

INDEX

INTRODUCTION	2
INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL	3
THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST	
1. Introduction	5
2. The Fall	7
3. Salvation	10
4. Deliverance	13
5. The Glorified Body	16
6. The Walk	19
7. What is Baptism all about?	21
8. Forgiveness	23
9. Communion or The Lord's Supper	26
10. What does being 'Born Again' mean?	28
11. Why do I still Sin?	30
NOTES	32

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this little manual is to help those who have come to treasure the love of God and want to help others to find, what they have been so blessed to receive.

It is a manual that has been put together, the writers trust, by the Holy Spirit. It is, in it's simplest form, no more nor less than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We live in a world that is surely in the time of the great apostasy. For this reason many have sought to spend much time and money warning others of false doctrine, but they have failed to see that, that activity is in itself a form of deception.

We were commanded to preach the Gospel to all creation, and to teach them the things that Jesus taught us. (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19-20). The Gospel is the only message that can open the way for changed lives. (Rom. 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:17-18; 2:1-5).

Many brethren have had the great privilege of experiencing the life changing effects of the manual's contents. In addition to this have gone on themselves to teach others about that blessed thing which they have received. (2 Tim. 2:2).

Today more than ever, and thank God for this, we are seeing a return to the early church lifestyle. People are seeking a greater knowledge **of God**; (not just knowledge **about Him**) they are seeking the realities of loving God more deeply. They are seeking to experience loving one another in a more meaningful way...they are seeking **to be the church**, rather than just **to attend one**. They are seeking to see the real power that the book of Acts speaks about. *To those that desire these things...it shall be given them.*

This manual seeks to help, in whatever way that it can, those precious people, as spoken of above, to attain their desires. Many have already experienced such desires through this Gospel of His great love, and are today effectively ministering the life of Jesus to little groups in houses.

Essentially, the manual is to be used by those who are willing to lead a small group (from ONE other person upwards) and disciple them faithfully, 24 hours a day, EVERY day of the week, until they are able to do the same for others.

There are some 'do's and don'ts; regarding this manual that you should accept, before using it.

Firstly, please **do** copy the manual freely, and as you have not had to pay for receiving it, don't charge others even for your copy work. If you do not have the means for copying, write to us, we'll gladly send you the amount of copies you need...free of charge.

Should you require help as far as teaching others is concerned we will joyfully help you in any way we can, just as the Lord leads.

There are other manuals, which follow on in series to this one. We will gladly send these to you when you are ready for them. The first manual consists of very basic teachings and is designed to take souls from a state of unregeneracy to being born again. Yet it is equally as essential for even those who have been born again to go through these basic teachings.

In conclusion, it is the earnest desire of those who have been used as vessels in putting these manuals together, that those using them would be brought to a greater knowledge of God and love of their neighbour. *It is not their desire to recruit members for a manmade organization.* Please take everything you read directly to God for confirmation and do not quickly reject anything even if it goes against your own biblical interpretation. The material in the manuals has already produced much fruit to the glory of God.

Please address your requests and enquiries to:

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

THE LOCATION AND TIMES

These teachings were designed to be taught anywhere. The material was originally used in a home situation, where people could easily hear what the teacher was saying and preferably a place free of distraction. Never discourage children from being present, but be very firm in your discipline of them or they will distract those wishing to learn. If possible, try to have the meetings in turn, at the homes of those who have children. (Always be very patient and understanding of the distress that children feel when in strange homes).

One of the finest ways of dealing with the above situation, and to make the teachings more fruitful, is to have them **at least** weekly around a bring-and-share meal (after the meal of course).

Parents should put the children to sleep, and this prayerfully, ministering to their needs before beginning the teaching. If the children are too fearful, allow them to lie at the feet of their parents during the teachings, but as we have already said making sure that they are disciplined. It is not important that husbands and wives jointly participate in these teachings together.

THE TEACHER

Anyone who has a desire can teach from this manual. Desire is the greatest single qualification. It has been the experience of the writers that there exists no greater way of learning about God's word than the experience gained from teaching others.

A good method to use in the first few sessions is to have a group sharing, in place of straight teaching. This way the teacher will become familiar with the word before he himself begins to teach.

Those teaching must never lose sight of the fact that *The Holy Spirit* is the only real teacher of God's word. He teaches through a vessel from what information is already in that vessel. In other words, no man will ever teach (life) beyond the level of his own testimony.

THE METHOD

The teacher arranges with those that he is going to work with to be at the appointed place at a specific time. Prior to this time he needs to lift up the session to God in prayer. Do not treat this important action lightly - it will be the make or break of those being disciplined.

Pray according to how God leads you. This could take the form of interceding for the individuals attending the gathering. If the teacher is not a seasoned pray-er then he should take note of the words in the modules on prayer.

Please ask all those that attend to bring their bibles and both something to write with and write on. Transcripts would be obtained by the teacher photocopying the relevant section from the manual. If you do not have this facility write to the address given in the beginning of this manual, requesting copies of the transcripts.

Once all are comfortably seated in a position that will not restrict their hearing, (Please be sensitive to older people who often have hearing difficulties, and are too afraid to mention this fact), begin the meeting by asking someone to open in prayer. If none of the group are able to do so, then the teacher should pray God's blessings upon the meeting.

Begin the teaching, or as the case may be, group sharing. Ask questions, encourage the brethren to ask questions. If the teacher cannot answer the questions then he or she should never be afraid to say so. This is much more preferable than attempting to give vague or uncertain answers.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a complete teaching, and for this reason, questions that are raised in one meeting are usually answered at a later one, by virtue of the teaching alone. So try to avoid lengthy discussions and especially contentious one's. Where scriptures are quoted, call for volunteers to read them. Usually there are one or two of the same people that will always volunteer. After a few weeks, when the group have more confidence, then the teacher should ask those who don't volunteer, to read the scriptures.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL (cont.)

It is very important to encourage participation as this reduces the incidence of 'fear of man'. (called shyness in the world) In later discipleship (especially teachings on The Holy Spirit) boldness is of paramount importance.

Where real doubt enters the proceedings, stop and ask the group to agree in prayer, asking God to reveal the truth. Then continue in faith believing that God will respond at the best time...and He surely will!

At the end of the session, ask each person to open up their bibles at any Psalm of their choosing and to read at least two lines of this Psalm. Go around the group clockwise with each person reading in turn. Then the teacher should close in prayer, requesting that anyone who wishes to pray for a particular person or situation should do so before he closes.

Each module should take on or about an hour to go through.

These teachings will only be assimilated by revelation and not by man-made methods, no matter how good. Therefore it will soon become evident that the teacher will have to be a man or woman to much prayer.

If you are so lead, contact us and we will pray for you in our intercessory times. We pray even now for whoever may be reading this that God will bless your labours abundantly.

Lastly, take courage, because this work is a work of discipleship and shepherding. The sheep need attention all day every day and as a result this work is a full time commitment. In spite of this many will desert you (as they did Jesus - John 6:66 - numbers are not an accident!) and often what begins as a large and very excited group, soon dwindles to a mere one or two faithful's.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

1. Introduction

Mark 1:14-15 ; Rom.1:16

What is... The Gospel of Jesus Christ?

It's simply a good message, or good news regarding the matter of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is that area where everything functions according to the perfect will of God.

The Kingdom - Sight and Entry

Jesus spoke much of this kingdom in Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7. He said that only once we were born again, could we see this kingdom; and only once we were born of water and of the spirit could we in fact, **enter** into it (John 3:3-5).

The Cost of Entering the Kingdom

In the first two years of His ministry upon this earth, Jesus spent much time illustrating the principles, and as important, the cost of living in it. In the very latter part of His ministry, He began to speak of the cost of entering this kingdom (John 6:41-58).

This cost provoked wild reaction from the Pharisees (vs. 52), it also caused separation in the ranks of His disciples, as they could not accept the teaching and left Him (vs. 60, 66). He was telling them that He would have to die to give them life and that in turn they would have to die as well, in order for Him to accomplish His will through them (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

The Light of the Gospel Exposes

The message of the Gospel could be likened to a massive surgical lamp being shone on the very innermost part of our hearts, revealing every hidden evil that resides there. As the surgical lamp reveals all to the surgeons performing an operation within the human body, so the light of the Gospel exposes the true condition of the human heart to us (Jn.3:20-21)

Much of what we have inside of us is hidden from the light of the truth (2 Cor. 4:4). This has been so since the fall of our forefathers, Adam and Eve. However, this condition is more grave for us today inasmuch as the glorious truth of the Gospel...so understood and lived by the early church as described in Acts...has become tainted with lies of men's opinions, over a period of some 1600 years.

As a result, the professing Christianity of today bears little, if any, resemblance to the lifestyle of Jesus, Paul, or the church of acts.

The Result of the Light

As the light of the Gospel exposes the true condition of our hearts, it will provoke only one of two reactions in us:

- a. We will want to switch the light off. (John 6:66).
- b. We will accept what is revealed and seek for help from the only quarter from which it can come – a crucified life with Christ (John 6:67-69).

The fruit of accepting the message of the gospel is a life which trusts in God implicitly. If this fruit is absent in our lives, then we have either never heard the true Gospel, or we have refused to accept it experientially into our lives.

The Gospel is different to Theology

Theology, which is the STUDY of the scriptures, is not the gospel. The gospel is a living experience of Jesus Christ. Theology is often tainted by opinions of men, and practiced at the expense of the flock. The Gospel is the imparting of a living relationship with God to sheep which are lost or have gone astray.

The Gospel is the culmination of the life of Jesus on earth and His final victory over Satan on the cross of Calvary.

The Gospel is Power

Paul said that the Gospel is the only route for the salvation of man (1 Cor. 1:17-18; 22-23). For those who don't have sight of the Kingdom, it is foolishness, but to those who have sight it is the power of God.

The carnal man (one who does not have spiritual sight and power), cannot be counselled. He can only be given the Gospel (1 Cor. 2:1-2). It is only when the Gospel is preached to him that he will receive faith to believe, and spiritual illumination to understand (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 10:13, 14, 17).

The Gospel is not a Message that entertains

Paul expressed great shock that the Galatians were so easily deceived, when the power of the gospel had been so visibly portrayed in their midst (Gal. 3:1).

In our day we have been raised for entertainment, and hence the reason why many will reject the message of the Gospel which does not entertain. Rather it calls for conviction, repentance, commitment and indeed the very piercing of hearts (Acts 2:37-39; 2 Timothy 4:3-4).

The Gospel vs. Religion

The Gospel is not new, but rather a timeless message (Heb. 4:3), and its accomplishment was attained in a six hour operation performed by God on the cross, to set aside the sinful nature of man. It is not a dead message, but rather a reality which all, who have been granted, can experience.

Much of what professing Christianity offers today centers around lifeless liturgies, doctrines, humanism and made rules. This is religion. The Gospel is life. The two are not compatible, because religion is not controlled by the Spirit of God. Yet it should be understood that the Gospel will accomplish the perfect will of God in spite of religion. Why do professing Christians need to hear the Gospel? **Because the majority don't know it.**

2. The Fall

Why did Jesus Come to the Earth?

Many would eagerly respond here, "He came to save me from my sins". This answer would of course be true, except it is not the whole answer.

The fullest answer we can give is that Jesus came to restore everything that was lost by man in the Garden of Eden.

To truly understand what Jesus restored, we would have to have some idea of what was really lost in the Garden of Eden. Until, in other words, we know what we have been saved from – we will not know what we have been saved to.

The Garden of Eden

God, in His infinite wisdom, created two people in **HIS image** and **likeness** (Gen. 1:26-28). They looked like God (**image**), and they were sinless like God (**likeness**). He set them to live in a paradise and He put them in charge of all other life in this garden. (Gen. 2:19)

They were named Adam and Eve and were able to see God as well as speak to Him. They had a free will to decide between obeying or disobeying God.

God gave them complete freedom in the garden, the only restriction placed before them was that they were not allowed to eat from the tree of **the knowledge of good and evil**; if they disobeyed Him, they would die (Gen. 2:17).

They chose to disobey God (Gen.3:1-6) and they inherited the promised curse of spiritual death (Gen. 3:14-19).

Before the Fall

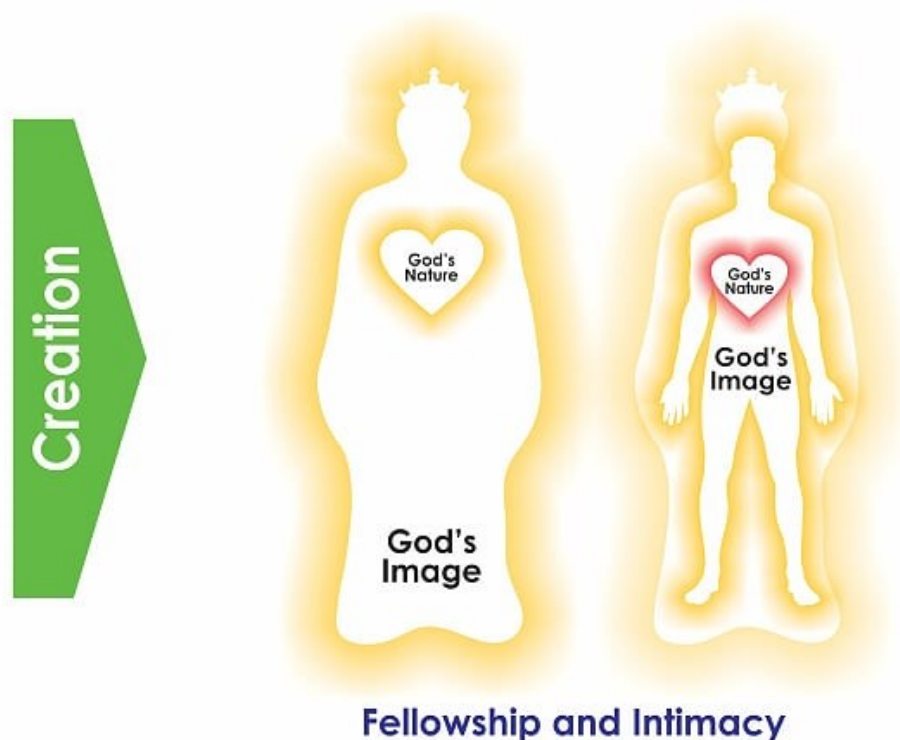


Fig. 1

The Result of the Curse

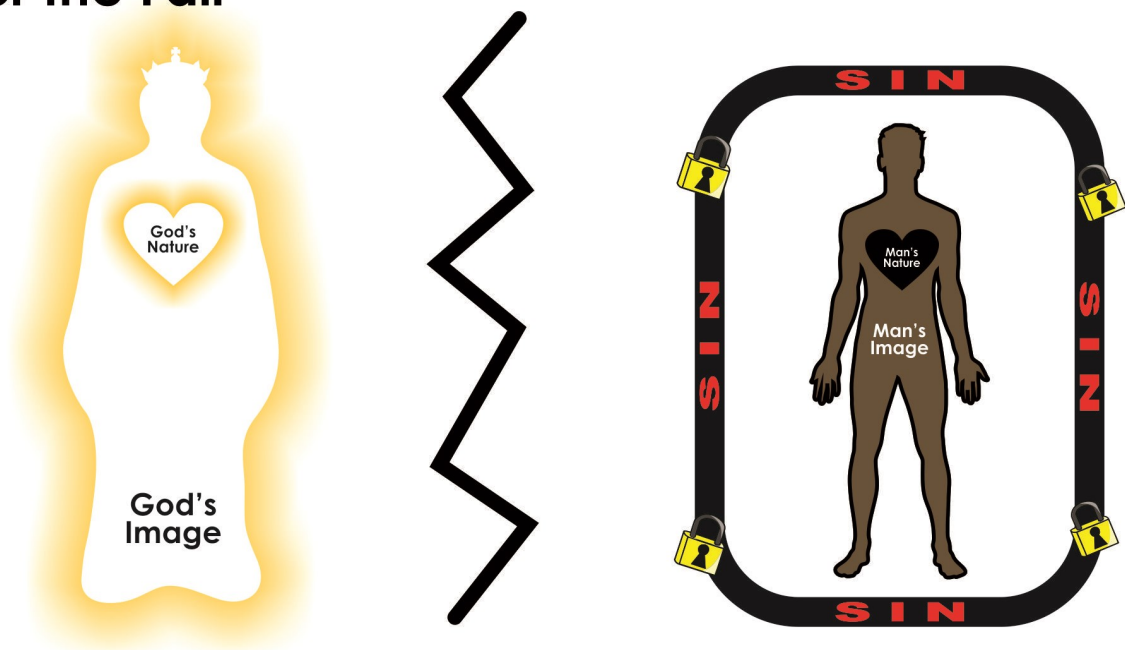
The curse of spiritual death resulted in three things, as far as Adam, Eve and all their offspring were concerned:-

1. **They lost their image of God** (Gen. 3:7-11). This means they no longer had glorified bodies like God and they took on the fleshly bodies that you and I have today (Gen. 5:3).
2. **They lost their likeness to God** (Gen.3:11-13; Gen. 6:5; Jer.17: 9; Phil.2:7). Losing their likeness to God would mean that for all time they would suffer from the following:-
 - a. Blindness to the righteousness of God and their own sinful state (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - b. Slavery to the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).
 - c. Self-centeredness (self-will, self-pity, self-exaltation, self-effort, self-righteousness, self-reliance). (2 Tim. 3:2; Isa. 14:13-14).
 - d. Worldliness (1 Jn. 2:15-16).

N.B. Anyone who dies practicing some, or all of the above, will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

- e. Weakness. (Fear, fear of rejection, insecurity, hurt etc. etc.) (1 Cor. 2:2-3; 2 Cor. 7:5). It is important to mention here that weakness in itself is not a sin and is not conducive to a spirit led life.
3. **They had lost their free will.** The sum of the above situation was that man was powerless to say 'No' to any of the conditions in 2 a-e., he therefore was a slave to Satan, completely under his dominion (James 1:13-15; Romans 7:25; 2 Peter 2:19).

After the Fall



Separation (Death) - Lost Sight of God

Fig. 2

Further Results of the Fall

As if this was not bad enough, man was unable to change his condition (Jer. 13:23) .

In addition, man would pass on this sinful nature, like a disease, from generation to generation (Ps. 51:5).

Who will Save us from this Situation?

Jesus came to earth that we may be saved from the above condition. All who became partakers of the new covenant are saved from the above condition. The Lord will give us a new heart (Eze. 36:26-27)

Now that we know what we have been saved from, we shall next see what we have been saved to. In other words, God went to the trouble of offering His son as a sacrifice so that we might be delivered from the above condition of slavery, to a place of a free will, and this **solely** for the purpose of now being able to follow **His will**.

3. Salvation

The last teaching showed us what mankind had lost in the Garden of Eden and why Jesus needed to restore these losses. Restoring these losses is called 'salvation'. Before we discuss the restoration of mankind's losses, let us look more closely at the meaning of salvation.

Salvation really consists of three separate parts:-

1 Justification

This is the reason we are released from guilt. A free gift from God. It is the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus on behalf of man's past sins and his present sinful nature. It is a gift from God because we neither did nor can do anything to earn it (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:16-19).

2 Sanctification

Sanctification is the process of becoming holy. This is the word that describes what God does in our lives to make us like Him (Matt. 5:48). God does this work by His grace because without it we cannot inherit eternal life (Heb. 12:14; Titus3:5; Col.3:10).

3 Glorification

Glorification is the restoration of man's image of God, and the gaining of rewards through good works. Glorification simply means that we are new creatures, **that look exactly like God, in the heavenlies** (2 Cor. 5:17), **and in the earthly realm** – perform works (Eph. 2:10).

It is important to note here that if any of these parts are missing, there is no salvation.

It is also important to see that salvation is not a one-time event, but is rather **a lifelong walk** (2 Cor.4:16; Philp.2:12; 2 Thess. 2:13-15).

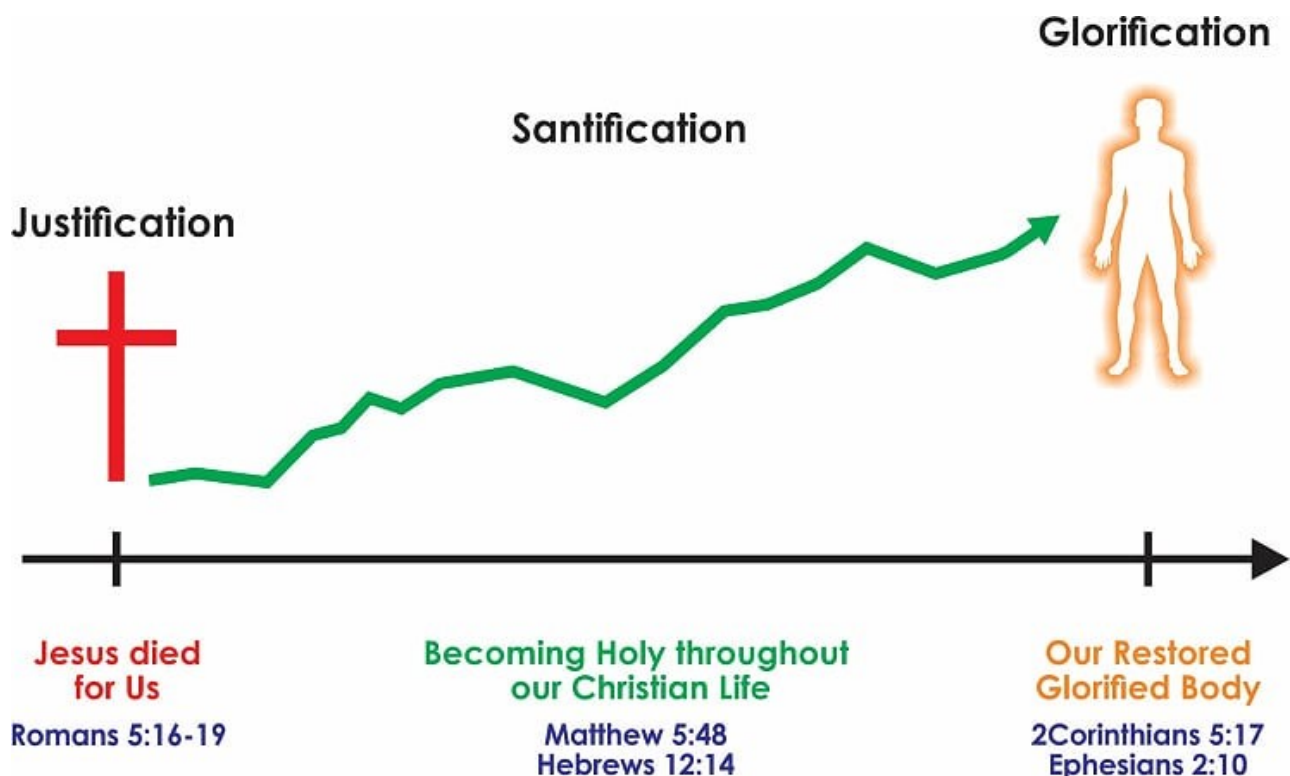


Fig. 3

What Salvation gives back to Mankind

- a. **We receive sight.** Firstly of God and His most holy character, secondly, of our own sinful nature. Lastly, the Devil no longer has us blinded. We now truly see him for what he is. (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Cor.2:14).
- b. **We receive power.** To say 'no' to all lusts of the flesh, self- centeredness, worldliness and weakness. Please note here that this power overcomes **every** hindrance we ever had to serving God. It is this power that God uses to sanctify us.
- c. **We receive the image** that mankind had (they looked like God), in the Garden of Eden. (Gen. 1:26).

Salvation really makes us exactly as Man was in the Garden of Eden before the fall. The sight and power mentioned above do this for us. Jesus described this in Matt. 7:13-14. Reading this passage will show us that 'the gate' is sight and walking 'narrow way', is power.

SALVATION GIVES US BACK:



Fig. 4

Salvation is Free

As we said before, we can't do anything to earn salvation, it is a free gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9). We don't have to be 'good' to get salvation. We received it whilst we are still sinners and salvation causes us to become holy.

Salvation is 'Touchable'

Understanding all that we have said above, it is not difficult to accept that salvation is something that is quite visible in a life. In addition to this, those that have it, experience it. Salvation is both visible and experiential (Matt.7:16-18).

Just a note here:

In James 2:14-24, he says that salvation can be seen and experienced by works. It almost seems that he is saying quite the opposite to what Paul is saying in Eph.2:8. But when we look closely, we discover that **Paul says, "Good works won't get you salvation"**. Whilst **James says, "If you have salvation you'll do good works."**

What are good works? Things that we do under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This includes evidence of His fruit being seen in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23).

So then, a person that has salvation, has the power to stop practicing sin. Look carefully at the following scriptures: 1Jn. 3:4-8; 1 Cor. 15:34; Rom. 6:1-2.

In other words **practicing** sin is not the nature of one who has salvation. Does that make saved people sinless? NO, only Jesus was sinless.

The Difference between Wilful and Unintentional Sin

The difference between the one who sins willfully and one who sins unintentionally (even though this might be seventy times in one day!) - is a heart attitude. In other words the difference between one who does not think that sin is serious and the one who genuinely does not want to sin, is an attitude of heart (1 Jn. 2:1).

In conclusion then, when we continue sinning willfully and are unrepentant, we do not receive forgiveness from God. But no matter how often we sin unintentionally, as we repent we are forgiven our sins. It is not difficult to see therefore, that only those who have a desire to walk the way of sanctification (the narrow road–Matt.7:13-14), and are using the power to say no to sin, will experience forgiveness irrespective of how often they fall.

In the next module we will see how God, physically and spiritually, brings out salvation in us.

4. Deliverance

Deliverance is the way God sets me free from my sinful nature

How does God bring about Salvation?

God brings salvation to us, spiritually and physically, in the following manner:

Firstly, He grants salvation to us (John 6:44;65). It is very important for us all to understand that salvation is not a matter for us to decide, but God alone (Rom. 8:29-30; 9:12-21; Eph. 1:4-5; Titus 3:5-7). Before the beginning of time, God knew who would receive the salvation HE had set apart for them, and it has no bearing on man's intellectual acceptance or rejection of Him (Matt.16:16-17; Matt.11:27).

Something very interesting arises from this fact; God will very often place it into our hearts to pray for a person's salvation (John 17:20; 1Tim2:1-4). Because of His word, God is bound to do all things according to a prescribed pattern and we shall look deeper into this matter in a later teaching on prayer.

Always bear in mind, that if God places people into our minds, we are to pray for their salvation. If unsaved friends and loved one's are experiencing real difficulties, pray for their salvation. God will often allow the difficulties in order to bring people to salvation (this obviously does not apply to one that is already saved).

Secondly, God has a special way of bringing people to salvation, or to put it another way, rescuing them from slavery to their sinful (Adamic) natures. The way He does this is:-

PLEASE USE A "LIVING BIBLE" TRANSLATION FOR ALL SCRIPTURES THAT YOU READ IN THIS SECTION, IF POSSIBLE.

1). He baptises our old sinful natures into the death of Jesus (Rom. 6:3-4), and buries them (vs.4).

This baptism took place at Calvary nearly 2000 years ago! It was there that our sinful nature was taken by Jesus, nailed to the cross, put to death and finally buried...**NEVER** to be resurrected again. The body of Jesus was broken (Rom. 6:6), to give us the power to say "no" to sin.

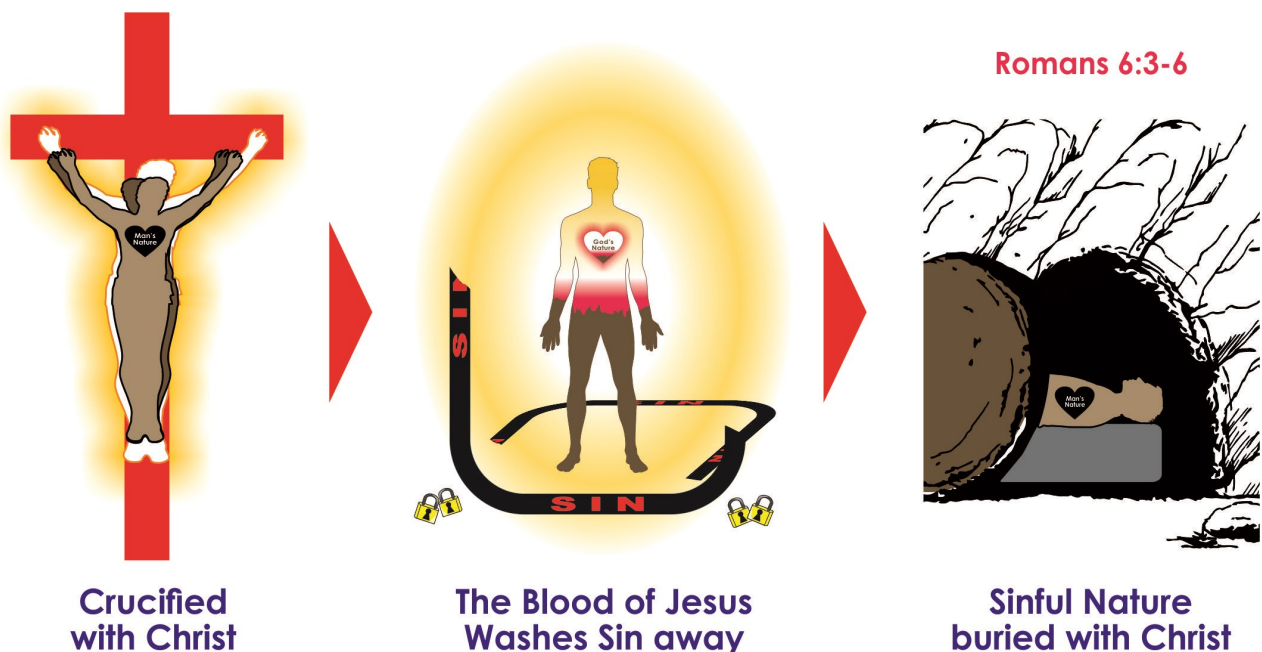


Fig. 5

The effect of this baptism into His death can be likened to heart surgery, as far as we are concerned in our physical bodies today. He removes our diseased (sinful nature), hearts and replaces them with healthy (rightful desire), ones (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

2). His blood was spilled to wash away all our sins; past present and future (Heb. 9:14;28).

You might ask WHEN does all this take place in me? Since the foundation of time really. God says I knew you before you were born (Jer. 1:5). The first signs that you will see visibly, are when you become “born-again”.

What does ‘Born Again’ mean?

Jesus said that we must be “**born again**” as this will give us “**sight**” of the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3). This sight will give us a real awareness of God, His holiness and His greatness. In addition, we become aware of our sinful nature and the reality of Satan and all his works. It does not give us **entry** into the kingdom of God.

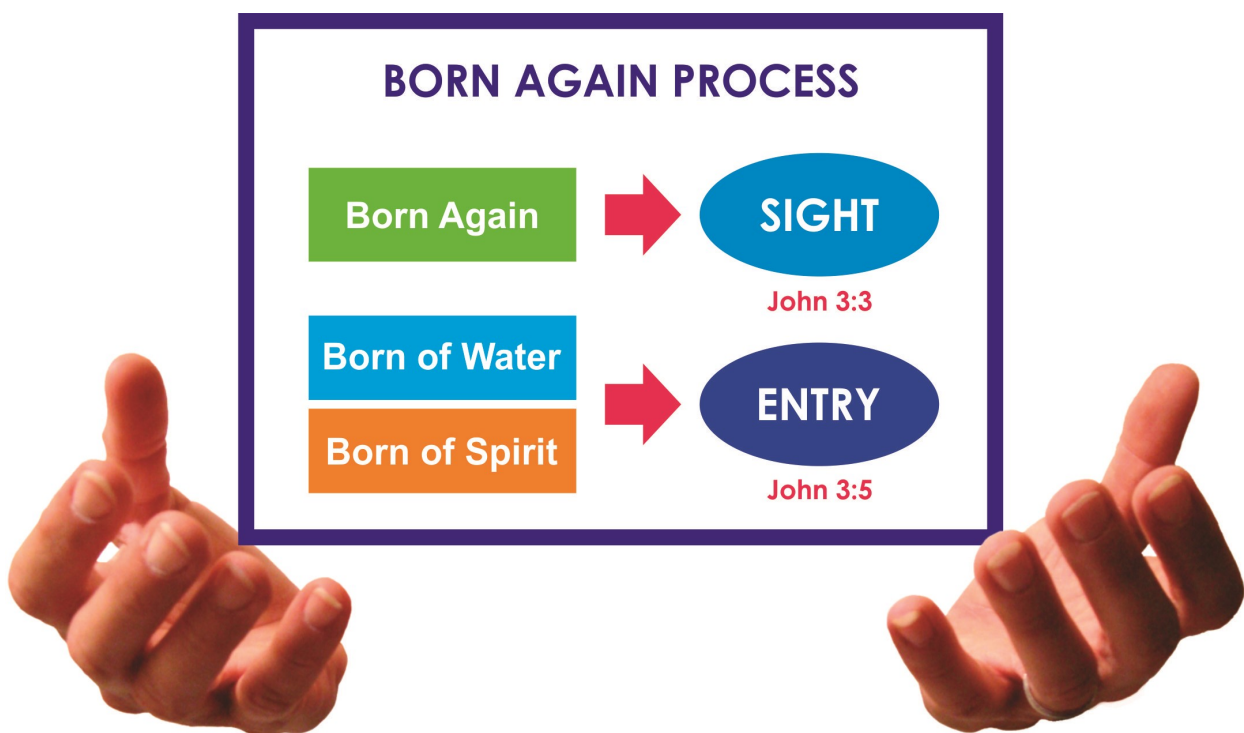


Fig 1a

What does ‘Born of Water’ and ‘Born of Spirit’ mean?

When we believe what happened at **Calvary**, as described above, then we become “**born of water**”. When we begin to desire to receive the gifts of the Spirit and to have our lives controlled by God (led by the Spirit), we are subsequently “**born of His Spirit**” (Jn. 3:5).

"Enter the Kingdom of God". What does this mean?

At this point we have "**entered**" and have begun to walk the narrow road. Outward signs of our entry and walk on the narrow road are fourfold:-

- We are freed of our lusts (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:6).
- We are freed from self-centeredness (Gal. 2:20; Mark 8:34).
- We lose our worldly desires (Gal. 6:14).
- We are set free from our weaknesses (Mat. 8:16-17; 2 Cor. 12:9-10).

Now we are rescued from Satan's hold and **ONCE MORE WE HAVE A FREE WILL**.

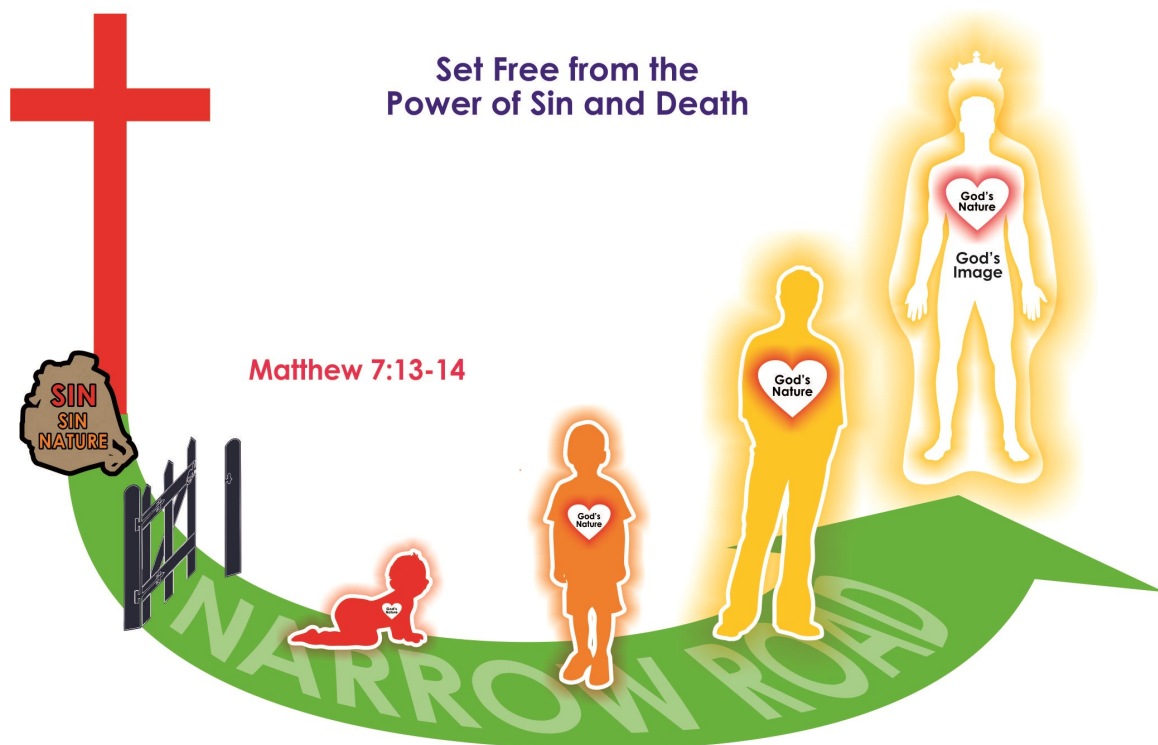


Fig. 7

Is it really possible to say 'NO' to Sin?

Some people say that the above situation is impossible, because even Paul could not say no to sin. They quote Rom. 7:14-25 to back up their statement. This of course is not true, because in this passage, Paul is speaking to the man who is "under law", (vs. 1) and not with reference to himself. In vs. 25 Paul is saying, "In my new nature I am a slave to God's law, but in my old sinful nature I am a slave to sin." (see Rom. 8:9-10).

In the following module we shall see how God restores the body, which was the image of Him, to us.

5. The Glorified Body

What is the Restoration of my Glorified Body?

Through salvation we get back: sight of God, power to overcome sin and lastly our Godlike image. In other words everything that our forefathers, Adam and Eve, had lost, is restored to us.

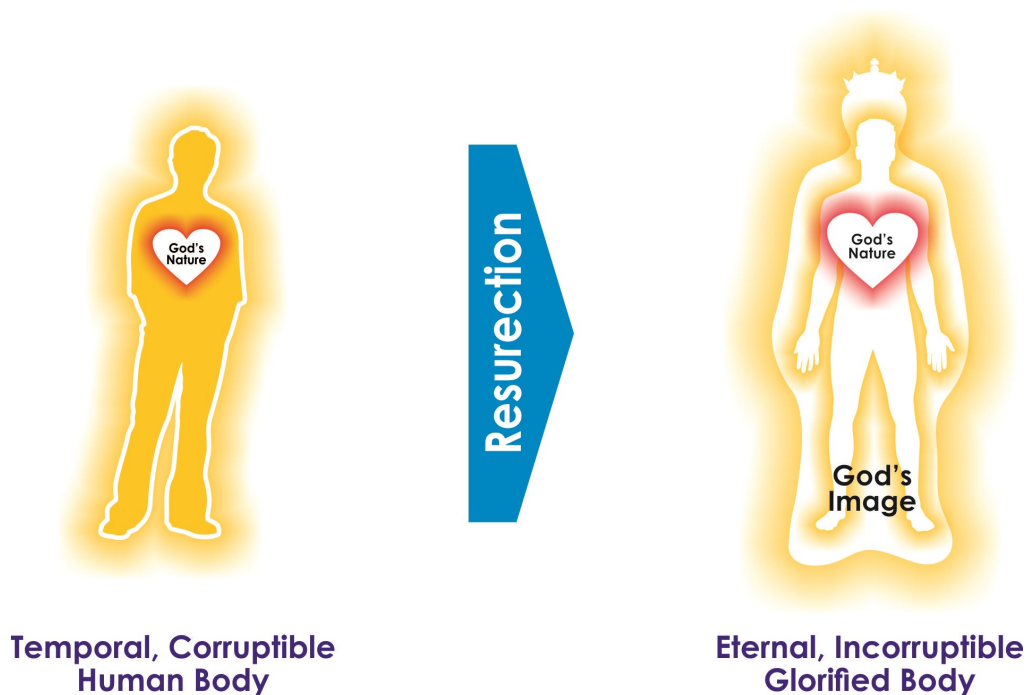


Fig. 8

Why is it that I don't look different?

This image is what we call our 'glorified body'. A body which looks just like God. We might well ask, "If we now have a glorified body, why don't we look any different?" Rom. 6:5 says that we now bear likeness to God, being as our old sinful nature was buried with Jesus and we were resurrected with Him. This truth is further testified to, in the scriptures of Rom. 8:29-30 and also Heb 1:3, where we read that God planned before the foundation of time, that we should look like Him, **through Jesus**.

How do we get our Glorified Bodies?

After Jesus was resurrected, He ascended into Heaven and was seated in heavenly places at the right hand side of the Father (Eph. 1:20). God did not stop at this point however. Chapter 2 vs. 6 tells us that he took us up and seated **us also** in heavenly places!! How are we seated? **"...in Christ."** In other words we have taken up our **TRUE SPIRITUAL POSITION**. Gen. 3:9 God asks of Adam, "Where art thou?.." Surely God knew where Adam was. What God was really asking was, "Who has taken you away from your place of spiritual communion with me?" Adam and Eve were in glorified bodies so they were able to worship and commune with God in Spirit.

Concerning Eph. 2:6; Please notice furthermore that the scripture speaks in the past tense, "...raised us..." So our glorified bodies are **already in Christ**...past tense! It is not that we await some future promise...**it is already accomplished**.

We are NOW new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). It is important to know that we are 'new creatures' in one place only – “...in Christ”. In other words, outside of Christ we are the same fleshly humans, but spiritually we are maintained in Christ by God's power through our faith, so that our glorified bodies will be revealed in the last days (1Pet. 1:3-5) (Very important scripture).

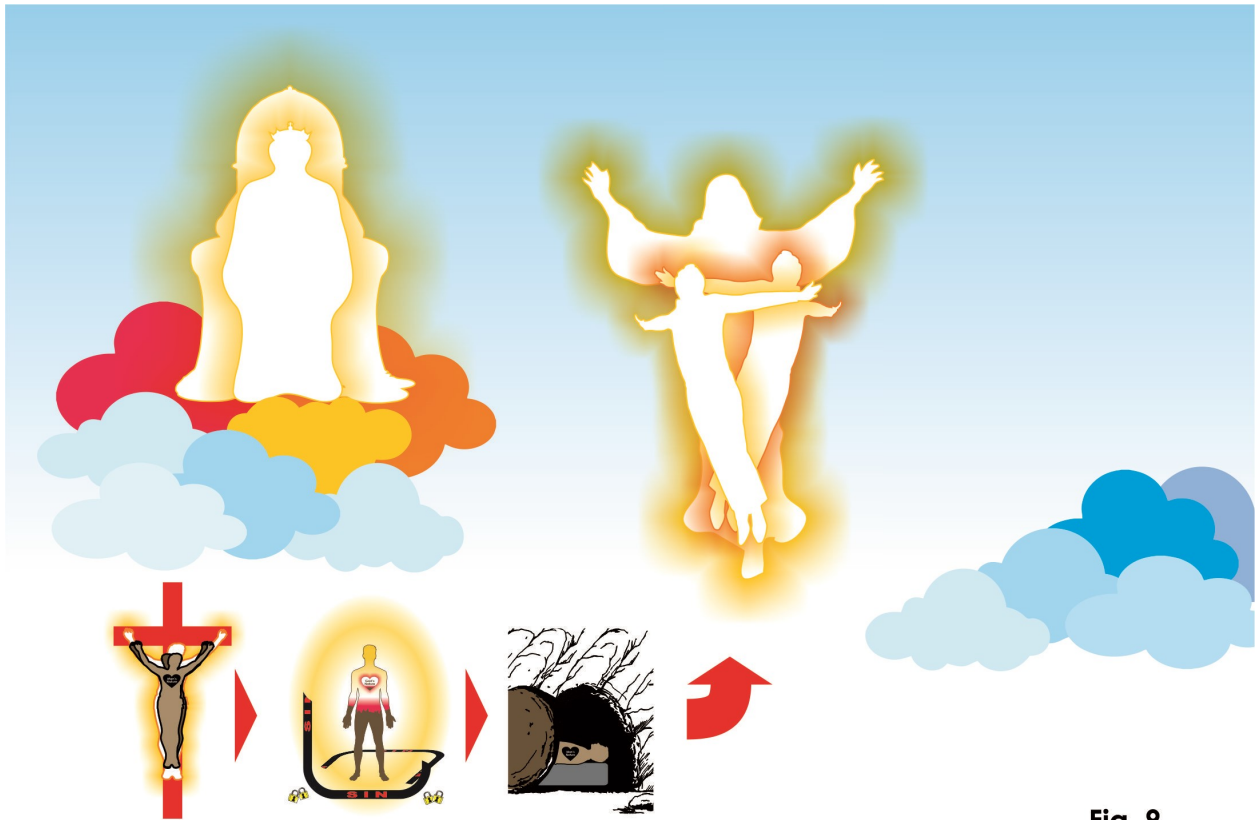


Fig. 9

If we are 'in Christ' - where is our real Home?

All this is a remarkable fact, and if we believe that we are seated in heavenly places in Christ, where do we truly live or have our permanent address?

The answer to this question should radically change our lives and Col. 3:1-4 and verse 10, hold the key.

OUR PERMANENT HOME IS IN HEAVENLY PLACES!

What does that make our earthly 'home'? **A TEMPORARY VISITING PLACE!** What does that make us? **VISITORS TO THE PLANET EARTH!** (Heb. 11:13-16). We are in effect citizens of another kingdom – a heavenly kingdom (Phil. 3:20-21).

We said that our faith maintains our glorified body in Christ. Rom. 1:17 tells us that we grow from “...faith to faith...” 2 Cor. 3:18 tells us that this same Gospel that takes us from faith to faith, will take us from “...glory to glory...” In other words our ever increasing faith will cause us to be the channel for God to perform many good works through us, the reward in heavenly places is the increasing glory of our glorified bodies there (1 Cor. 15:41; Dan. 12:3).

(In a future module, a more detailed teaching headed “REWARDS”, will give us a much better understanding of the above principle.)

If we believe this, why do we dig our earthly roots so deep? Why are we locked into debt and other earthly trappings?

How can we be sure that all this is true?

Firstly, it is true because God's word says it is. Secondly God knew that we would need proof of what He had promised us, so we would not become discouraged. This proof is a 'pledge' or 'down payment' on His commitment to us (2 Cor. 5:1-5; Eph. 1:13-14). We must see all that we have discussed as a covenant or contract in which His Spirit is the down payment (1 Jn. 4:13).

How can we prove that His Spirit is within us? (Rom. 8). Proof of His Spirit in us is evidence in our lifestyles:-

1. We have the power to say 'no' to sin (Rom. 8 vs. 11-13).
2. We have the power to say 'yes' to his will (Gal. 5:24-25; Rom. 8 vs.14; 1 Pet. 1:2)
3. We behave as members of god's family (Rom.8 vs. 14-17)

In the following module we shall look at the lifestyle that a Spirit filled believer should be living.

6. The Walk

In the last four modules we spoke about the loss mankind experienced in the Garden of Eden; How God in return restored all that man had lost, through Jesus, on the cross. We discussed the particular method that God used to bring all this about; Then we heard about God's wonderful guarantee of man's ultimate reward in heaven.

We must remain 'In Him'

What is of the utmost importance however, is the fact that we discovered that God's guarantee of restoration is dependent on how we walk in our Christian life here on Earth. We have seen that in the scriptures of Eph. 1:18-20 and 2 Cor. 5:17 that God's guarantee of restoration only applies if we remain **"in Him"** (Eph.2:6; 2Cor1:20).

What does "in Him" mean? It simply means how we behave as Christians here on Earth. In other words God needs to control our walk here on Earth until Jesus returns. (Ps.1:1-4)

God gives us Sight

This "walk" through life is entered into through a narrow gate (Matt. 7:13-14). But as we all know, it would be difficult to enter through something we can't see. So firstly God must grant us salvation (Jn. 6:44;65). Following this, when we become "born again" (Jn. 3:3), God places sight into us.

God gives us Power

Having sight is the result of being born again. But it is really only the beginning process. If, from a distance, we see a beautiful beach, with gentle waves washing down upon it, the first desire we have is to both walk on the beach and allow the waves to rush over our feet. If this be the case, do we just stand there looking and hoping that the beach will move toward us? No, of course not, we start to walk in the direction of the beach. Being born again is not a place that we "arrive" at and park there until Jesus comes. It's the place where we receive sight of the gate to the narrow walk of the Christian life.

What is God's Power?

John 3:5 tells us how we can **enter** through this gate onto the narrow road. We enter, through God's power alone. This power is found in, **"being born of water and Spirit"**.

From what we learned in the teaching on, "God's Method of Deliverance", we saw that God took our sinful nature and nailed it to the cross with Jesus. He then put it to death and finally buried it. **NEVER TO BE RESURRECTED EVER AGAIN!** (Rom. 6:3-4).

When we believe this truth, we are then **"...born of water..."**. Once we begin to desire and practice the gifts of the Holy Spirit (walking in, and being led by, the Holy Spirit), we are, **"...born of the Spirit..."**. This then is God's power.

His Power comes only from Faith

God's power, as we have discussed above does not come to us according to our educational standard or our experience in life, but simply by the fact that we believe (faith). Trying to imagine ourselves, for instance, being hung on a cross with Jesus some two thousand years ago is impossible! Therefore all we can do is believe, and if we can't believe we must pray to God and ask Him for the faith to believe. He will then give us this faith.

Heb.11:1 (KJV). We need to put into practice that which is evidence of things not seen. Our sinful nature was put to death on the cross so let's put that fact into practice!

Walk by Faith - not by Sight

We are commanded by God, not to be concerned by what we see, but rather to live our Christian life by what he tells us (2Cor. 5:7). In other words, we must live by faith. We must be absolutely firm regarding this matter of walking by faith (Heb. 3:6;14).

How do we remain firm in our walk? The truth of the matter is, that we, in our own strength will fail and never be able to be firm.

Remember—it is God's doing that we are 'In Christ' (1Cor.1:30).

We must Abide in Him

In every situation we should turn to the Lord for answers and encouragement (Isa.45:22). When we 'turn to Him' — we **ARE** saved.

If we abide in Him, He will cause us to remain firm (Jn. 15:5). We "abide in Him" by coming to Him daily in private prayer asking Him to live in us, to increase our love for Him.

Then together with our prayers we must systematically read the Bible. This will help us to come to know the nature and character of God.

Jesus says that we need to die to our selfish nature and then we will bear fruit for HIM (Jn.12:24). Paul confirms in Gal.2:20 that in our daily walk, we live for Christ's sake, not ours!

Furthermore, we are alive 'in Christ' and dead 'In Adam' (1Cor.15:22) **(Fig 1 and Fig 2)**

Obedience is the Evidence of Salvation

How can I tell that I am abiding in Him and living by faith?

1. We can very simply measure this by how **obedient** we have become to God's commands in our lives. Let us read the scriptures of Rom. 15:18-19, 16:25-26 for confirmation of this.
2. Furthermore, Jesus says that where there is no obedience, there is no salvation! Let us read the scriptures of Matt. 7:21; Rom. 8:14; John 3:36; 2 Thess. 1:6-8, to receive confirmation of this fact.

Is our Salvation Guaranteed?

Yes, but on only one basis. That we obey God. Those of us who disobey and do not turn away from sinful practices will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven if we die in that state, irrespective of whether we call ourselves Christian or not!

When we sin does it mean that somehow our sinful nature has resurrected? No, the Accuser fills our minds with thoughts of sin. Reject the thoughts and you won't sin!

(see module on, "Why do I still sin?").

THE OLD MAN

Gen.5:3

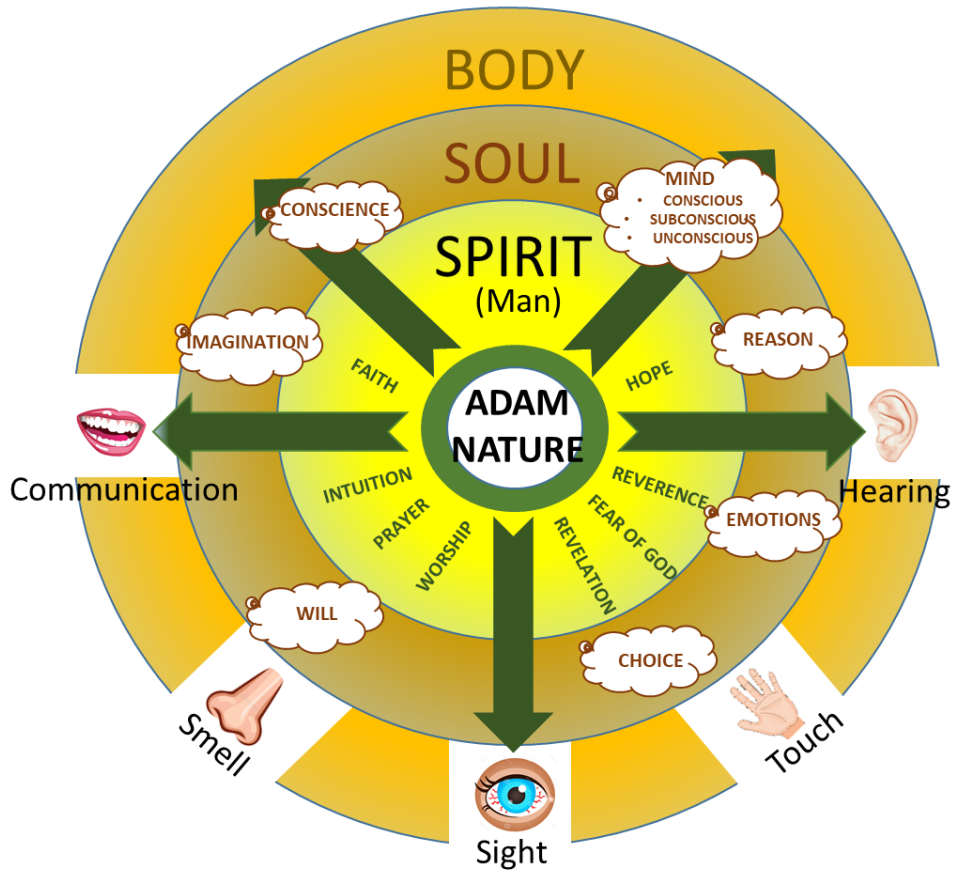


Fig 1

THE NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

Rom.6:5-6

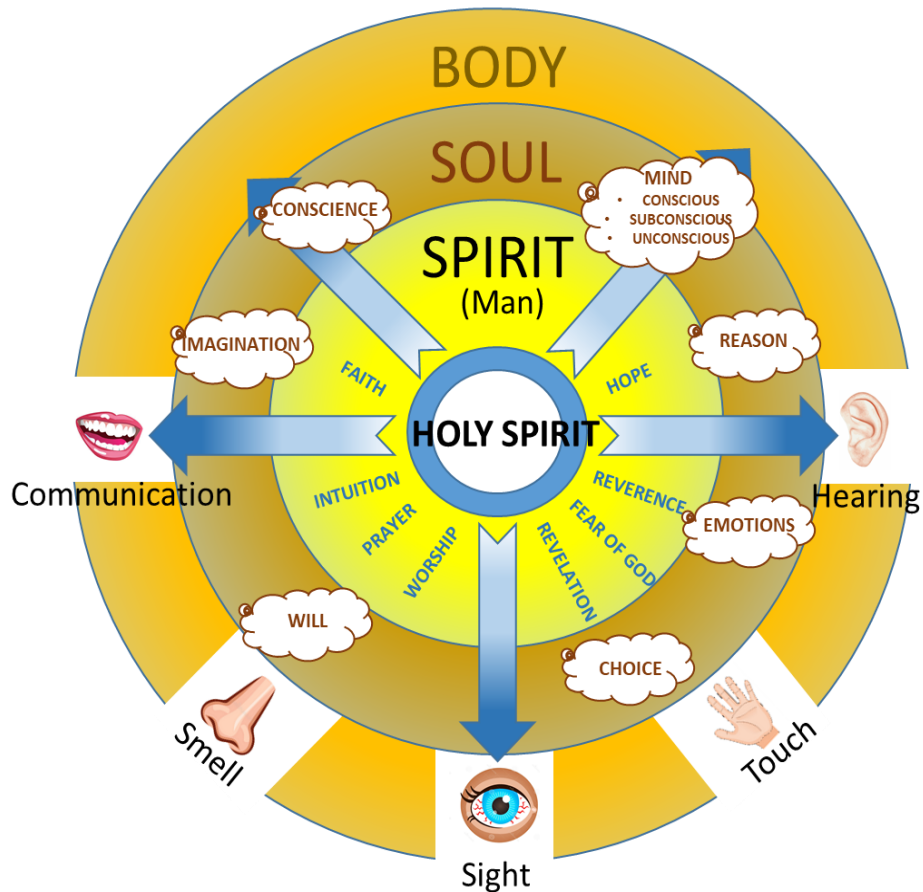


Fig 2

THE DAILY TRANSFORMATION

Col.3:1; 2Cor.3:18; Phil.2:12

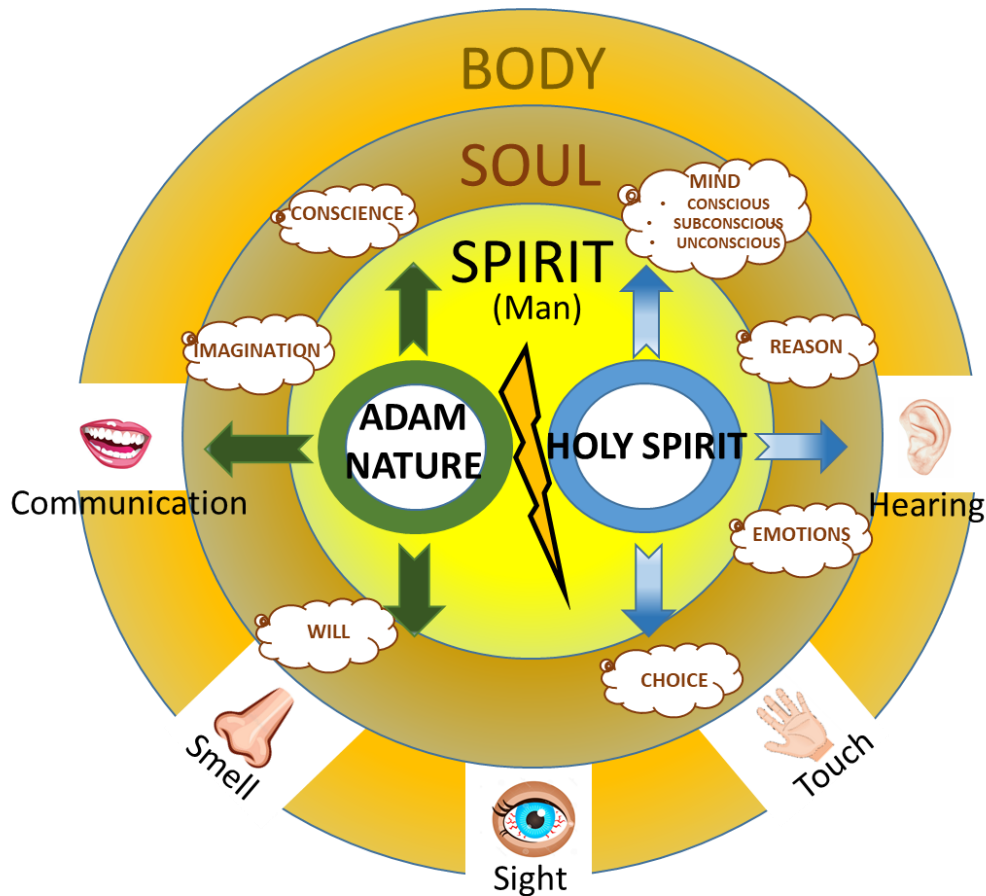


Fig 3

Rom 8:5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.

Rom 8:6 If your sinful nature controls your mind, there is death. But if the Holy Spirit controls your mind, there is life and peace.

Rom 8:7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will.

Rom 8:8 That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God.

Rom 8:9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them are not Christians at all.)

Rom 8:10 Since Christ lives within you, even though your body will die because of sin, your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God.

Rom 8:11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you.

Rom 8:12 So, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation whatsoever to do what your sinful nature urges you to do.

Rom 8:13 For if you keep on following it, you will perish. But if through the power of the Holy Spirit you turn from it and its evil deeds, you will live.

Rom 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

7. What is Baptism all about?

*"Well then, shall we keep on sinning so that God can keep on showing us more and more kindness and forgiveness? Of course not! Should we keep on sinning when we don't have to? For sin's power over us was broken when we became Christians and were baptised to become part of Jesus Christ. **Through His death the power of your sinful nature was shattered.** Your old sin-loving nature was buried with Him by baptism when He died and when God the father, with glorious power, brought Him back to life again, you were given this wonderful new life to enjoy. For you have become part of Him, and so you died with Him, so to speak, when He died, and now you share His new life and shall rise as He did. Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with Him, that part of you that loves, to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, **no longer needs to be a slave to sin..**"*

(Rom.6:1-6 LB).

Baptism - An Outward Sign

Baptism is no more than an outward sign of what a Christian believes in their heart.

Once we have read the scripture above, we know what every believer should hold in their heart. Jesus knew that it would be the desire of many of us to share the good things that we experience with others...even more so our experience of salvation.

Our 'Sin-Loving' Nature was buried with Him

When we get baptised we are saying to the world:

1. My old sin-loving nature died with Jesus (Rom. 6 vs. 3);
2. My old sin-loving nature was buried with Jesus (Rom.6 vs. 4);
3. My new nature has been resurrected with Him (Rom.6 vs. 4).

The old one has been buried, never to rise again!

When should I be Baptised?

The time for baptism is firstly, once I believe what Romans 6 says, namely, that Jesus died to give me power to say 'no' to sin and 'yes' to His will (Acts. 8:12).

Secondly, when I have decided that I want to change my lifestyle (repent) (Acts 2:36-38).

It can be very clearly seen from Romans 6 that this is the reason for being baptised and anyone therefore, who does not both, believe and repent, cannot be baptised.

How do I get Baptised?

Jesus showed us how we were to be baptised. Mark 1:9-10 says that He came 'up out of the water'. Matthew 28:19 says that we must be baptised, "...in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". So each of us must be bodily dipped, once only, in water, and this must be done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19), or in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38, 8:12).

Can Baptism save me?

Does the physical act of baptism have the power to save a person? **No!** The physical act of going under the water cannot save a person. It is the realization (by revelation of the Holy Spirit) of the death and burial of our old self that gives us the power to say 'no' to sin. If we look at the scripture of Ephesians 2:8-9, we will see that we are saved, "...by grace through faith...not by works...". The physical act of Baptism is a work, it can't save us.

Why must I be Baptised?

Why is it necessary to be baptised? Very simply, because God has commanded us to be baptised. In both Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:16, we are told to be baptised. Jesus Himself said that for the sake of fulfilling all righteousness HE allowed John to baptize Him (Matt. 3:15). In addition to this, James, in Jas.2:20-26 tells us that, "...faith without works is useless..." remember, we said that Baptism is a work.

What is a 'Work'?

Perhaps it would be good to explain a little more about "works" at this point. Our understanding of works should be this: Anything we do as a result of our faith (belief in Jesus) is a good work (in other words something acceptable to God). Anything we do that is not because of faith is a man-made work, and is not pleasing to God. A good example is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). All these come about because His Spirit lives in us (a result of our faith).

Must I Baptise my Baby?

Can an infant be baptised? No, - it is completely as we saw in the beginning of this teaching from Romans 6, - when we are baptised we are really saying, "I believe my old sinful nature died with Jesus, and I have been resurrected with Him, therefore I will turn away from my old lifestyle and live for Him". No infant can ever make this statement, nor in fact needs to, because whilst they have a sinful nature, they have not as yet sinned! (They will be able to sin as they grow older).

Many people used to baptise their babies, because they were worried about what would happen to them if they died. Jesus tells us not to be concerned about this, because little children have angels that stand constantly in the presence of God (Matt. 18:10).

Who can Baptise me?

Making disciples is the responsibility of every believer. Jesus tells us in Matt.28:19-20 to "...make disciples... baptizing them...and teaching them" – by His authority.

Therefore anyone who has had revelation of the true meaning of Baptism and bears fruit of it in their lives is able to baptize others.

What about proxy and re-baptism?

Can a person be baptised on behalf of another? No (1 Cor.15:29). Can a person be baptized again? Yes, if they were baptised in any other way, other than what we spoke about in the beginning.

8. Forgiveness

(A Godly Principle—Mark 11:25-26)

There are many hindrances in our lives today that are restricting the work that God would like to do in us. The biggest single area in this respect is that of our relationships with others (Acts 2:42-47; Acts 5:12-16)

Love your Neighbour

We are commanded by God to "...love your neighbour..." (Matt.22:39) Jesus says this is one of the two most important commandments (Matt.22:40).

Luke 10:29-37 — who is our neighbor?

This is so because only in unity is true power found. This is witnessed in the power of the Acts church (Acts 2:42-47). It was certainly the result of the prayer of Jesus in John 17:20-26. When we have unity we harness a great source of power.

It is not difficult to see why God commanded us to love one another. In doing this, unity would be achieved, and the power of the living God would be witnessed in our lives.

Strong Relationships are the Foundation of a Church with Power

This unity and its fruit, power, was found in the church of Acts, who clearly experienced the 'fullness of Christ' (Eph. 1:22b-23). The key to this unity was, strong relationships.

Why is it that, knowing this, we somehow cannot reach that place of true unity and its fruit of power? Because we are unable to cultivate strong and lasting relationships with one another. What causes this situation?

Relationships are Founded on a Commitment to Transparency

The 'root of bitterness' is the biggest single cause in the failure of relationships in the church today. The root of bitterness has a family tree consisting of many branches:- anger, resentment, unforgiveness, bitterness just to name a few.

The root of bitterness family is the chief block to transparency in our relationships with one another. It must be said here that no transparency, and resulting relationship, can ever come about, in any event, without us first being committed to a relationship with God (John 15:5).

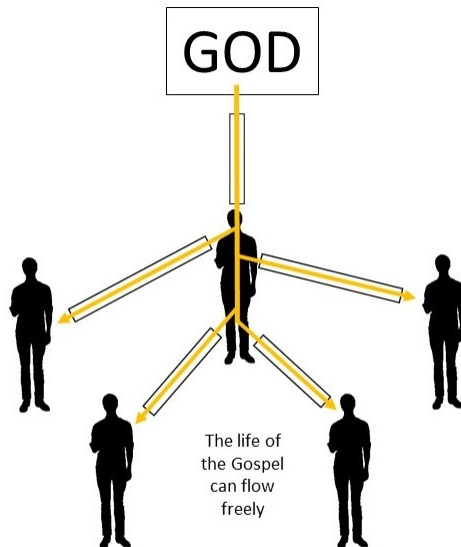
As we grow closer to God we desire transparent relationships with one another. Transparency comes as we obey what God tells us to do. His word tells us how to deal with the hindrances that limit our relationships.

A Relationship with God opens up Relationships with others

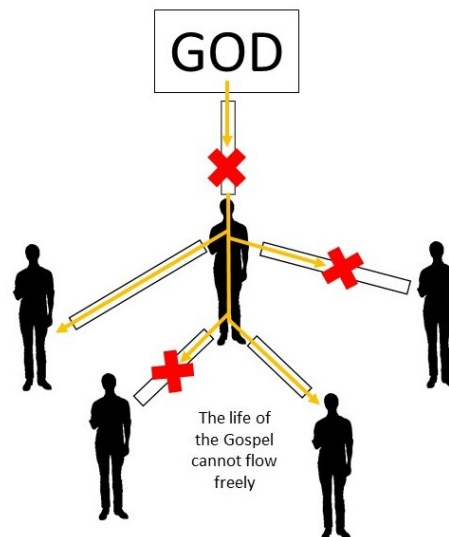
Mark 11:25-26 (KJV) and Matt. 18:35, tells us that we will never have any kind of relationship with God or one another unless we are quick to forgive. Next we see that not only are we robbed of a relationship with God, when we don't forgive, but even more, we effect the lives of others, because we cannot impart life to them. (Matt.28:19).

Life is the Gospel, the testimony of the work that the Gospel has done in our lives, is the life that we can pass on (Matt. 16:19; 18:18).

In Matt. 18:18, we see the promised outworking of Mark 11:26. Where, if we don't forgive, God does not forgive us. Accordingly the matter becomes both bound on earth (in the relationship) and in heaven by God. In addition to which it opens the doors for all kinds of negative influence in the lives of those involved in the relationship.



The Path of God's forgiveness through us to those around us
Mark 11:25-26



The Path of God's forgiveness is broken through us if we do not forgive others—Mark 11:25-26

Matt. 18:23-35 shows us that the thoughts of the unforgiven situation will 'torture' us until they are dealt with.

There are no loopholes in the necessity for forgiveness as far as God is concerned. Matt. 5:23-24 tells us that even where we have forgiven, we need to ask for forgiveness if someone has anything against us. It is not good enough for us to say that we have nothing against another, if they do hold something against us.

Obey His Word, never Talk about Others

The biggest single area in the failure of relationships is the area of dealing with the 'splinter in my brothers eye'. When we see another sinning, toward us or another, or just to himself, we must adopt the only solution - God's word. Matt. 18:15-17. Many abuse this procedure, by either not using it at all, or using it partially. Either way the results are devastating.

The scripture commands us to go to a sinning brother in private. If he repents, all is well, if he does not repent, do not discuss it with another, but take another with you and again consult him in private. If this effort still fails take the elders of the church with you to resolve the issue. If this fails, you will win him with your love and prayers (as is the case with heathens and publicans).

It is most important for us all to realize that if we leave out any of the steps in this scriptural procedure, our efforts will fail and God's will is not done!

Is Confession Essential to Forgiveness?

In Cor. 11:28, Paul says that we should examine ourselves before partaking of the communion meal. He warns that if we do not it could invoke dire consequences. This 'examination' is not saying one has to confess one's sins. It's another way of saying, "Make sure you are in right relationship with your neighbour, before taking part in the communion meal".

(More will be discussed in this regard in the module on the communion meal). The only requirement for forgiveness is repentance. (Luke 17:3-4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22).

Why are we told to Confess our Sins?

Scripture is profoundly wise, knows all things and in no way is ever contradictory, even by implication. In James 5:15-16 and 1 John.1:9 we were told to confess our sins.

In the instance of the scripture in James, he is linking the position of illness to the state of sin. Even as did Jesus when he said, "Go, and sin no more". (John 5:14).

In old Testament scriptures, we see that in certain cases sickness and disease were linked to sin. (2 Kgs. 5:27; 2 Chron. 21:18-19; Mic. 6:13).

Therefore where we harbour bitterness, anger and unforgiveness for long periods we can be the unwitting victims of sickness and disease.

In addition to this where we abuse our bodies through lust (sin), we suffer late consequences.

An example of such a situation would be the case of a person who was a heavy smoker and even although he repents from this, when he becomes saved, he contracts emphysema and suffers much as a result.

Therefore James counsels us to confess our faults (sins) one to another, in order that forgiveness, along with its healing effect, can take its course.

Confession of our sins to God, on a daily basis, is a scriptural guarantee that not only will our sins be forgiven (on account of our repentance in confessing) but our minds will be renewed from all the unrighteousness connected to the sins (1 John 1:9).

Is it necessary to search our minds and confess all the sin of our past? No, it is not necessary, for God said, "Remember not the things of the past..." (Is. 43:18-19) and Paul said, "...forgetting those things which are behind..." (Phil.3:13). Also see Gen.19:26. If you repent you will be forgiven for all your past sins.

How often do we Forgive?

Therefore the only requirement for forgiveness is repentance and to forgive others.

Matt. 18:21-22, 35 there can never be any limit to our forgiveness of others. The heart of this matter is to pray earnestly for those who appear unrepentant, that they might turn before it is too late.

Forgiveness is a decision we must make (1 Cor.13:4-5)

9. Communion or The Lord's Supper

1 Cor. 11:23-24

Where did The Lord's Supper originate?

The first record in the New Testament of the celebration of the communion meal, was the last supper.

The first record in the Old testament of the celebrating of the communion meal was in Gen. 14:18-19. Melchizedek is a character of mystery, (who in fact is Jesus. Heb. 7:1-3), celebrates the meal, in demonstration to Abram of a new covenant to come.

Jesus, in Jewish tradition, celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples on the night before He was betrayed. This meal was celebrated by all Jews, and is still celebrated to this day by orthodox Jews.

They celebrated it to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt (Exo.12:12-14). In the original physical meal the blood of a spotless lamb was shed and it's blood smeared on the doorposts of those who obeyed God. The angel of death passed over the homes of those smeared with blood, and ultimately they were delivered from bondage and freed to go to the Promised Land.

What does the Lord's Supper signify in the New Testament?

This meal was to celebrate a shadow of the deliverance of a sinner of salvation, under the New Covenant.

The Israelites were delivered by the blood of the spotless lamb (Born again - John 3:3). They were led by Moses through the Red Sea ("born of water" John 3:5; 1 Cor. 10:1-2) and they followed a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night ("born of the spirit" - John 3:5; 1 Cor. 10:1-2).

During the course of the traditional Jewish celebration meal, three pieces of unleavened bread were placed at the head of the table. These were accepted by all Jews to represent Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In 1 Cor. 11:24 Jesus explodes this myth and tells His disciples that, "...this is my body...". He is saying that He is the unleavened bread (leavened stands for hypocrisy and evil), furthermore He is saying that the three pieces represent the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

He is also demonstrating that:

1. **His body will be broken for them on the cross, thereby destroying the body of sin** (Adam Nature) that has held mankind captive for four thousand years! (mankind's body of sin will be broken releasing them from bondage to sin) (Rom 6:6).

He then commands them to, "...do this in remembrance of me..." (1Cor.11:24). Notice something important here, He is saying that we 'do' to remember, not think to remember. The collective brains of a thousand genius's could not 'think' or imagine what happened to Jesus on the cross. We are simply commanded to "do" and in this way, spiritually speaking, we will remember Him.

2. 1Cor.11:25 Jesus tells us, "...this is my blood...", He is saying that His blood would usher in the new Covenant - **in order that our sins, past, present and future might be washed away** (Eph 1:7).

Why should we Celebrate the Lord's Supper Today?

We should celebrate this meal together because Jesus said we are a testimony of the great work the cross when we partake. (1Cor.11:26) and secondly, because we have been commanded to do so (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

How often should we do this?

As often as we are led by His Spirit to do so. The church of Acts did it continually and daily (Acts 2:42-46).

Who ministers the Elements?

Any believer who is led by the Spirit to do so. There is a wrong teaching that the elements are sacred. This is completely untrue. They are nothing more than wafers of unleavened bread and grape juice. There is certainly nothing sacred about these.

Believers did it themselves in their homes, on any day they wanted and as often as they were led. There were no "priests, pastors or elders" in the early days of the Acts church. There were only 12 Apostles, who could never logistically have ministered elements to some 8,000 believers, (a conservative estimate), daily!

Some say that the elements are sacred because somehow they become the physical body and blood of Jesus! This is heretical, (Matt. 26:26-29) as it would mean that we crucify Christ afresh every time we partake of the communion meal (Heb 6:6; 7:27).

Who may partake of this meal?

1. No non-believer should partake in this meal. It would be pointless – what would a non-believer celebrate?

2. No person who is in wrong standing with any members of the body ('unworthy' - 1 Cor. 11:27).

Such a one must "examine" himself first (vs. 28) to see if he is guilty of "not discerning of Lord's body..." (vs. 29).

Paul exhorts us to make right our relationships among the members of the body first, then come to the supper table. If we don't we may well eat and drink damnation upon ourselves, the result of which is sickness and in some cases - death (vs. 29-30).

It is good to know here that this letter from Paul to the Corinthians comes in the form of rebuke for their relationship problems (1 Cor. 1:11; 11:17-18).

Must I Confess my Sins before partaking?

Not necessarily. The basis of the forgiveness of sin is repentance (Acts 2:38). Some erroneously believe that we have need to confess sins before communion, because of what Paul says in 1 Cor. 11:28, "...examine yourselves...". This has already been explained above. If forgiveness were only based on confession, then this might be wise, but it is not.

10. What does being 'Born Again' mean?

John 3:3-5

Most Christians who are asked the question, "Why must be I born again?", would reply, "To have eternal life!". Or if they are asked, "What does being born again give a person?", equally they will respond that one receives eternal life from being born again. This is of course not true.

'Born Again' gives sight only

John 3:3 will tell us that being born again gives us sight of the Kingdom of God. What is sight of the Kingdom of God? It very simply means that we receive the return of that which our father, Adam had in the Garden of Eden. Namely, the realization that God truly exists. We see His great holiness and we see our sinfulness, by comparison. We see that Satan exists with the sole purpose to pull us away from God by tempting us to sin.

Where is the Kingdom of God? Luke 17:21 says that it is within us. God reigning in our lives. 'Sight' is our awareness of the fact that God is now within us.

How do I become Born Again?

How does one become born again? The answer is that we don't 'become born again', God alone grants us this gift (John. 6:44; 65). In His time He places His Spirit within us, which then allows us to be born again and the scales fall off our spiritual 'eyes'.

Has this got anything to do with praying the 'sinners' prayer, or 'making a commitment to Jesus'? NO!

Although having said 'no' it is important to mention that when God places His Spirit within us it could well result in such a prayer being prayed. Often we are led to get others to, "pray the sinner's prayers" or "make a commitment to Jesus" either the folk that we lead to pray this prayer respond by showing the signs of being born again, or they drift on without any change. One thing becomes apparent - what God wills (Rom 9:16). Once He places His spirit in a person, that is when they become born again, that is when they will conscientiously or unconscientiously seek for the things of God.

This is as far as being born again will take us...to the place of seeking. Whilst it will put us in sight of the narrow gate, it will not allow us to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 7:3-14).

How do I enter the Kingdom of God?

What then allows us to enter?

John 3:5 gives us the answer. Jesus said we must be 'born of water and the Spirit' before we can enter. Let us look at what Jesus was saying to Nicodemus, the Pharisee, when He made this statement.

Not a Human Experience

When Jesus said that a man needs to be born again, Nicodemus, thinking like a man, was confused. He associated the expression with human birth. Jesus said (vs.6), that humans will give birth to other humans, but He (Jesus), was not speaking about human matters, but rather those relating to the Kingdom of God (vs.12). In other words that which he was saying could only be grasped by Godly revelation and not by intellect (vs.10).

Let us summarize then, Jesus says that we have to be born again, Nicodemus says this can't be done, Jesus responds that He is not speaking about earthly matters, but rather spiritual matters. He then goes on to tell Nicodemus that even he, as clever as he is, would not understand, in the intellect, that which can only be revealed by Godly revelation.

Born of Water

What does 'born of water' mean? Firstly, let us look at the word 'born'. The Greek word here is 'gennao' which comes from 'genos' which means from the kin of, kind, generation, offspring, stock etc. It does not refer to human birth. The word for human birth is 'gennetos' as in Luke 7:28, "...born of woman...". So let us for convenience use the word 'offspring' in the place of 'born'.

The fleshly being can never 'enter' the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50, 1 Pet. 1:23).

What does 'water' stand for then? The Greek word here is 'hudatos' from 'huo' - to rain, a shower. We summarize then that to be born of water is to be a cleansed offspring. Cleansed of what? Sin of course!

Cleansed from Sin by Faith

From our previous teachings we discovered that we are cleansed from sin by 'grace through faith' (Eph. 2:8-9). This was done by believing that we had been 'baptized' into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus on the cross (Rom 6:3-4).

To understand a little more about what this 'baptism' means let us go to 1 Pet. 3:20-21.

Peter says, "eight souls were saved by water...", he continues, "...even as baptism does for us today...", but he hastens to add, "not the physical act of being immersed in water, but by believing that our old sinful nature has been put to death with Jesus on the cross".

Born of Spirit

What does 'born of Spirit' mean? Simply, an offspring of people coming from the Holy Spirit. If we are born of parents whose name is Smith, then we are known as the 'Smiths' coming from an offspring of Smith. Born of the Spirit implies the same thing. Romans. 8:1-27 describes the characteristics of those who are born of the Spirit. In short we became the children of God (vs.16).

11. Why do I still Sin?

Romans 6:1-2

My Sinful Nature is Dead and Buried Forever

If my old sinful nature died with Christ, why do I still sin? Does my old sinful nature resurrect often during the day, thus causing me to sin?

Romans. 6:3-4. Each one of us must understand, with absolutely no doubt whatsoever, that our old sinful natures can never be resurrected, they have been buried forever!

Now, if our sinful nature has been buried, why do we still sin?

My new Heart desires only to serve God

We saw from the teachings on the Gospel of Jesus, that the death and burial of our sinful nature with Jesus, was likened to a heart transplant operation. Burial signifies the removal of the old diseased heart, and resurrection the implanting of the new heart. A heart with new and rightful desires. A heart that does not desire to sin, but rather wants to do the right of God (Eze. 36:26-27).

Where does the struggle take place then? If we don't want to sin but end up sinning anyway, what is happening to us?

The Battle is in the Mind

Let's go to Romans 7:23-24. The answer lies in the mind. Satan has no power on earth, except the power to tempt people. He cannot force them to sin. Is:54:16-17 say that God created Satan for the purpose of refining us, and he does this by tempting us to sin.

If we no longer have an old nature that desires to sin, then how will Satan succeed in getting us to sin?

By lying to us in our minds. The method he uses is to place a thought in our minds and wait until we accept the thought. Once we accept the thought, we are sinning, even if it has not yet had the chance to become an action.

Romans 8:6 warns us that such thoughts will result in spiritual death (separation from God in other words). But if we keep our minds filled with spiritual thoughts, then we will experience life.

Submission to God - Renewal of the Mind

James 4:7 tells us that resistance to Satan begins with submission to God. What is this submission? It is allowing our minds to become like the mind of Jesus (Phil 2:5).

This is what is called renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:2). As our minds become renewed, we not only become resistant to the thoughts that Satan places in our minds, but we also come to the place where we understand God's will!

A mind which is a thought channel for sin, can never at the same time be a channel for God's will. A mind that is a channel for sin, is blinded to God's will (2 Cor. 4:4).

How do I Renew my Mind?

Can I renew my mind? No! Only the Holy Spirit can renew our minds. But our behaviour is very important because this will limit His work in us, as far as the renewing of our mind is concerned. In other words, the Holy Spirit can only renew our minds as far as we are willing to let Him do so.

1 Confess your Sins

The first step we need to take is, to daily confess our sins to God. His promise to us, if we do this is, "...He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness". This means the following:-

We are forgiven our sins; We are cleansed from all unrighteousness.

2 Read your Bible

Step two, we must be washed by the word of God. In other words, we must systematically read our Bibles every day.

3 Pray Daily

Step three, we need to pray every day, alone with God, and as often as we can with other Christians.

4 Guard your Mind

Step four, we must be very careful what we allow our minds to receive each and every day. Be careful of what you read – worldly newspapers and magazines. Be careful of worldly television and movies. All these are designed by Satan to destroy the ability of your mind to be renewed.

NOTES