

# *The Doctrines of Christ*

*A Message from Jesus Christ*

Through His Friend  
Joseph M. Smith

*The Doctrines of Christ*  
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## **The Doctrines of Jesus Christ**

If someone were to ask you what you believe, could you tell him the basic foundation of your faith?

Where does your church or denomination get its teachings and doctrines?

We encounter such diverse views concerning what one church or denomination holds to be doctrine versus what another group finds to be wrong or offensive. Why does Christianity have such differences?

Nearly all groups calling themselves Christian worship the same God and Father and have the same Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Most claim to embrace the identical Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God.

Why can't all of us have the same doctrines and beliefs?

How can you know if you have the doctrines that Jesus Christ taught?

The Body of Christ, the Church of the Living God, is, "...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*" (Eph. 2:20).

Let's examine the Word of God together and find the doctrines established by Jesus.

Where, in the Word of God, can we look to find a brief summary of the doctrines of Christ? In Hebrews we discover information hidden from the eyes of a casual reader. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into a good understanding of the true doctrines Jesus Christ brought.

In Hebrews 6:1-2 we read, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, [7] let us go on unto perfection; not laying again [1] the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of [2] faith toward God, [3] the doctrine of baptisms, and of [4] laying on of hands, and of [5] resurrection of the dead, and of [6] eternal judgment."

Wow! Now that is a concise outline of the doctrines of Jesus Christ as delivered to the apostles. Let's study these points and you can determine how closely they compare with what you have been taught.

### **First Doctrine of Christ: The Foundation of Repentance from Dead Works**

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel!" (Mark 1:14-15).

We see that, at the onset of Christ's ministry, He started preaching about the Kingdom of God and encouraging everyone to **repent** and to believe the gospel—the good news of the Kingdom of God.

## What Does it Mean to Repent?

Many think repenting means merely being sorry or feeling sorrowful for the bad deeds they have done. Often that bad feeling only comes from being caught! This is not the repentance Jesus taught.

There is a huge difference between worldly anguish over having one's sins discovered by others and deep, Godly repentance. "For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death" (II Cor. 7:10 NLT).

Simply feeling sad about our sins is not what God wants. There is a great difference between feeling bad and repentance. To grasp repentance, we must know what constitutes sin. After we recognize sin for what it is, then we must know to Whom we should repent.

## What is Sin?

Let's discover what sin is. God has set guidelines by which humans are to live. John has said, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for **sin is the transgression of the law**" (I John 3:4). But we also come to realize that, "...by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for **by the law is the knowledge of sin**" (Rom. 3:20). Paul further explained that, if there was no law, there would be no transgression. (See Rom. 4:15).

Christians, under the New Covenant, are to live by faith in Jesus Christ and to follow His example. That is, to abide by the spiritual intent and the magnification of those laws. James, the brother of Jesus, said, "Therefore **to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin**" (Jas. 4:17). And the Apostle Paul said of believers that, "**...whatsoever is not of faith is sin**" (Rom. 14:23).

So, you see, "...the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

And Jesus went on to say, "The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in Me" (John 16:9 NLT).

Now we know and understand what sin is. Our repentance must be focused toward God. It is only God that can forgive us of all our sins!

By reading the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ in writing, we grow in our relationship with

the Father. Jesus said, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). So, as we learn more and more about God and our Lord Jesus Christ, we grow in awe of them. This deepens our humility and repentance.

## **Repentance from Dead Works**

What does it mean to repent of dead works?

John the Baptist put it this way, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8). Dead works are all efforts done or accomplished through the flesh, that is, with fleshly, carnal-minded desires and motives without direction of the Holy Spirit. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25).

Our natural desires lead to death. Doing what feels good or comes naturally, without regard to God and His laws, leads to death. "You can enter God's Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it" (Matt. 7:13-14 NLT).

We are to repent of our former way of life apart from God. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:5-8). It is only after the Holy Spirit is working in our lives that our efforts have any lasting value. Once we have the Holy Spirit functioning in us, we can then produce fruit that is pleasing to God.

"Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God" (Matt. 3:8 NLT).

## **How Does a Person Repent?**

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (Jas. 4: 7-10).

God said in Isaiah 66:2, "...to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." Our humility and repentance must be toward God. He alone can forgive sin. We must humble ourselves as little children in God's presence. We must be teachable and yielded to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Jesus said, "...Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of

God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein” (Luke 18:16-17).

Part of repentance toward God means to stop thinking that you have all the answers, that you are always right, and that you don't need God in your life. “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Prov. 3:7). For, “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *His commandments*: His praise endureth for ever” (Psa. 111:10).

An excellent example of wholehearted repentance is found in Psalm 51. David said, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, *and* be clear when Thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in [into] sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* Thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* Thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me *with Thy* free spirit. *Then* will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: *and* my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness. O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise. For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Psa. 51:1-17).

You see, with this heart, God is well-pleased. The Lord said David was, “...a man after Mine own heart...” (Acts 13:22; I Sam. 13:14). David, during his lifetime, did everything in a wholehearted way. When he sinned, he sinned big but when he repented, he did so with his entire being. God wants us to be filled with zeal and enthusiasm in every facet of our relationship with Him.

This repentance is not a one-time event! It is the attitude God wants from us in our lifelong relationship with Him!

## **Second Doctrine of Christ: Faith toward God**

Where does one get faith? Faith to believe can only come from God. This faith is not something we can decide to work up or develop on our own. Jesus said, “No man can come to Me, **except the Father which hath sent Me draw him**: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44). We can't even have faith in God unless He grants it!

It is the Father that gives us the faith to believe. He draws us to the saving knowledge of His Son—Jesus Christ. It is the Father that implants the Holy Spirit within us as we come to accept the shed blood of Jesus to cover all our sins.

So, we see that it is the Father that leads us to repent of our sin and gives us the faith to believe.

But how does a person grow in faith? The apostles also wanted to know. “And the apostles said unto the Lord, ‘**Increase our faith.**’ And the Lord said, ‘If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, “Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea”; and it should obey you. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, “Go and sit down to meat”? And will not rather say unto him, “Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink”? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, **when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, “We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do”**” (Luke 17:5-10).

The point Christ is making here is that **we increase our faith by responding to and doing the will of the Father!** We are to go above and beyond the minimum we are told to do. **To obey God and do what pleases Him gives us great boldness, confidence, and increases our faith!**

Faith also comes through studying the Word of God. The Apostle Paul wrote, “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). By studying the Bible, we come to better understand the will of the Father in our lives. As we continue to grow in our faith, Paul further encourages us to, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15).

Have faith in God! Do you realize that, “**...without faith *it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him***” (Heb. 11:6).

We can’t expect God to deliver on His promises if we don’t believe and trust in what He says! Faith in God to do what He says He will do is paramount to building a relationship with Him. If we don’t have confidence and rely on God to deliver on His words and promises, then we won’t believe the Gospel of the Kingdom of God either!

We are instructed to, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5).

Jesus Christ our Lord had FAITH in the Father and OBEYED by following all His commands!

## **Increased Faith through Fellowship**

Our faith is strengthened through the study of God's word (the Bible). But it is also increased as we fellowship together. In I John 1:3 we see, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." When we fellowship, we are communing with our Father and Jesus Christ in one another. This increases our joy and faith in God. In the book of Hebrews we are also instructed, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

## **Faith through Remembering The Sacrifice of Christ**

Part of the doctrine of Faith toward God is that of the Communion Service. This service was established by Jesus Christ to remind us of His sacrifice for our sins. It was to be part of our fellowshiping together. The Apostle Paul explained it this way, "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (I Cor. 11:23-26 NKJV). It is through sharing this sacrifice of Christ that we increase our faith toward God and we are united in the Body of Christ.

## **Third Doctrine of Christ: The Doctrine of Baptisms**

What does it mean to be baptized? And why does it speak about more than one baptism?

It is so beautiful to be able to look into the Word of God and find, preserved for us, the answers to these questions.

John the Baptist came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

"The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke:16). During the time of the Old Covenant, baptism was never mentioned. But from the time John came bringing a message to repent, a new era had begun—the Kingdom of God was at hand.

With this repentance comes a public confession of our sins and the outward sign of baptism to show that we have renounced sin in our lives and have turned to God.

It is explained as follows in the New Living Translation from the book of Mark, “This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began just as the prophet Isaiah had written: ‘Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, “Prepare the way for the LORD’s coming! Clear the road for Him!””

“This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had turned to God to receive forgiveness for their sins” (Mark 1:1-4).

This doctrine of baptisms was introduced by the Holy Spirit through John and was part of the New Covenant. **Jesus validated its authenticity by coming to John to be baptized.** Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God in a human body, was baptized. Are we better than Jesus by thinking we don’t need to be baptized?

When Jesus was about to leave the disciples and return to the Father, He instructed them about their commission, “...All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:18-20).

We have been called to follow Jesus, “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps” (I Pet. 2:21).

### **What is the Proper Method of Baptism?**

There has been much controversy, over the centuries, about the proper method of baptism. Some support the idea of child sprinkling as the right and approved way to baptize. Others feel pouring water over the head of the one being baptized is the acceptable procedure. Still others find evidence to support their belief in full submersion as the true way to be baptized.

So, what does the Bible tell us about how a person should be baptized? In the book of John we read, “After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judaea; and there He tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized” (John 3:22-23). “...And [they] were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins” (Mark 1:5).

We see that Christ’s disciples and John the Baptist were baptizing in this area because there was much water there. If we sprinkle or pour a little water over the head of the one being baptized, there would be no need to have much water. This is a clear indication of submersion as the proper form of baptism.

Jesus Himself didn't baptize but His disciples did (John 4:2).

The word "baptize" means to immerse or to dip (a person) into water. In Greek, the word means to make fully wet.

"Therefore we are buried [under water] with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (Rom. 6:4-8).

In Ephesus the Apostle Paul found a group of men that had some knowledge about being baptized, yet their understanding was not complete. "He said unto them, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' And they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.' And he said unto them, 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' And they said, 'Unto John's baptism.' Then said Paul, 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.' When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them**; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:2-6).

Sometimes those being baptized have not received the Holy Spirit because they either have not been baptized in the name of and by the authority of Jesus, or they have not had hands laid upon them by another converted Christian who has asked the Father to give the Holy Spirit to them. This was the situation with those believers Paul met in Ephesus.

Today many are being baptized, sprinkled, or doused with water, yet they have not received the gift of the Holy Spirit. For those who were sprinkled or had water poured over them, it was not baptism as set forth by John the Baptist and Jesus. In other cases, there has been no repentance or rejection of one's former way of life. Many have come, "just as I am" and have repented of nothing! Yet God says He gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey Him (Acts 5:32). Jesus said, "...why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Obedience is required for salvation! Obedience is necessary before God gives the Holy Spirit and without the Spirit we will not have eternal life!

## Childhood Baptism

What about babies and children being baptized? Many come to ministers or servants of Jesus Christ asking if their childhood baptism was valid. First, it is necessary to ask a few questions:

- (1) At the age of “baptism,” did you have the knowledge of sin?
- (2) Did you repent of your sins?
- (3) Did you then accept the shed blood of Jesus Christ to wash away all your sins?
- (4) Did you accept Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior and determine to follow Him?
- (5) Were you baptized by the authority of Jesus Christ in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?
- (6) Were you baptized, that is, submersed in water as Jesus was? He set us an example by being baptized Himself. “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21).
- (7) Were hands laid on you and did the servant of God pray for you asking God to give you His Holy Spirit?

If these events didn’t take place, then, with further counseling and study, you should be baptized in accordance with the questions and instructions outlined above.

### **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

We saw in Hebrews 6 that one of the doctrines of Christ was “the doctrine of baptisms.” There are several baptisms spoken of in the New Testament. We have already covered water baptism. Now we will see, through the pages of the Bible, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:5 Jesus was speaking to His disciples shortly before returning to the Father, “For John truly baptized with water; but **ye shall be baptized** [*to make whelmed or overwhelmed*] **with the Holy Ghost** not many days hence.” Then Acts 2:1-4 says, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Another account is found in John 1:33. John the Baptist said, “And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, ‘Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, **the same is He which baptizeth** [covers or overwhelms] **with the Holy Ghost.**”

Mark also records the same statement made by John, “**I indeed have baptized you with water: but He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost**” (Mark 1:8).

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

Those who believe, repent of their sins, and are baptized with water will receive the blessing of a covering, or an overwhelming, of the Holy Spirit.

So, we see that Christians are baptized, first with water, then with the laying on of hands they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit or are baptized (covered with) the Holy Spirit. But there is yet another baptism awaiting all Christians.

### **Baptism of Suffering— Suffering with Christ**

Being a Christian is not always easy. To improve and strengthen our character, we are allowed to suffer. “Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all” (Psa. 34:19).

A good example of suffering as a type of baptism that Christ went through is found in Matthew 20:20-23. Here the mother of James and John approached Jesus to request a “small” favor of Him. She asked if one of her sons could sit on His right hand and the other on His left in the Kingdom of God. Jesus stated that what she was asking wasn’t His to give. But He went on to ask the brothers, “...Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?” (v. 22 NLT). They both agreed that they were able to go through the same sufferings He would be going through. Then Jesus answered, “...Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized” (Mark 10:39).

In John 16:33 Jesus said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

What we build in our spiritual life will be tested to determine its value. Suffering solidifies our character. It refines us into the fine gold and precious jewels God wants us to become. Times of testing will come upon us even as they did Christ.

We, as Christians, are now being judged on the way we are living our lives. “But on the judgment day, fire [trials] will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person’s work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames” (I Cor. 3:13-15 NLT). Judgment is now upon the house of God. Peter explained it this way, “For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (I Pet. 4:17).

Our Lord knew His time of suffering was very near and He was sharing with His

disciples the turmoil and mental anguish He would endure when He said, “I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of Me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished” (Luke 12:50 NLT).

“...They [the Apostle Paul and those with him] encouraged them [around Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch] to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22 NLT).

The King James Version states this as follows, “Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22).

### **Suffering of the Body of Christ**

Torture and suffering have not been new for followers of God. Hebrews 11 is a chapter that lists many of the atrocities believers have endured down through the ages. Books such as *The Early Church Fathers: Ante-Nicene Fathers, Fox’s Book of Martyrs*, and many other historical accounts catalog the horrible experiences of Christians. Even today many Christians are suffering and being slaughtered around the world.

The Apostle Paul told the brethren at Colosse, “I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for His body, the church” (Col. 1:24 NLT).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (I Pet. 4:12-13).

Being a Christian makes us a target of Satan! Satan and his demons are allowed to give us fiery trials and problems. But be of good courage, put on the whole armor of God, and, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Eph. 6:16).

### **Special Circumstances**

What about those who never had the opportunity to be baptized with a water baptism before they died? The example of the thief on a cross beside Jesus comes to mind for many. In this case, he realized and repented of his sins, “And he said unto Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.’ And Jesus said unto him, ‘Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise’” (Luke 23:42-43). In the King James Version of the Bible, the coma was placed in the wrong place, therefore, distorting the meaning. The actual meaning is this, “Verily I say unto you today, you will be with Me in paradise.” You see, Jesus was not going to paradise when He died. He was going to the grave for three days and three nights. But whether this man was saved without being baptized is clear. If the Lord says he will be with Him in paradise, then he will

indeed be with Him in the Kingdom of God.

What about those who have died for their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior, yet have not been baptized? The event comes to mind of a Christian school in Pakistan. A group of radical Moslem terrorists burst into the Christian school with the intent of beheading anyone that would not deny Jesus Christ and their Christian faith. One young girl was beheaded because she kept her faith. Will she have eternal life? **YES SHE WILL!**

While she may not have been baptized with a water baptism, she was baptized with the same baptism Jesus was baptized with—the baptism of trials and suffering! She suffered with Christ and she will also reign with Him! The proof is found in Revelation 20:4-6, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6).

## **Baptism by Fire**

Jesus said, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28).

“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (Heb. 10:26-27).

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14-15).

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:7-8).

So, you see, **eventually everyone is going to be baptized!** We will either be: (1) baptized in water for the remission of our sins; (2) baptized with the Holy Spirit; (3) baptized with trials designed by God to refine and purify His people; or (4) baptized in the lake of fire prepared for Satan and his demons (Matt. 25:41) and all those who refuse the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the offer of salvation.

We have now covered the four areas of Christ's doctrine of baptisms.

### **Fourth Doctrine of Christ: Laying on of Hands**

This doctrine is revealed often throughout the New Testament. Yet it is one of the least understood doctrines of Christ. There are four areas in which this doctrine is used in the New Covenant: (1) to pronounce a blessing; (2) at the giving of the Holy Spirit after baptism; (3) at the time of prayer for healing; and (4) in the promotion to an office of service within the Church. Let's examine each of these areas.

#### **Pronouncing a Blessing**

In Mark 10:14-16 we find Christ setting us an example by blessing little children, "...Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.' And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them."

Part of this blessing is asking God to set His holy, protecting angels about the children, to lead them, through His Spirit, into a saving relationship with His Son, and to be ever-present in their lives.

Some churches hold a special service once a year to bless the little children. They ask God to watch over these little ones and to protect them from harm and danger.

This blessing of children can also be extended to milestones and achievements in their lives, such as the rite of passage into adulthood. Some families have instituted a special time of blessing for each of their children.

The laying on of hands is often used at weddings to give the new couple God's blessing on their union and for conceiving children.

We are reminded by the Apostle Paul to, "...bless, and curse not" (Rom. 12:14).

"... Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35).

Be a blessing to others and follow the examples of Jesus.

#### **Giving the Holy Spirit After Baptism**

Not long after the founding of the New Testament Church, Philip went from Jerusalem to Samaria preaching the good news about Jesus and the Kingdom of God. And, "... when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of

**God, and the name of Jesus Christ**, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) **Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost**” (Acts 8:14-17).

In Acts 19:6 we read, “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

The laying on of hands is a significant part of baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit.

## Warning

It is important that we realize the seriousness of “the laying on of hands.” With the proper use of this doctrinal instruction from Jesus Christ comes the power of God! It is not to be utilized as a moneymaking business. Some are pillaging this sacred doctrine for personal gain. We have ministries polluting the use of “the laying on of hands” and defaming God’s name by attempting to heal people in the name of God but doing it for their own profit.

We have, in the book of Acts, a classic example of a man that tried to obtain this power for his personal use and benefit. In Acts 8:9 we see a case where a man named Simon, “...used sorcery and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one.”

Then in Acts 8:18-23, “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, ‘Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.’ But Peter said unto him, ‘Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.’”

You see, this man was baptized earlier by Philip but he had not repented of his sins and turned to God. (Just as many today think they can simply add Christ to their wicked lives then they are “good to go.”) His heart was not right before God. He thought this power would be great to add to his other tricks of sorcery to bewitch and take advantage of people. He imagined it would be a lucrative, business opportunity. Even yet today, his followers are selling indulgences and other benefits to people for their departed relatives in an attempt to get their loved ones out of a falsely perceived purgatory.

## Prayer for Healing

The third example of laying on of hands is for healing. There are many examples given by Jesus for us to follow.

One of the first mentionings of this doctrine was in Mark 5:23 where Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue came asking Jesus, "...My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray Thee*, come and **lay Thy hands on her**, that she may be healed; and she shall live." He understood how Jesus performed many of His healings.

Mark 6:5-6 reads, "And He could there do no mighty work, save that **He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them**. And He marvelled because of their unbelief..."

In Mark 8:23-25 Jesus gave us another example, "And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when He had spit on his eyes, and **put His hands upon him**, He asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, 'I see men as trees, walking.' *After that He put His hands again upon his eyes*, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly."

In Luke 13:10-13 it is recorded that Jesus, "... was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*. And when Jesus saw her, He called *her to Him*, and said unto her, 'Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.' And **He laid His hands on her**: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and **He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them**" (Luke 4:40).

In the book of Mark we see our great commission, "And He said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world, and **preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned**. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; **they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover**" (Mark 16:15-18).

And in Acts 9:17-18 we see, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and **putting his hands on him** said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, **that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost**.' And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

In James 5:14-16 we are instructed that if any is sick among you, "... let him call for the elders of the church; and **let them pray over him, anointing him with oil** [using olive

oil in combination with the laying on of hands] in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

This use of oil for anointing stems from the instructions given to the disciples by Jesus. We read in Mark 6:13 that the disciples participated in the first evangelistic tour anointing with oil [olive oil] when healing the sick.

One other example has been given to show the use of the laying on of hands by the Apostle Paul. “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11-12). From this example of the Apostle Paul, we take small pieces of cloth and pray to God, anointing the cloth with oil in the name of the Lord. In doing so, the prayer of faith will save the sick. This is done whenever it is not possible or practical for us to reach the person physically.

God does heal today! Follow His instructions and the prayer of faith will save the sick.

### **The Promotion to an Office of Service Within the Church**

The fourth use of laying on of hands is that of promotion to an office of service within the Church.

In Acts 6:5-6 (NKJV) we are shown, “...they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.” These men were promoted to the office of deacon within the Church to help serve the Body of Christ.

Acts 13:1-3 says, “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, ‘Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.’ And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.” Here again was the work of the Holy Spirit directing the leadership of the Church at Antioch to set apart Barnabas and Saul (now Paul) for the work of the Ministry. They were ordained to be apostles (ones sent forth).

In I Timothy 3:6 we see that this laying on of hands for offices within the Church must not be done too quickly, “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” Then in verse 10, “And let these also first be proved;

...being *found* blameless.” And in I Timothy 5:22, “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”

## **Fifth Doctrine of Christ: Resurrection of the Dead**

Part of knowing the doctrines of Christ is to understand what Jesus taught about the resurrection of the dead.

First, it is important that we understand that, “...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). The doctrines of “eternal judgment” and the “resurrection of the dead” are closely linked. We will learn more of the details as we continue.

Can you explain clearly your belief in life after death?

All the doctrines of Christ are important, but this doctrine is of central importance. The Apostle Paul made it clear as he was explaining the outline of this belief to the Corinthians, “But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead?” (I Cor. 15:12 NLT)

Some today are preaching as if they don’t believe in the resurrection either. They think that we float off to heaven when we die or are taken in a rapture and there we are! Many do not know what they believe about any life after death.

“For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can’t be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost” (I Cor. 15:13-18 NLT)! Without this doctrinal belief of a resurrection from the dead, we, as Christians, would have no hope!

There is much confusion regarding this doctrine of the resurrection. Many do not put their hope in a resurrection for those who die in Christ. They simply believe we are transformed from the dead, physical body to a spirit body that rises as we go to heaven. Therefore, many doubt Jesus Christ will ever return in a “Second Coming.”

Many today don’t know what they believe when it gets right down to the nitty-gritty of their thoughts about a resurrection.

So let’s allow the Spirit of Jesus to lead us into all truth!

Back in the days when Jesus walked the streets of Jerusalem there were those of the sect called the Sadducees who didn’t believe in the resurrection of the dead either. After

they explained their hypothesis of seven men in secession having one woman as their wife, they wanted Christ to determine whose wife she would be in a resurrection. Jesus showed them their lack of understanding.

“Jesus replied, ‘**Your mistake is that you don’t know the Scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God.** For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven” (Matt. 22:29-30 NLT).

There were two items they didn’t know:

1. They didn’t know the Scriptures.
2. They didn’t know the power of God.

In the New Living Translation we find Christ went on to say in verses 31-32, “But now, as to whether there will be a resurrection of the dead—haven’t you ever read about this in the Scriptures? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ So He is the God of the living, not the dead.”

Let’s analyze Christ’s words to learn the truth of this doctrine of the resurrection.

Jesus said, “When the dead rise.” This is a definitive statement—a conclusive or decisive phrase. The dead will rise! It is only a matter of when. Therefore, we have established the fact, in Christ’s own words, there will be a resurrection!

How is it that Jesus can say Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive when He just got through saying there will be a resurrection?

The Apostle Paul spoke of this power of God the Sadducees didn’t understand when he wrote of Abraham saying, “...**God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did**” (Rom. 4:17 NKJV).

You see, God can speak of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as though they were alive and in the present because He lives outside time and space. **God sees what He is going to accomplish as already being done.** After all, who is going to stop Him? God is Almighty! He can do and carry out anything He wants. Never underestimate the power of God!

For the person who may think Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could have been alive at the time God was talking to Moses from the burning bush, we are shown that Jesus Christ was, “... before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**; that in all *things* He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:17-18). Jesus is, and will always be, the firstborn from the dead. You see, if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were alive at the time God was speaking to Moses, then Jesus would have to be at least the fourth to be raised from the

dead! This, however, was not the case. Jesus remains “the firstborn from the dead”!

Jesus went on to describe more about the resurrection of the dead as He explained how we are to go about doing good works, “...When you put on a luncheon or a banquet,’ He said, ‘don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then **at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you**” (Luke 14:12-14 NLT).

## **The Resurrection of the Righteous!**

There are two different resurrections mentioned in the New Testament. Jesus stated in Luke 14:14 there will be a resurrection of the righteous.

Jesus explained more about this resurrection when He spoke to Martha after the death of her brother Lazarus. “Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:** And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die [this is speaking of the second death]. Believest thou this?” (John 11:25-26).

In John 3:16 Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Those who have their life in Jesus as their savior and believe in Him, even if they die, they will have eternal life.

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. **This is the first resurrection.** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6). The first resurrection is for the saints. They will be resurrected from physical to spiritual bodies—immortal bodies!

There are two resurrections. This first resurrection is also part of God’s eternal judgment. This is a resurrection to immortal life! It is God’s everlasting decree upon all faithful worshipers of God.

## **The Second Resurrection**

God gave the message of the Book of Revelation to Jesus Christ to give to the Church. In the book we can see that a second resurrection is also revealed. In the verses mentioned above we can learn much about both resurrections.

We have found the first resurrection is reserved for the faithful worshipers of God. They are blessed and holy that have a part in the first resurrection. They will be kings and priest and reign with Christ a thousand years.

For Jesus to say there is a first resurrection means there will also be at least one more. Little is known by the Christian community about a second resurrection.

Unless you know of God's complete plan for mankind, you will miss this vital knowledge of the second resurrection. **The Holy Days given to Israel after coming out of Egypt reveal God's complete outline of salvation for mankind.** These convocations, though not kept as Holy Days, were still recognized by the Apostles in the early New Testament Church. The Apostle Paul told us that, "...all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Cor. 10:11).

It all started with **The Passover** which represented sending Jesus Christ to be our Passover Lamb. Then, during the **Days of Unleavened Bread**, we see Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, pictured as our wave-sheaf offering for sin—to wipe away our sins. After this came **Pentecost** (fifty count). It was exactly fifty days after Jesus returned to heaven to be accepted of the Father for our sins that the Holy Spirit was given to the Church. (This happened on the day of Pentecost.) The **Feast of Trumpets** showed the plagues mankind will face because of rejecting the laws of God and the instructions of Jesus Christ. This will finally result in the seventh trumpet and the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. With the events of this seventh trumpet and the seven last plagues, Satan's wicked and sinful government will be finished. Saints will finally be at-one with God as pictured by **The Day of Atonement**. This will lead to **The Feast of Tabernacles** which pictures a remarkable 1000-year reign of Jesus Christ where the saints will be ruling with Him as kings and priests. It will be a wonderful time of peace and everyone will have full knowledge of the truth without Satan and the demons around causing sin.

And at the end of this 1000-year reign of Christ there will come the time Jesus spoke of in John 7:37 and Revelation 20:5. **The Last Great Day** is a separate Festival Day at the end of the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. It's the final day in God's plan. It is the eighth day of the fall festival season which pictures **The Great White Throne Judgment**.

This is made clear when Jesus said, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished..." (Rev. 20:5). **This is the second resurrection! It is a physical resurrection!** This second, general resurrection is for all those who lived, died, and never understood what God had reserved for them through Jesus Christ. They were never able to make an informed decision about what Jesus did for them.

"And I saw **a great white throne**, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was

opened, which is *the book* of life: and **the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [hadēs, the grave] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

God is a God of love! No person will ever die and go to hellfire without full knowledge and understanding of the decision he is making. The unpardonable sin can never be committed without a full discernment and complete comprehension of what one is doing!

This resurrection is described in Ezekiel 37—the valley of dry bones. This prophecy shows a great, general resurrection of all who have ever lived that were not part of the first resurrection.

This resurrection is also mentioned in Isaiah 65:17-25, “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree *are* the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they *are* the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust *shall be* the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the LORD.”

The duration of this Last Great Day—The Great White Throne Judgment will be 100 years. During this great, general resurrection all who are resurrected will live 100 years. There will be no babies being born throughout this time.

Remember the words of Jesus, “...**Your mistake is that you don’t know the Scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God.** For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven” (Matt. 22:29-30 NLT).

So, you see, in this general resurrection to physical life, there will be no reproduction. The baby that died a few days old will live to be 100 years old. The old person that died after a full life will also be resurrected to a life of 100 years.

**This is a time of judgment of all who have ever lived having never known enough about God and His plan to make an informed decision.** Human beings are judged while we are alive! This second resurrection comes after there have been 1000 years of the Government of God on this earth with Jesus Christ as King and Lord. It will indeed be a new world, much different from the one we live in today.

God says, "...I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (Isa. 65:18). Can you even begin to imagine what Jerusalem and the world will be like then after 1000 years of joy and peace under Jesus Christ?

Today God calls Jerusalem "Sodom and Egypt" (Rev. 11:8).

When these people are resurrected into such a world, there will be no comparison to the place from which they came! They may not even remember their previous life. Read again Isaiah 65:17, "...the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

### **Sixth Doctrine of Christ: Eternal Judgment**

There is one more area to address as we learn about the different resurrections and that is the doctrine of **Eternal Judgment**. Each of the resurrections we have covered has a part to play in God's Eternal Judgment. It was part of God's plan to share with His children His Eternal Life and that is an Everlasting Decision or Eternal Judgment. It is the **First Resurrection!**

There are two areas to our eternal judgment, the judgment and the sentencing. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). For Christians, we have died with Christ in the watery grave of baptism and now is our time of judgment. The Apostle Peter said, "For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God..." (I Pet. 4:17). Our sentencing will be carried out when Jesus says, "...Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matt. 25:21). Judgment is made while we are alive and our sentencing after we die! God's judging of us is determined by our works. There is much confusion in the Christian community about this area of God's judgment and the gift of salvation. Many quote Ephesians 2:8-10, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Many do not understand the gift of eternal life is only a part of our eternal judgment. Eternal life is a gift God gives us based on our belief, faith, and acceptance in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. It is our works that are a large part of our sentencing. (If you are confused read Matt. 25:14-46.)

We are saved by God's grace and that part of God's plan is based on our faith, not

works. We are created as God's workmanship to do good works by and through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. It is these works for which we are judged or rewarded above and beyond eternal life. Another way of putting it is to say, God will determine what we are doing with the gift (His Holy Spirit) He has given us and our eternal reward will be based on how productive we have been. Offices, jobs, and positions of rulership will be given in the Kingdom of God based on our works.

James said it this way, "...Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas. 2:18-19). James continued, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:21-26). This is why we will be judged by our works.

Some are also confused about Christ's words as to our works and His judgment of them when He said, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37). This day of judgment for Christians is Now! Today is our day of reckoning! We are being judged on the words we use and on what we do. For the others, it will be in The Great White Throne Judgment when they will be judged.

**The Great White Throne Judgment** that will last one hundred years is also part of God's Eternal Judgment. You see, the way a man chooses to live will determine his eternal sentence. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [hadēs, the grave] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:12-13).

## **Unpardonable Sin and the Lake of Fire**

There is one last group upon whom God will pass sentence and that is all who have committed the unpardonable sin.

At what time will this judgment come to pass? If there were any alive during their first life that had committed the unpardonable sin, they, of course, would not be part of the First Resurrection. They would awake to the lake of fire at God's timing (which could be at the end of the Great White Throne Judgment). If any would commit the unpardonable sin during the Great White Throne Judgment, at the end of their 100 years,

they would be cast into the lake of fire (Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:11-15).

What is the unpardonable sin? This sin is a rejection of God and His work. “Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come” (Matt. 12:31-32). This is a monumental sin and is in need of a clear explanation from God’s Word.

## Who or What is the Holy Spirit?

What does it mean to sin against the Holy Spirit? How can this happen? To understand what it means to sin against the Spirit, we must understand who or what is the Holy Spirit.

God the Father is Spirit and He is Holy! Therefore, He is Holy Spirit! “...The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. **God is a Spirit**: and they that worship Him must worship *Him* in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). And in Leviticus 11:45 we see that God said, “For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for **I am holy**.” So, we see from God’s own Word that He is Spirit and He is Holy!

Now Jesus Christ is also Spirit and He is Holy! Therefore, He is also Holy Spirit! “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God**. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. **In Him was life**; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1-4).

Now in John 1:13-14 we read that Jesus was, “... born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of **the only begotten of the Father**), full of grace and truth.” Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit, “...she [Mary] was **found with child of the Holy Ghost**” (Matt. 1:18). So Jesus was begotten of the Father which is the Holy Spirit! Jesus, therefore, is God and is the Holy Spirit!

Jesus said, “I and *My* Father are one” (John 10:30). And Jesus once again said, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; **Even the Spirit of truth**; ...I will not leave you comfortless: **I will come to you**” (John 14:15-18). So, you see, **Jesus is Spirit and Jesus is Truth!** For He said, “...I am the way, the truth, and the life...” (John 14:6). Now, therefore, the Spirit of Truth is the Spirit of Jesus! “I will come to you”!

Do we stop to realize how foolish it sounds to say the Holy Spirit is a separate personage from our Spiritual Father or Jesus Christ our Spiritual Brother when they are Spirit, they are Holy, and they are one? If the Father wasn't spirit and holy and Jesus wasn't spirit and holy—only then would it make any sense to have a separate Holy Spirit!

At this point we must come to understand the composition of the Godhead. There are three places in the Bible where the Godhead is mentioned and in none of these verses is the Holy Spirit mentioned as being a separate or coequal, spirit being or personage with the Father and the Son. The Father is referred to and clearly indicated as being part of the Godhead. The Son is also shown to have, “all the fullness of the Godhead.” But nowhere in these verses is the Holy Spirit called out as being a distinct and separate personage of the Godhead.

In Acts 17:29 we see, “**Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God**, we ought not to think that the **Godhead** is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.”

In Romans 1:20 it is written, “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and **Godhead**; so that they are without excuse.”

And Colossians 2:6-9 reads, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in Him: Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. **For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.**”

The Godhead is also shown in I Corinthians 8:6 NLT, “But we know **that there is only one God, the Father**, who created everything, and we exist for Him. And **there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through Whom God made everything and through Whom we have been given life.” Why wasn't the Holy Spirit mentioned here as being part of the Godhead? (See also Col. 1:2.)

And again we read in John 17:3, “And **this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.**” Eternal life consists of knowing the Godhead—the Father and the Son. But where is the Holy Spirit if it is part of a triune God? How can a person have eternal life and not have or know the Holy Spirit?

The glory of this mystery, “...is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**” (Col. 1:27), not a separate third person as the Holy Spirit.

You see, the Godhead consists of the Holy Father who is Spirit and Jesus Christ who is also Spirit and Holy! Jesus said that He is Truth (John 14:6) and that He, the “Spirit of Truth,” would come to us (John 14:17-18). Therefore, the Comforter or the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of our Holy Father and the Spirit of the Holy Jesus Christ! Jesus said, “...If a

man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and **We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him**" (John 14:23). How much clearer can Jesus explain the Holy Spirit?

## Unpardonable Sin

Is there a sin that God can't forgive? God cannot forgive a sin that is not confessed. This sin is a total refusal of the work of the Holy Spirit. The unpardonable sin is a rejection of all that is God! It is a denouncing of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a rejection of the Godhead—both the Father and the Son! This is a condition of knowingly dismissing the sacrifice of Jesus which was to cover all of one's sins and much more. It is to discard the entire action of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit and all the labor of God in a person's own life and the clear evidence of God's work in the world around them. The only sin that can't be forgiven is the sin of which a person is totally unwilling to repent!

This judgment and sentencing will be carried out on fairly few human beings.

**"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet** that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20). We see here that **this Eternal Judgment is pronounced upon the beast and false prophet.**

**"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever"** (Rev. 20:10). **The devil also receives Eternal Judgment** and is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

**"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14-15). We see that death and hell (the grave) were also cast into the lake of fire. There will be no more death. Isn't that great? Death will be put to death!

**The second death** is reserved for those who have committed the unpardonable sin.

**The lake of fire was really created for the Devil and his demons** and the comparatively few human beings that have committed the unpardonable sin. "...Depart from Me, ye cursed, into **everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels**" (Matt. 25:41).

Any human being thrown into the lake of fire will be burned up. Only Satan and his demons will experience hellfire for eternity. For humans, the second death will be an

eternal death, not eternal life in hellfire. For man, Jesus calls it **THE SECOND DEATH NOT ETERNAL LIFE IN HELLFIRE!** **Satan would have all humans believe we are the ones to roast forever in hellfire and that we will be placed there by a mean and vengeful God. But, hellfire was created for Satan and his demons! They are the ones to “be tormented day and night forever and ever.”** The only humans to be placed into the lake of fire will be those who have rejected all that God is. To prevent them from living for all eternity in total misery and unhappiness, God, in His love, will allow them eternal death.

I want you to understand that God is extremely good at what He does! He is Almighty and Perfect in all His ways. He has set into action His plan to have a family and most human beings will be saved and brought into this family.

God doesn't want anyone to perish. Jesus said, “Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish” (Matt. 18:14). The Apostle Peter stated it in this manner, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Pet. 3:9). And the Apostle Paul said of Israel, “I want you to understand this mystery, dear brothers and sisters, so that you will not feel proud about yourselves. Some of the people of Israel have hard hearts, but this will last only until the full number of Gentiles comes to Christ. And so all Israel will be saved...” (Rom. 11:25-26 NLT).

**Don't be as the Sadducees who didn't know or understand the power of God!**

**NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF GOD!**

### **Seventh Doctrine of Christ: Going on into Perfection**

After we have come into the knowledge of the truth and: (1) have laid the foundation of repentance from dead works; (2) developed a deep faith in God through Jesus Christ; (3) become baptized and received the Holy Spirit; (4) by the laying on of hands from a servant of God; then (5) we await the resurrection of the dead; (6) our eternal judgment of being born into the very family of God. While we are waiting for our change; (7) we are to be going on into perfection by growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

When we are first converted, we are as babes in Christ. And as any baby we must grow. We are told in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” This means to become mature in Christian growth and development. We see in Matthew 6:33 that we are to, “... seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” And God who has begun a good work in us will continue to perfect us until the coming of Jesus Christ.

(See Phil. 1:6.)

The Apostle Peter also encouraged us to, "...grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." (II Pet. 3:18).

Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21).

The Apostle John went on to clarify what Jesus meant in the verse above when he said, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (I John 5:4-5)?

## Warning

John continued by warning us and saying, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in **the doctrine of Christ**, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 1:9-11).

Therefore, be careful of the doctrines you believe. It could be that many of your beliefs have no foundation in the doctrines of Christ. Many are teaching for doctrine the ideas, precepts, and commandments of men! If they don't have the doctrines of Christ as the center of their beliefs, you may find yourself guilty of participating in counterfeit doctrines and you may be disseminating a false or deceptive gospel!

## Summary

So now we have covered the doctrines of Christ. Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God and establishing these doctrines as the backbone of the Church.

If you live by these doctrines, you will be part of the Body of Christ. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).

These doctrines of Christ should be a source of great encouragement for Christians everywhere! We don't have to wonder about God and His plan for mankind, nor do we need to worry about our friends and relatives that have died.

God, in His marvelous plan, has provided for everyone to understand His love and to comprehend that each one of them can be part of His family for all eternity.

You see, Jesus didn't come with His own doctrine. "And the Jews marveled [you too may also marvel], saying, 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?' Jesus answered them, and said, 'My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. **If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.** He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him'" (John 7:15-18).

If we are diligent to follow the will of the Father, we will know whether these are the doctrines of God or something Jesus made up on His own!

Listen, if you are doing the will of the Father, you will recognize these doctrines to be from God! If not, you will not understand these teachings and instead you will probably be arguing about them—but your argument will be with God!

"...Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may [you] grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ"  
(Eph. 4:14-15).

You see, Jesus Christ has given you His own Doctrines as delivered to Him from the Father, so you will not be led astray by the cunning craftiness of men as they lie in wait to deceive you.

May God bless you as you strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen!

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