away. (Acts 13:2-3)*

Once a Christian has been sanctified or set apart to the service of God through baptism and the laying on of hands he looks forward to the hope that is set before him ... his glorification. The word glorification means, “to clothe with splendor.” A person’s glorification is a two-step process, which involves the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

CLARIFICATION

Talking about the subjects of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment is somewhat difficult because no one has had first-hand experiential knowledge of these subjects. Our understanding of them is limited to what the Scriptures tell us. Before we begin our study let’s try to clear up some misconceptions people have about their eternal destinies.

First of all, nowhere in Scripture is the word “hell” used. The word “hell” is an English translation of the concept ... “**to conceal**” and most closely aligns itself with the word “Hades” as we shall see. Depending on the translation of the Bible one uses, many Old and New Testament words have been translated as “hell”, which makes it confusing to those who want to understand this subject thoroughly.

Let’s look at the words the Bible actually uses:

1. Tartaros
2. Abyss
3. Sheol
4. Hades
5. Gehenna
6. Lake of fire
7. Abraham’s Bosom/Paradise
8. Heaven

Tartaros

Tartaros is a Greek word that denotes the dwelling place of fallen **angels**.

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Tartaros and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment. (2 Peter 2:4)

Abyss

The abyss is a Greek word, which means “**the deep**” and contains the idea of unfathomable or bottomless. The word abyss appears to be the description of the place where the fallen **angels** are incarcerated, whereas Tartaros is the proper name of the place.

*They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.
(Luke 8:31)*

‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”(Romans 10:7)

They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon. (Revelation 9:11)

When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them. (Revelation 11:7)

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. (Revelation 17:8)

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. (Revelation 20:1)

Sheol

Sheol is a Hebrew word and is used exclusively throughout the Old Testament to define the **grave** or internment place of the body. The corresponding Greek word used in the New Testament is mnemeion. The **bodies** of both the righteous and the wicked remain there until their resurrection from the dead.

Hades

Hades is a Greek word, which means “**unseen**” and is most closely associated with the actual translation of the English word “hell” ... “to conceal.” It is used to denote the place that the **soul** or consciousness of an unrighteous person goes upon his death. It is a temporary place of torment and the soul remains there until the final or Great White Throne judgment.

And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. (Matthew 11:23)

I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. (Matthew 16:18)

And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades! (Luke 10:15)

In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and ^{}saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. (Luke 16:23)*

*For David says of Him, 'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE; FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN. 'THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED; MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE; BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO **HADES (SHEOL)**, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. 'YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.'* “ Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO **HADES (SHEOL)**, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.
(Acts 2:25)

*When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “ Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.
(Revelation 1:17)*

*I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.
(Revelation 6:8)*

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:13)

Gehenna

Gehenna is used throughout the New Testament as a description of a place of extreme torment. The word is derived from the use of two Hebrew words “ge” “hinom” and is used to describe the Valley of Hinnom on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The valley itself lies on the south and west sides of Jerusalem and separates Mount Zion from the Hill of Evil Counsel. The valley was the site of a Jewish apostasy, where the rites of passing children through the fires of Molech were practiced. (1 Kings 11:7) King Josiah converted it into a place of abomination, where dead bodies were thrown and burned. (2 Kings 23:13-14)

Gehenna appears to be the **eternal** destination of wicked souls after the resurrection from the dead and final or Great White Throne judgment. This word is closely associated with what Christians mean when they use the English word, “hell”.

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ' You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before

the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery Gehenna. (Matthew 5:22)

If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into Gehenna. (Matthew 5:29)

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. (Matthew 10:28)

If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery Gehenna. (Matthew 18:9)

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of Gehenna as yourselves. (Matthew 23:15)

You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of Gehenna? (Matthew 23:33)

And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by Gehenna. (James 3:6)

Lake of Fire

The lake of fire is the **eternal** destination, after the final or Great White Throne judgment, of Satan, the Antichrist, false prophet, death, Hades and those individuals whose names are not written in the Book of Life. The term lake of fire appears to be the description of the place of eternal torment whereas Gehenna is the proper name of the place.

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (Revelation 19:20)

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10)

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14)

“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”(Revelation 21:8)

Heaven/Paradise/Abraham’s bosom

In Jewish thought there are three heavens. The first heaven is the earth’s atmosphere where the birds fly and the clouds roll by. The second heaven is outer space where the sun, moon, planets and stars are. And the third heaven is the dwelling place of God, which is unseen by human eyes. It was to this place, which the Apostle Paul was taken when he was nearly stoned to death. He called it “Paradise”.

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows— was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. (2 Corinthians 12:2-4)

The Apostle John gives the best description of heaven in the book of Revelation. He was taken there in the Spirit, when he was in exile on the island of Patmos. The heavenly portion of his vision begins this way:

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. (Revelation 4:1-2)

Jesus used two terms for the dwelling place for the souls of the righteous dead: Abraham’s bosom in Luke 16:22-26 and Paradise in Luke 23:43.

Regardless of the name of the place, it appears upon the death of a righteous person, his **soul** ascends directly into the presence of God. There it remains even after the resurrection of the body, which occurs at the second coming of Jesus Christ. The **eternal** destination of the righteous is the New Jerusalem, which will exist in the new heavens and earth created by God after the final or Great White Throne judgment.

RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

- Definition -

The word resurrection is translated from the Greek word “anastasis” which means to “**stand up**” or to “**arise**”. It speaks of those who have died being made alive again.

- History -

Throughout Old Testament times, a **bodily** resurrection was believed in by many Israelites. In fact the only major sect of Judaism existing at the time of Jesus who did not believe in a bodily resurrection from the dead were the Sadducees. (Matthew 22:23) One evidence of this wide spread belief is the gigantic graveyard that encompasses much of the Mount of Olives just to the east of Jerusalem. Many pious Jews have been buried there throughout the years because they believed that when the Messiah came he would come to the Mount of Olives first and they would be the first to arise from the dead.

- The Resurrection of the Messiah ³⁴ -

The Apostle Paul stated that the Scriptures bore witness to the fact that the Messiah would be raised from the dead on the third day. (1 Corinthians 15:4) The primary text that he refers to is Psalm 16:8-11. It is also the same passage that the apostle Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost to the Jewish people in his presentation of the gospel to them.

I have set the LORD continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; 1) my flesh also will dwell securely. 2) for You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; 3) nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You will make known to me the path of life; 4) in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever. (Psalm 16:8)

Another primary passage for the resurrection of the Messiah is Psalm 71:20.

1) You who have shown me many troubles and distresses 2) will revive me again, 3) and will bring me up again from the depths of the earth. 4) May You increase my greatness and turn to comfort me. (Psalms 71:20)

- The Resurrection of Others from the Dead -

*“As for me (Job), I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. “Even after my skin is destroyed, **yet from my flesh I shall see God**; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me! (Job 19:25)*

³⁴ Messiah is the Hebrew term for “Savior”.

*Your dead will live; **their corpses will rise**. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. (Isaiah 19:25)*

*The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry. He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD, You know.” Again He said to me, “Prophecy over these bones and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.’” “Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, ‘Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. ‘I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the LORD.’” “So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then He said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.””’ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’” “Therefore prophecy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “**Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves**, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. “Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. “I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,” declares the LORD.’” (Ezekiel 37:1)*

*“Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. “Many of those who **sleep in the dust of the ground will awake**, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” (Daniel 12:1)*

*As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the **resurrection from the dead**. (Acts 4:1)*

- The Third Day -

There are many allusions to the **third day** as being the day of resurrection beginning with Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac and God providing a ram in his place. *On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. (Genesis 22:4)*

After the Israelites left Egypt, God came down on Mt. Sinai to meet with them on the third day and Moses went up to Him in a cloud. (Exodus 19:11 & 20)

Esther appealed for the salvation of her people before the king on the third day of a fast. (Esther 5:1)

The Prophet Jonah was in the belly of a great fish for three days and three nights before he was vomited out upon dry land. (Jonah 1:17 – 2:10)

Jesus foretold his own death and resurrection from the dead on the third day to fulfill the prophecies of the Messiah. (Matthew 17:22-23, Matthew 20:18-19 & Luke 18:31-33)

Hosea prophesied that those who returned to the Lord would be raised on the third day as well. *“He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day,³⁵ that we may live before Him. (Hosea 6:2)*

- Resurrection in Stages -

From Scripture we learn that the resurrection of the dead occurs in three stages. *But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. **But each in his own order: 1) Christ the first fruits, 2) after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, 3) then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. (1 Corinthians 15:20-26)***

The first stage occurred at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is referred to as the **first fruits** since it was the beginning of the harvest of God’s people and it actually occurred on the biblical Feast of Firstfruits.³⁶ During this stage the bodies of Jesus Christ and many Old Testament saints were resurrected. *The tombs were opened, and **many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. (Matthew 27:52-53)*** This resurrection did not include all the Old Testament saints since Peter declares that King David was still in his tomb on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus’ resurrection.

The second stage of the resurrection occurs at the return³⁷ of Christ to the earth and is **part** of what the book of Revelation³⁸ refers to as the “**first resurrection.**” The first resurrection begins

³⁵ Without the Apostle Peter’s instruction in the third chapter of his second epistle concerning resurrection and eternal judgment, we may find it difficult to understand what Hosea means by the term “the third day.” The Apostle Peter said, *“But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord **one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.**” (2 Peter 3:8)* From his statement we can understand that the resurrection will occur within the third 1000-year day from the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the first fruits. (See Lesson 46 of A Journey With Jesus teaching series entitled, “Looking At The Future” for a full explanation.)

³⁶ Leviticus 23:9-14

³⁷ This event is commonly referred to as the second coming of Christ.

³⁸ Revelation 5:20

with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the first fruits of the harvest and ends with those raised at his second coming, the rest of the harvest.

The second stage of the resurrection includes all those who belong to Christ and are either in the grave or are still living. *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the **dead in Christ will rise first**. (1 Thessalonians 4:16) Then **we who are alive and remain** will be caught up³⁹ together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)*

The dual nature of this resurrection, of both the living and the dead, was referred to by Jesus in a conversation He had with Martha. *Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again. “Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me **will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die**. Do you believe this?” (John 11:23-26)*

The third stage occurs after a thousand-year⁴⁰ reign of Christ on the earth and in conjunction with the Great White Throne judgment. Martha referred to it as the “last day” since after that judgment heaven and earth pass away and God creates a new heaven and earth. *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)*

- Resurrection is Central to the Christian Faith -

The resurrection of the dead is so crucial in validating Christianity that the Apostle Paul declared that if there were no resurrection of the dead then the Christian faith was worthless. *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, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is **vain**. (1 Corinthians 15:12-14)*

God, the Father, also used the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the proof that there would be future resurrection from the dead and that judgment would befall all of mankind. *Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished **proof** to all men by raising Him from the dead. (Acts 17:30-31)*

³⁹ This “catching up to be with the Lord” is commonly referred to as the “Rapture”.

⁴⁰ This is also referred to this as the Millennium or Millennial reign of Christ.

Jesus also pointed to the promise of the resurrection from the dead when he said, “*For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will **raise him up** on the last day. (John 6:40) And the Apostle John testified to it as well. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which **all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth**; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment. (John 5:25-29)*

Christian baptism also identifies itself with the resurrection from the dead and acts as a seal that it has **already** taken place in the believer’s life. *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. (Romans 6:4-7)*

- Other Observations -

When a person’s body is resurrected from the dead it will be different in many ways from his original natural body. *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 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. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15:41-44)*

The Scriptures give us clues on how our bodies will be different. Here are some ways:

1. Our bodies will look different. (Mary Magdalene did not recognize Jesus in the garden, nor did his Uncle Cleopas on the road to Emmaus. His disciples were startled and frightened by his appearance in the closed room. Then, when the disciples went fishing with Peter on the Sea of Galilee, they did not recognize Jesus standing on the shore after having seen him in Jerusalem not many days before. It appears that when Jesus **spoke**, people were able to recognize Him.)
2. Our bodies will be different from one another.
3. Our bodies will last forever.
4. Our bodies will be glorious.
5. Our bodies will be powerful.
6. Our bodies will be spiritual.
7. Our bodies will be able to fly. (Jesus ascended into heaven)
8. Our bodies will be able to pass through material objects. (Jesus appeared to the disciples in a closed locked room)

After the conclusion of the first resurrection, when Jesus returns to the earth the second time, those who have been raised with Him will be given a new assignment. *Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded ⁴¹ because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4-6)*

⁴¹ The word beheaded is not a good translation of the Greek word “Pelekizo”, which is used only one time in the Scriptures. Many people take this to mean that some Christians will have their heads chopped off. While, some Christians might actually experience this, the word does not lend itself fully to that translation. The word “Pelekizo” means “to chop”: as with an axe. However, it is derived from another word, “Plesso” which means to flatten out or pound. “Plesso” in turn is derived from another word, “Plasso” which means to shape, fabricate or mold and from which our English word plastic is derived. The idea indicated by the use of the word “Pelekizo” might be better expressed: that Christians are being whittled upon and shaped to conform to this world. If beheading were actually being indicated, the Greek word “Apokephalizo” would have been used since it means, “to decapitate”. Apokephalizo is used four times in Scripture and each reference is to the beheading or decapitation of John the Baptist, who actually had his head, severed from his body.

ETERNAL JUDGMENT

- A View of Heaven -

Before we begin this study on eternal judgment let's take a look into what is described as heaven in Hebrews 12:22-24 to discover what is there. *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.*

Initially we observe that heaven is the dwelling place of God. He is called the “**living**” God because He had told the Israelites that His name was Yah (I AM) or Yahweh (I AM THAT I AM). In other words, “I always was and I always will be.”

The place where God dwells is called Mount Zion and with good reason. From the Scriptures we see that this was the area in which God displayed His mercy to Abraham when he was about to sacrifice his son, Isaac. God provided a ram for sacrifice in the place of Isaac. Mount Sinai was the place where God gave the Israelites His Law but they were fearful in His presence. By contrast, Mount Zion was the place where God sent the Holy Spirit upon His people (the Church) and they rejoiced at His presence within them.

God dwells in the heavenly Jerusalem. (Jeru Shalom – City of Peace) When we think about the word peace we envision a place of harmonious living where the inhabitants are doing only good. There is no strife, envy or fighting. All the fruits of the Holy Spirit are in evidence.

Every city has inhabitants and the heavenly Jerusalem is no different. Beside God, three groups inhabit the heavenly Jerusalem because their names are written in the book of life.

1. Myriads of angels (those who did not lose their first estate).
2. The general assembly (These include the Old Testament saints and those whom the Lord deems righteous)
3. The church of the firstborn (Christians)

Within the framework of this passage of Scripture, God is presented as just, helpful, kind and merciful. He is shown to be just because He is the judge of all. He is shown to be helpful because He sends the Holy Spirit to lead His people. He is shown to be kind because He sent Jesus to be the mediator of a new covenant. He is shown to be merciful as He accepts the sprinkled blood of His Son for the sin and disobedience of men.

- The Blood -

The description of heaven in the book of Hebrews ends by contrasting the sprinkled blood of Jesus, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. The statement causes us to pause for a moment and to reflect on its significance. What is it that God wants us to see?

In the book of Genesis, Abel is presented as a righteous man whose blood was shed when his brother Cain murdered him. Let's consider the differences:

1. Abel's blood was shed without his own will or consent but Jesus' blood was freely given of His own consent, as the price of man's redemption.
2. The blood of Abel was sprinkled on the earth but Jesus' blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, which is in heaven. (Hebrews 9 and 10)
3. Abel's blood cried out to God for justice concerning his murderer (an eye for an eye) but Jesus' blood pleads to God for mercy and forgiveness. (*Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.*)

- Nature of the Judge -

God is judge of all. And with that responsibility will come the time when he rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. The truest and most perfect expression of God's eternal nature is love: it is not condemnation but grace, not wrath but mercy. *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the **world might be saved through Him**.* (John 3:17)

So unwilling is God to bring judgment and wrath against people, that He transferred all of His authority to judge to Jesus, the Son of Man. *For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also **gives life to whom He wishes**. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has **given all judgment to the Son**, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who **hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*** (John 5:21-24)

And Jesus, being like His Father, is so unwilling to bring judgment and wrath against people, that He transferred all of His authority to judge, to the words that He had spoken. *And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. **If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, 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 sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.**"* (John 12:44-48)

- Four Principles of God's Judgment -

1. God's judgment is according to truth. **Your word is truth.** (John 17:17)
2. God's judgment is according to deeds. *But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who **WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS**: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.* (Romans 2:5-8)
3. God's judgment is without respect for persons. *For there is no partiality with God.* (Romans 2:11)

4. God's judgment is according to light, the measure of moral knowledge available to each person. *“And that slave who **knew his master's will** and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the **one who did not know it**, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been **given much, much will be required**; and to whom they **entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.** (Luke 12:47-48)*

- Clarification -

The Greek word for judgment in the primary text we are using (Hebrews 6:1-3) is “krima” which simply means “a decision”. A decision can be either **favorable** or **unfavorable**. A decision can also be for a specified time (**temporary**) or without regard to time (**eternal**)

- Temporary Judgments -

God issues warnings to people through temporary judgments here on earth, using them as examples to bring about repentance. Some examples of these are:

1. Ungodly living.
 - *And if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an **example to those who would live ungodly lives** thereafter; (2 Peter 2:6)*
2. Lying to the Holy Spirit
 - Two Christians - Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts 5:1-10*)
3. Craving evil things.
 - *For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud⁴² and all passed through the sea;⁴³ and all were baptized into Moses⁴⁴ in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food;⁴⁵ and all drank the same spiritual drink,⁴⁶ for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. (1 Corinthians 10:1-7)*

⁴² The cloud spoken of here is the “Shekinah” or “Cloud of Glory” and is an indication of God's presence. In the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt it appeared as a cloud by day, providing shelter from the intense rays of the sun during their journey and a pillar of fire at night to lead them in the way. The Israelites were dependent on it for their journey. When it moved, so did they and when it remained in place, so did they. This cloud of glory or Shekinah is a representation of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians.

⁴³ The Israelites had to pass through the sea to be saved from their enemies, the Egyptians. It was if they had to go through the sea, which was an instrument of their death, but God provided a miracle by parting the waters for them and they came out a new people. This corresponds to a Christian's baptism; when he enters the waters of baptism and comes out a new creation

⁴⁴ As the Israelites were baptized into Moses, so too, are Christians baptized into Jesus Christ.

⁴⁵ The Israelites ate manna in the wilderness, a miracle food, which God sent from heaven to sustain them during their journey. Christians partake of the body of Christ in bread form, during communion, which sustains them spiritually during their journey.

⁴⁶ The Israelites drank water from a spiritual rock, which followed them in the desert. Christians partake of the blood of Christ in wine form, during communion, which is designed to refresh them.

4. Using good self-judgment.

- *But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But **if we judged ourselves rightly**, we would not be judged. But **when we are judged**, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:28)*

- A Trustworthy Statement -

Before we commence our study of eternal judgments it might be wise for Christians to remember a trustworthy statement found in 2 Timothy 2:11-13.

- For if **we died** with Him, **we** will also **live** with Him; (Romans 6:5)
- If **we endure**, **we** will also **reign** with Him; (Revelation 3:21, 20:4)
- If **we deny** Him, **He** also will **deny us**; (Matthew 10:32-33)
- If **we** are **faithless**, **He** remains **faithful**, for **He** cannot deny **Himself**. (Romans 3:3-4)

- Eternal Judgments -

It appears from Scripture that there are three eternal judgments given. Each one is given from a different judgment seat and they affect different groups of people. The three judgment seats are:

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ (**Bimah**)
2. The Throne of His **Glory**
3. The **Great White** Throne

- The Judgment Seat of Christ or Bimah Judgment -

In the New Testament when the judgment seat of Christ is referred to, the Greek word used is bema (bay' ma). The bema is not a seat at all but a raised platform. In the Hebrew language the same word is "bimah" and is pronounced "bee mar". The bimah is placed in the center of the assembled people, much in the same manner as it does in a synagogue, and the Word of God is read from it. Jesus Christ, "The Word of God", judges from this position. *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Hebrews 4:12-13)*

The Bimah Judgment takes place upon Christ's second coming to earth and two groups of people are judged there: **Christians** and **hypocrites**. Hypocrites are those who profess to be Christian but by their actions prove they are not. They are merely playing a role and are not genuine.

Christians are judged first.

*For it is time for judgment to **begin with the household of God**; and if it begins **with us first**, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?⁴⁷ **AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?** (1 Peter 4:17-18)*

*But you, why do you **judge** your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For **we** will all stand before the **judgment seat of Christ**. (Romans 14:10)*

*For **we** must all appear before the **judgment seat of Christ**, so that each one may be **recompensed for his deeds in the body**, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)*

The Christian will not be judged in respect to his own personal righteousness.

*He who believes in Him **is not judged**; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (John 3:18)*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, **1)** has eternal life, and **2)** does not come into judgment, but **3)** has passed out of death into life. (John 5:24)*

*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and **I give eternal life to them**, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:27)*

*Therefore there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)*

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous **to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. (1 John 1:9)*

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And **if anyone sins**, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is **the propitiation for our sins**; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. (1 John 2:1)*

The true Christian, not the hypocrite, is judged for rewards in respect to the service rendered to Christ while in his earthly body. The rewards are based on three elements:

1. Faithfulness to use the abilities that God has given to each believer. (Matthew 25:14-30)
2. The percentage of return that each believer achieves with what God has given him in this age will result in a proportional increase of authority and responsibility during the age to come. (Luke 19:11-27)
3. The building materials provided by each believer are what Jesus uses to build the Christian's house. This house is his glorified body, the dwelling place of his spirit.

⁴⁷ Those who obey not the gospel of God are those who have heard the gospel but not obeyed.

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:2)

*For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. **If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.** (1 Corinthians 3:11)*

The building materials are divided into two groups then contrasted with one another in their ability to withstand the test of fire.

- One group survives the other is destroyed.
- Quality is of greater importance to God, than quantity.
 - Gold, silver and precious stones are normally found in small quantities, difficult to obtain but have enormous value.
 - Wood, hay and stubble are normally found in large quantities, easy to obtain and have much less value.
- Gold, silver and precious stones are compared in the Bible to faith (in God), hope (of being like Christ) and love (of God and man).

Christians can be awarded crowns. There are four mentioned in the Scriptures.

1. Crown of exaltation – for those that were ministered to by the believer. (1 Thessalonians 2:19)
2. Crown of righteousness – for those who loved the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 4:8)
3. Crown of life – for those who have persevered under trial. (James 1:12)
4. Crown of glory – for elders who shepherded the flock. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Hypocrites, those who profess to be Christian but by their actions prove they are not, are judged next. Their judgment is that they are committed to **outer darkness**, were there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. These are some of the characteristics of hypocrites.

1. These are known as “wolves in sheep's clothing”. (Matthew 7:15)
2. They are the subjects of the book of Jude.
3. They practice lawlessness. (Matthew 7:23)
 - Professing to be Christians they should be living under the royal law (Law of the Spirit), which is based on love and is stated, “*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*” But instead they are a law unto themselves.
4. They don't exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:19-23)
5. They are unforgiving.
 - ***For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*** (Matthew 6:14-15)

- The story of the servant who did not appreciate the king’s forgiveness. Matthew 18:21-35
6. They deny the Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 1:4)
 - *Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever **denies Me before men**, I will also **deny him** before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32)*
 - *For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and **THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES**. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, “**VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.**” And again, “**THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.**” It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (Hebrews 10:26-31)*
 7. Professing Christians who do not have the proper attire⁴⁸ for the wedding feast of Jesus are sent there. (Matthew 22:11-14)
 8. Professing Christians who did not have enough oil⁴⁹ for their lamps to make it until the return of Christ. (Matthew 25:1-13)
 9. Professing Christians who did not make use of the Lord’s gifts to serve Him.⁵⁰ (Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27)
 10. Unbelieving Jews. (Matthew 8:10-12 and Luke 13:23-30)

Author’s Note - Within Christianity, some think that this “outer darkness judgment” might be a temporary judgment until the final Great White Throne judgment hence; the concept of purgatory was developed.⁵¹ (Reference the Apocalypse of Peter)

- The Throne of His Glory Judgment -

This judgment also takes place at the second coming of Christ and involves the Israelites and the nations. This is what the Apostle Paul had to say about the salvation of his fellow Israelites.

*I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “**THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM***

⁴⁸ The fine white linen garments required at the wedding feast are the righteous acts of the saints. (Re 19:8)

⁴⁹ Oil has always been a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The parable indicates that these individuals did not have an adequate amount of the Holy Spirit to keep their lamps burning until the wedding feast of the lamb. The reason for it is they did not keep asking for more of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:5-13). They had become satisfied with what they already had, lukewarm as some who say, no longer hungering and thirsting after the things of God.

⁵⁰ Those who do not serve God are called “wicked”. (Malachi 3:18)

⁵¹ Both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches hold this position, as do some Anglican and Methodist churches.

*JACOB. THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”
(Romans 11:11 & 25-27)*

The prophet Zechariah also spoke about the salvation of the Israelites.

And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. (Zechariah 12:9-10)

And Jesus, Himself, said that the twelve Apostles would be judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

*“Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His **glorious throne**, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:28)*

The nations that will be judged are those people who are alive at Christ’s return who are neither Christian nor Jew. They will be judged with respect to their actions towards Christians and Jews.

*“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His **glorious throne**. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ‘For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ “Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? ‘And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ‘When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’ Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ “Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ “Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:31-46)*

*For after all it is only just for God to **repay with affliction those who afflict you**, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, **dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be **glorified in His saints** on that day, and to be*

marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:13)

- The Great White Throne Judgment -

The final judgment of mankind occurs after the **1000-year reign** of Christ on earth and after God has released Satan upon the earth again. It appears that all those who had not previously been judged will be at this time. Those whose names are written in the book of life will enter a new heaven and earth, while those whose names are not written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

*Then I saw a **great white throne** and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)*

If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. (1 John 5:9-12)

*He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but **blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven**. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, **it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come**. (Matthew 12:30-32)*

*But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, **they** shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For **by your words** you will be justified, and **by your words** you will be condemned.”(Matthew 12:36-37)*

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:7)

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. (1 John 4:15-19)