

THE BASICS

*The Beginning,
the Gospel of God's Grace, and the New Beginning*



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The Basics:
The Beginning, the Gospel of God's Grace, and the New Beginning
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CONTENTS

Prologue	2
The Beginning	3
God's Enemy	4
God Created Man	5
Man Sinned	6
The Temporary Solution	7
Jesus Christ	9
Holy Spirit	12
The Bride of Christ	14
The New Beginning	15
Epilogue	16

PROLOGUE

The Scriptures speak of the “elementary teachings about Christ” (Heb. 6:1) and things of “first importance” (1 Cor. 15:3), which contain the “gospel of God’s grace” (Acts 20:24). We aim here to lay out the basics of the Scriptures – from the beginning through the progressive dealings of God with Man.

The tragedy of the Fall of Man cannot be overstated. In the Garden of Eden, Satan succeeded in his mission as God’s enemy. Man transitioned from the bearer of God’s Image to the producer of sin. Such a great fall required a great salvation, and what a great salvation Christ accomplished through the Cross! Think about it: the Son of God became a Man to conquer everything that conquered the first man, Adam. What a great salvation!

We pray this study increases your knowledge of the Scriptures and establishes you with confidence in the grace of God.

THE BASICS

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD

Before Creation, from all eternity past, God existed with no beginning. His Name is *Yahweh*, which means *I Am that I Am*.¹ He exists because He exists. He is the uncaused Cause. He never began and will never end; He simply *is*.

God exists as Three in One (often called the “Holy Trinity”). He is Three “Persons,” yet One God. It is a mystery to understand how, but we know it is a fact.² God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (e.g. Mt. 28:19). The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God – but not three gods – One God!

Jesus is the Son of God (Mt. 16:16).³ Before Jesus was born in flesh and given the Name “Jesus,” He was known as the Word of God, and He still is. This means He is the articulation and the expression of the will of God. John 1:1 reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (cf. 1:14-18, also Rev. 19:13). It is important to realize that, even though Jesus was born as Man through a virgin, He has always existed as God. “And he is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17).

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). John 1:3 teaches that God created through Jesus, the Word: “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (NIV). God spoke everything into existence (Heb. 11:3).

Why did God create? He was not lonely, because He is Three in One. God is love (1 Jn. 4:8), so for eternity past, each Member of the Trinity loved the others perfectly. He did not need heaven as a home – the heavens cannot contain Him (1 Ki. 8:27). He did not need earth, so Man

¹ *Yahweh* is the personal Name that sets God apart from false gods and offers intimate relationship for His children (Ex. 3:13-15). God commanded that we call Him by this Name this for all generations (3:15). Most translations and our quotations use small caps for “LORD” when (mis)translating. The name “Jesus” comes from the Hebrew *Yeshua*, which means *Yahweh is salvation*.

² See projectOne28.com/trinity for more verses and explanations.

³ Rom. 1:4 teaches that Jesus’ resurrection proved that He is the Son of God.

would have a home, because God did not need Man either (Acts 17:25). God did not *need* to create anything.

*God created all things for His glory.*⁴ He created for His pleasure and His delight in manifesting His nature.⁵ Ps. 19:1-4 sings, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (also Ps. 50:6, Job 12:7-9). *Physical creation is speech.* It manifests invisible spiritual realities, dramatizing what is happening in the eternal realms. Creation is speaking, especially of the eternal qualities of God (Rom. 1:19-20). When we see creation, we should worship and give God glory for being powerful and beautiful!

GOD HAS AN ENEMY

Angels were among the first of God’s creations. One angel, Lucifer, was perfect in beauty. Created to worship God for God’s beauty, Lucifer suddenly looked away from God and at Self. He began to exalt himself in pride, desiring to be worshiped and served. He deceived one-third of the angels into joining his rebellion.⁶ Then God cast them down to earth in judgment. See Ezek. 28:11-19 and Isa. 14:12-15.⁷ Lucifer lost his position and authority in heaven, but God delayed His final judgment, and Lucifer exerted authority over earth,⁸ where we know him as the devil and Satan.

BUT THE EARTH BECAME DARK

When God cast Lucifer and one-third of the angels down to earth, one could assume that event would cause a serious effect. Gen. 1:2 shows

⁴ Glory (*kabod* in Hebrew, *doxa* in Greek) is the manifestation of one’s nature that brings honor and praise or, directly, the honor and praise given in response to that worthiness.

⁵ Prov. 8:27-31. Christ is the “wisdom” personified here (v. 12, cf. 1 Cor. 1:30, Col. 2:2-3).

⁶ In Rev. 12:4 the dragon is Satan (12:9, 20:2), and the stars represent angels (1:20). The tail is his ministry of lies (Isa. 9:15, Jn. 8:44) that deceived one-third of the angels to follow him.

⁷ God often layers prophecies. In the immediate sense, these speak of human kings in Tyre and Babylon, but the overlap is understandable, because we know the spirit of Satan was at work in these kings (Eph. 2:2, 2 Tim. 2:26). Notice this Ezekiel passage addresses a guardian cherub in the heavenly realm – not merely a man on earth.

⁸ 2 Cor. 4:4; Jn. 12:31, 14:30, 16:11; Eph. 2:2

it, “But the earth became⁹ waste and empty and darkness over the surface of the abyss, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (lit.). Because the physical realm was created to tell the story of the spiritual realm, when darkness appeared in Lucifer’s heart, then darkness manifested in the place of his judgment – earth. What we normally call the days of Creation are actually days of reclamation, in which God began correcting the effect of the enemy’s judgment.¹⁰

GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS IMAGE, FOR HIS GLORY, TO SUBDUE AND RULE

Isa. 43:7 says God created us for His glory, like all of creation. Yet God gives the exact purpose He created Man in Gen. 1:26-28, “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our¹¹ image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (NASB).

Man is the only creature created in God’s Image. This is the foundation of God’s love for us. God loves us because He loves Himself. Never doubt it, because He will never stop. Our purpose:

1. Be fruitful.
2. Multiply.
3. Fill the earth.
4. Subdue.
5. Rule.

⁹ See the booklet *Light Shines in the Darkness* at projectOne28.com for a fuller explanation. NIV places a great footnote after its translation, “and the earth was,” being honest that “was” could be translated “became,” like it is in Gen. 2:7, 19:26, and others. “And” in Hebrew (*waw*) here is a disjunctive coordination in order to contrast; i.e. Gen. 1:1 *but* Gen. 1:2. God did not start creating with darkness because of 1 Jn. 1:5. Neither did He start with emptiness because of Isa. 45:18 and Eph. 1:23 (footnote below). Darkness and emptiness are not His nature. Creation started glorious, *but became* waste, empty, and dark.

¹⁰ The words “waste” and “empty” in 1:2 also show judgment (Jer. 4:23-28, Isa. 24:1, 34:11). Some avoid this teaching because of the Gap Theory, which supposes millions of years in between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2, in order to account for evolutionary geology. We believe in a young earth, spoken into existence without evolution or a Big Bang about 6,000 years ago. We do not place millions of years between 1:1 and 1:2, but we do believe the dozens upon dozens of verses in the whole of Scripture that interpret darkness as judgment, evil, or the kingdom of Satan. See *Light Shines in the Darkness* at projectOne28.com.

¹¹ “Us” is a demonstration of the Trinity: One God speaking in plural - Father, Son, and Spirit determining to create Man in “Our Image.” The next verse says “His Image” because God is One God.

The word *subdue* shows that something was out of subjection¹² – the fallen angels. Ps. 8:2 explains that He created us to establish His strength against the enemy, to stop the enemy. In justice, God chose to judge a rebellious creature through a faithful creature. God rules in the Kingdom of heaven and desired to reassert His rule on earth through Man in His Image. Therefore, God bestowed on Man a blessing – supernatural empowerment and favor to accomplish this commission.¹³

MAN SINNED AND LOST LIFE

God placed Man in a paradise Garden of *Eden* (Gen. 2:8), which means *delight*. He walked with them in the breeze of the day (3:8). He gave them pleasurable fruit trees to eat with their bodies (2:9). Because the physical creation told the spiritual reality of their need for God's sustaining life in their spirits, He also gave them the Tree of Life (2:9). Because they had the option for independence from God, He also planted the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but commanded them not to eat of it.¹⁴ He warned, "...in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Adam and Eve did not need to know Good or Evil; they needed faith in God's revelation through their spirit.

Then Satan embodied a serpent and appeared to them in the Garden (Gen. 3:1, cf. Rev. 12:9, 20:2). He persuaded Eve to doubt the word of God, and in unbelief, she ate of the forbidden tree and then gave some to Adam. They suddenly possessed a Knowledge that Man was never meant to have. They could suddenly know things apart from faith in God's revelation. Just as God warned, their spirits were separated from God, who is life (Isa. 59:2). They were kicked out of the Garden and denied continued access to the Tree of Life (again, because physical creation told the spiritual story). And they died – in their spirits and souls, and eventually, in their bodies.

Man was created to overcome God's enemy, but instead they agreed with the enemy and themselves became enemies of God (Rom. 5:10).

¹² John N. Oswalt, "*kabash*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1980), 430.

¹³ *Ibid.*, "*barak*," 132, defines "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc."

¹⁴ Knowledge is eaten in the soul, where the mind resides. See the booklet *Spirit, Soul, Body* for more information about how we are created three in one (like God is Three in One) and how that affects our relationship with Him.

WHEN ADAM SINNED, EVERY HUMAN SINNED

Romans 5 teaches, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned (v. 12)... by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners” (v. 19). *The many* is a Hebrew and Greek expression for *all individuals*.¹⁵ Every human after Adam was born a sinner because Adam’s spiritual, soulical, and bodily DNA was in him. Then humans grow up to commit sins because of the sin nature in them. We possess the same Knowledge of Good and Evil usurped by Adam, and it puffs us up (1 Cor. 8:1), so that we presume to live independently of God.

It is important to see we have a two-fold problem: sin and sins. *Sin* is the evil nature in us from birth; it exists because we inherited it from Grandpa Adam. *Sins* are the thoughts or acts we commit in unbelief (Rom. 14:23). We are *not* sinners because we sin. We sin because we are born sinners. We must repent for more than what we *do*; we must also repent for what we *are*. We need God’s solution for both the outward sins and the inward sin nature.

A TEMPORARY SOLUTION: SACRIFICING ANIMALS IN THE TABERNACLE

God desired to restore Man back to life and the blessing of Gen. 1:28. He wanted to dwell again with Man in the breeze of paradise. First, He would have to provide forgiveness for their sins and put an end to the sin nature in them. Because God is holy,¹⁶ He cannot simply shrug His shoulders at sin and brush it under the rug. The full justice of sin must be paid. Hebrews 9:22 says “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” Life is in the blood,¹⁷ and since the punishment for sin is death,¹⁸ life-blood must be shed.

God began to foreshadow His redemption when He sacrificed an animal to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness (Gen. 3:21). They had covered up with fig leaves (3:7), but that did not shed blood, and therefore, it brought no forgiveness. God began to prophesy that a perfect Lamb must be slain for the sins of the world (more on pages

¹⁵ Friedrich Graber, “*polloi*,” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975) 1:95-97.

¹⁶ *Holy* means set apart, before and above, perfect (Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8).

¹⁷ Lev. 17:11, 14

¹⁸ Rom. 6:23

9-10). He also prophesied that Eve's offspring¹⁹ would crush the serpent (Gen. 3:15) and fulfill Genesis 1:28.

Then God called a man, Abraham, out of his father's country (Gen. 12:1), a culture that worshiped false gods (Jos. 24:2). God sacrificed animals to establish a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:9-10, 17-18). God promised him that his offspring²⁰ would defeat his enemies and restore the blessing of Gen. 1:28 to all people (22:17-18).

The nation of Israel descended from Abraham (Gen. 32:28), and within a few generations, they became enslaved in Egypt (Ex. 1:6-11). God severely judged Egypt with plagues for mistreating His people. In the tenth and final plague, God warned Egypt's leader (Pharaoh) that He would kill their firstborn sons and cattle, if he did not let Israel go (Ex. 11:4-7). Pharaoh refused to obey. God commanded all the families of Israel to sacrifice a spotless lamb and spread the blood over their doorposts, so that the plague would pass over them (Ex. 12; hence, the yearly celebration of Passover, on which Christ died, Jn. 19:14-16).

After Israel was rescued from Egypt, Moses received the Law of God. In it God commanded Israel to build a tabernacle (a portable tent), in which His presence would dwell with them (Ex. 25:8). God gave them a specific system of sacrificing animals and sprinkling the priests and items in the tabernacle with blood (e.g. Lev. 16:11-19). By doing this, they showed they knew they needed forgiveness to dwell with God (Heb. 10:3), and this appeased God temporarily. The blood of these bulls and goats could not forgive the sins of Man (Heb. 10:4, 11), but the sacrifices told the story of the permanent solution God would send into the world.

THE ETERNAL SOLUTION PROPHESED

God prophesied about the Savior of the world in many places throughout the Old Testament.²¹ The prophet Isaiah wrote that the Son of God would be born a Man through a virgin and would be called "Immanuel" (which means *God with us*, 7:14; cf. Mt. 1:23). The Child would also be called "Mighty God" and reign forever (9:6-7). But first, He must die for the sins of the world.

¹⁹ The word here should be neuter (no gender assigned), but the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) broke the rules (only this once amongst almost 150 others) to be singular masculine, speaking of Jesus Christ. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Hermeneutics And The Theological Task," 1 *Trinity Journal* 12:1 (Spring 1991): 13.

²⁰ Again singular masculine, which Paul specifically interprets as Christ (Gal. 3:16).

²¹ See the booklet *Why Trust the Bible?* for a more extensive list of prophecies about Christ.

Isaiah 53:4-12 prophesied about Christ, “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; *like a lamb* that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. ...Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ...because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.”²²

The death of a sinful man is deserved and brings justice for himself, not atonement for others.²³ Therefore, the Son of God became a perfect Man to offer sinless blood for our forgiveness.

JESUS CHRIST, THE GOD-MAN

“The Word became flesh and tabernacled²⁴ among us” (lit., Jn. 1:14). The Holy Spirit overshadowed the virgin Mary to conceive a Son named “Jesus,” which means *Yahweh is salvation*. God the Word became Man and grew like every other man (Lk. 2:52), except without sin (Heb. 4:15). At about thirty years old, Jesus began His ministry.²⁵ John the Baptist, His forerunner, introduced Him, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29, cf. 1 Pet. 1:19, 1 Cor. 5:7). All of the

²² Our primary focus here (and Isaiah’s context) is spiritual redemption, but *griefs* and *sorrows* in v. 4 point to the soul’s healing. Then Matthew 8:16-17 adds the dimension of physical healing fulfilled in Christ’s kingdom ministry. Glory to Jesus for complete healing in His Name: spirit, soul, and body. May we experience all three!

²³ *Atonement* means to cover, to pay the debt to be free of guilt. “As we speak of a sum of money as sufficient to ‘cover’ a debt, so [atonement] is the payment of whatever divine justice sees as sufficient to cover the sinner’s debt, the death of the substitute sacrifice....” J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 78.

²⁴ Jesus was the true tabernacle, the true place of sacrifice and of God’s presence (Jn. 2:19-21). “Dwelt” gets the sense, but loses the Old Testament value.

²⁵ Lk. 3:23. The age to begin priestly service, Num. 4:3. Also note Gen. 41:46.

Old Testament hints of redemption manifested in the Man Christ Jesus. He would be the Passover Lamb, the perfect sacrifice for sins. He would be Eve's offspring who crushed the serpent's head. He would be Abraham's offspring who defeated His enemies and blessed all nations.

In about three years of ministry, Jesus *proclaimed* the Kingdom of God and *demonstrated* the Kingdom of God. He brought the dynamic, ever-increasing rule of God from heaven to earth. "The reason the Son of God appeared was to undo²⁶ the works of the devil" (lit., 1 Jn. 3:8). Jesus proclaimed the truth of the Kingdom of God to undo the lies of the devil (Jn. 18:37, 8:44); Jesus cast out demons and healed diseases to undo the oppression of the devil (Lk. 7:21); Jesus died for sins tempted by the devil; and Jesus rose back to life to nullify the devil's hold on the power of death (Heb. 2:14-15).

Jesus also called disciples who would give up everything to partner with Him in accomplishing God's purposes on earth. He said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Lk. 9:23, cf. 14:26, 33).

Jesus predicted His own death and resurrection.²⁷ And He promised that after He ascended to the Father, He would give us the Holy Spirit to restore us to life (see page 12). The Jewish leaders hated Jesus because He claimed to be the Christ²⁸ and made Himself equal with God (both of which are true).²⁹ They arrested Jesus and put Him on trial with false witnesses (Mt. 26:59-61). They delivered Him over to the Romans to be crucified. But this was all God's will – and Jesus' will.³⁰ God unleashed on Jesus all of His wrath against every sin of every person who ever lived and will live.³¹ As Jesus died, He cried, "*Tetelestai*" (Jn. 19:30), which was a Greek accounting term for "the debt is paid in full."³²

²⁶ The Greek *luō* means to loosen, undo, break apart (as untying sandals, Mk. 1:7, and loosening bondage, Lk. 13:15-16).

²⁷ Mt. 16:21, 17:23, 20:19; Lk 9:22, 18:33, 24:7, 24:46

²⁸ *Christ* means *Anointed One*. Anointing was the process of setting apart kings, priests, or things for God's purposes by pouring oil on them. The oil signified the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1, 10; Isa. 61:1; Acts 10:38). The Old Testament pointed to One great King and Priest who would be the Mediator and Ruler of the world (e.g. Ps. 2, Dan. 9:24-26).

²⁹ Jn. 4:25-26, 5:18, 19:7; Mt. 26:63-66

³⁰ Acts 2:23, Isa. 53:10, Jn. 10:17-18

³¹ Jn. 1:14, 2 Cor. 5:14, Ti. 2:11, 1 Tim. 2:6, 1 Jn. 2:2, 2 Pet. 2:1, Lk. 23:34

³² Dr. Joe White, *Tetelestai: Drawing Near To the Man and His Cross* (Branson, MO: ADPress, 2000), 13.

THE ETERNAL SOLUTION: THE BODY AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS

On the Cross, Jesus solved our two-fold problem: sin and sins. His blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins.³³ We must value the blood of Jesus the way the Father values the blood. The blood of Jesus satisfied the wrath of God. Just as God attributed our sins to Jesus, so did God credit Jesus' righteousness to us who believe (Rom. 3:22, 2 Cor. 5:21). Even when our consciences condemn us, we can be confident in faith that God receives us because of His "free gift of righteousness" (Rom. 5:17, cf. Phil. 3:9, 1 Cor. 1:30, especially Rom. 8:1).

Yet even with the forgiveness of *sins*, sinners would still have *sin* in them because of Adam's nature. Therefore, on the Cross, God placed every person in the history of the world in Christ. Just as all had been in Adam during the first sin, all were in Christ during the punishment for sin. "...One has died for all, therefore all have died" (2 Cor. 5:14). We were crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), we died with Christ (Rom. 6:8), and we were buried with Christ (6:4). "We know that our old man was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be rendered inactive, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin" (lit., Rom. 6:6).

Watchman Nee wrote, "We shall see that the Blood deals with what we have done, whereas the Cross deals with what we are. The Blood disposes our sins, while the Cross strikes at the root of our capacity for sin."³⁴ Our consciences can be free from guilt because of the blood (Heb. 10:22), and we can overcome sin because of our inclusion in the Cross and the resurrection (Rom. 6:7, 11).

THE RESURRECTION AND THE SECOND SPECIES OF MAN

On the third day, Jesus was raised back to life by the Spirit of God. He appeared to more than 500 people at one time and proved His bodily resurrection by being touched, eating, and preaching over a period of forty days.³⁵

Jesus was the last Adam in His death and the Second Man in His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45-47). On the Cross, every descendent of Adam died in Christ; that species of Man ended (for those who believe). The same body that died came back to life, but now it is a resurrected,

³³ Mt. 26:28, Eph. 1:7, 1 Jn. 1:7, Rev. 1:5

³⁴ *The Normal Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1977), 14-15.

³⁵ 1 Cor. 15:3-8; Mt. 28:1-10, 17; Lk. 24:39, 42-43; Jn. 20:27-28; Acts 1:3

glorified body, fully saturated with the Spirit. Jesus initiated a new, second species of Man, which cannot be corrupted by sin or death. God started with Adam and started over with the resurrected Jesus. All in Adam are dead, but all united with Christ by His Spirit become a new kind of human.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus' work did not finish at the Cross, or even in the Resurrection. He ascended into heaven to receive the promised Holy Spirit from the Father. Then He poured the Spirit into believers' spirits (Acts 2:4, 33; Lk. 24:49; fulfilling Ezek. 36:26-27). Everyone who repents and believes is born again by the Spirit (Jn. 3:5-8, Mk. 1:15, Acts 20:21). They are no longer the old Adam-man; they receive the life of the Second Man.

To repent is to experience godly sorrow that leads to a changed mindset (2 Cor. 7:10). A repentant person hates Self for its sinfulness and turns toward God for salvation.³⁶ To believe in Jesus is to trust He is who He is. To believe is to substantiate and make personal the invisible realities of God in our hearts (Heb. 11:1). "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). True faith produces fruit of obedience because the repentant believer loves Jesus and wants Him to be his Lord and to get glory out of his life.³⁷ The obedience does not earn love or salvation (Eph. 2:8-9), but the obedience is how we experience the love and joy always aimed at us (Jn. 10:17, 15:9-11). It is important we understand that obedience is fruit – the natural overflow of the life of the Spirit in us. A disciple does not have to follow thou shalt and thou shalt not, but learn to experience by faith his connection to the Vine, Jesus Christ (Jn. 15:1-5, Gal. 5:22-23).

"He who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (1 Cor. 6:17). The Spirit of Jesus is united with our spirits. Christ is in us by His Spirit, and we are in Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:5-6). This is the greatest glory of the gospel. Jesus' death and resurrection were a means to an end: the Spirit of God dwelling in the spirits of Man. Jesus said it was better that He leave His disciples, so that He could give them the Spirit (Jn. 16:7). Jesus *with us*, outside of us, is not as good as Jesus *in us*. The point of the gospel is not just getting us out of hell and into

³⁶ Lk. 14:26; Rom. 7:24; Acts 3:19, 26; 9:35; 11:21; 14:15; 26:18-20

³⁷ Mt. 7:21; Jn. 5:30, 44; 14:15, 21, 23; Jas. 2:14-26

heaven; the point is we get God Himself. Jesus' blood cleansed us, so He could dwell in us by the Spirit.

Therefore, Paul could say "...your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God" (1 Cor. 6:19). Every believer has more glory inside him than he knows. The Holy Spirit is not just some influence or life force; He is a Person. He is God Himself. Every believer receives the Spirit who empowered Jesus' miraculous ministry and brought Him back to life! Oh, we must pray and learn to commune with this God who is closer than our skin.

SAVED, BEING SAVED, AND WILL BE SAVED

Scripture uses three tenses for our salvation. We have been saved (past tense, Eph. 2:8); we are being saved (presently, 1 Cor. 15:2 ESV); and we will be saved in the future (1 Cor. 3:15). All three speak the truth because we are three parts: spirit, soul, and body (1 Th. 5:23). We have been saved in our spirits. God gave us a new spirit and united it with His Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14). We are being saved in our souls, where our mind, emotions, and will reside. We still have habits of thinking, feeling, and deciding that need to be transformed (Rom. 12:2, Col. 3:10, 2 Cor. 3:18). Right now our bodies are wasting away, but our bodies will be saved in the resurrection when Jesus returns to earth a second time (1 Cor. 15:51-53). Now we have a soulish body – a body dominated by and characterized by the soul.³⁸ Then we will have a spiritual body – our entire spirit, soul, and body saturated by the Spirit of Christ.

The process of growing as disciples is aligning our souls with the glorious reality in our spirits. We must humble ourselves and submit our wills to receive from the Holy Spirit in our spirits. We must allow the Spirit to give us His thoughts, His emotions, and His will. Then our souls will be able to direct our bodies to glorify God. This is the divine order for the glory of God to manifest through His Image-bearers: Spirit to spirit to soul to body. Our goal is to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16). The booklet *Spirit, Soul, Body* examines this more thoroughly.

³⁸ 1 Cor. 15:44. Some translations render a "natural" body, but the Greek word is *psuchikos*, which is an adjective form of *soul (psuche)*, i.e. *soulish*.

JESUS' BODY STILL ON EARTH: THE CHURCH

On the day of Pentecost, when Jesus poured His Spirit into those believers, He created the Church. He had said, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades³⁹ will not overpower it" (Mt. 16:18 NASB). The Church is people called out of Adam and gathered into Christ.⁴⁰ It is not a building, a meeting, or an institution. Different denominations are invented by man, but in truth, there is only One Church.⁴¹

The Church is the Body of Christ.⁴² This metaphor shows the close, coordinated partnership God desires with us. Jesus is the Head,⁴³ and because we are connected to Him and each other by the Spirit, we are the parts that make up His Body. We are already in heaven because of Jesus, and Jesus is still on earth because of us! Christ lives in us and desires to continue His ministry on earth through us.

Right now the Head and the Body are in different physical locations. Scripture uses another powerful metaphor to show how we will be joined to the Lord when He comes back. It calls us the Bride of Christ.⁴⁴ It uses the most intimate relationship we know on earth to hint at the degree of intimacy we will have with the Lord. He is coming back to marry us, to love us more closely and more passionately than we can now imagine.

The Church is the holy priesthood of God.⁴⁵ Today there is an unholy divide between clergy and laity. Regular believers pay professionals to do ministry. In reality, God wants every believer to engage in ministry; Christ wants to express Himself through every believer (Jn. 14:12). When a person is born again, the Spirit brings a gift of grace to enable his ministry. Every believer has at least one of the seven gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to

³⁹ Hades meant the grave (*Sheol* in the Old Testament). But even more than location of dead bodies, it meant the place of torment for the spirits and souls of dead *un*believers (Lk. 16:19-31, Acts 2:27). It is not hell (*Gehenna* in Greek), but a temporary version of hell. Hades will be thrown into hell, called the Lake of Fire, after Christ's return and judgment (Rev. 20:13-14). Heaven, likewise, is a temporary place for believers until we receive resurrected bodies to dwell on New Earth (Rev. 21:1-3).

⁴⁰ *Ekklesia* means assembly, comprised of *called* and *out*. See 1 Pet. 2:9, Col. 1:13.

⁴¹ 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 20; Eph. 4:4; Rom. 12:5

⁴² 1 Cor. 12:27, Col. 1:24, Eph. 5:29-30

⁴³ Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23, 5:23

⁴⁴ Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17; cf. Jn. 3:29; Mt. 9:15, 22:2, 25:1; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:31-32

⁴⁵ 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6; Isa. 61:6

us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Some have unique ministries to equip other believers for their ministries (Eph. 4:11-12), but all have ministries. Part of the process of growing as a disciple is discovering our gifts and learning to glorify God and bless others with them.

THE NEW BEGINNING

We live at the transition of the age.⁴⁶ Soon Jesus will come back to earth to completely destroy the enemies of God.⁴⁷ This is the year of the Lord’s favor, but the day of His vengeance is drawing near (Isa. 61:2, cf. Lk. 4:17-21). When He appears, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:10-11). Those who did not want Him to be their Lord will join Satan and the Antichrist in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10, 15), separated from God for eternity of punishment (2 Th. 1:8-9, Mt. 25:46). Those who repented, believed in Jesus, and were born again by the Spirit will live with God forever on the New Earth (Rev. 21:1-3).

There will be no more pain, no more death, no more sea, no more darkness, no more sun or moon, for the glory of God will give light through the Lamb (Rev. 21:1, 4, 23; 22:5). Before the beginning, God was all that existed. In the new beginning, God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28). We’ll be here in resurrected bodies on a resurrected creation, and all things will be saturated with God and enjoying His glory!

This booklet described mostly the gospel of God’s grace (Acts 20:24), so we encourage you to read the booklet *The Kingdom of God* to see more specifically the big picture - what Jesus called the “gospel of the Kingdom” (e.g. Mt. 4:23). We absolutely must prepare for the return of King Jesus. It is our destiny to partner with Him in fully establishing His Kingdom on earth as it is heaven (Mt. 6:10).

⁴⁶ 1 Cor. 10:11, Heb. 9:26

⁴⁷ Lk. 19:27, 2 Th. 1:7-10, Rev. 22:7, 12, 20

EPILOGUE

The goal of this booklet is not the accumulation of information. We aim to renew our minds, so that we can by faith worship God in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24). Take your time with these verses and truths. Let them soak into your soul. Ask God questions, and ask His Church.

Believe Jesus is the Son of God, died but alive forevermore (Rev. 1:18), and give your life to bringing Him glory. God loves you intensely. He jealously longs to fill you with His righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit. Nothing else will satisfy, because you were created for Him. The greatest life - the only real life - is in the center of His will, loving Him with all our hearts and fulfilling our individual ministries through our gifts of grace.

Additional Discipleship Booklets



*The Kingdom of God:
Why Christ Created Man, Became Man, and Is Coming Again*

*Spirit, Soul, Body:
Created to Relate to the Holy Trinity by Faith*

*Light Shines in the Darkness:
Scripture Interpreting the Spiritual Drama of Genesis 1:2-3*

Why Trust the Bible?

How to Read the Bible

*Day and Night Prayer:
Fire Will Burn on the Altar Until the Return of King Jesus*

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